Date June 11, 1942

Mr. James R. Woodul, Chairman

Coordination Committee for Mexico

WE TRANSMIT HEREWITH LETTER NO. M-424, DATED June 11, 1942, FROM THE Press

DIVISION

1096

NELSON A. ROCKEFELLER
No. 864  Desp. 2518

To the American Ambassador,
México, D. F.

The Secretary of State transmits herewith a copy of a project authorization entitled "Arias Bernal's Trip to Washington" which has been submitted to the Department for approval by the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs.

The Ambassador is requested to submit to the Department at the earliest possible date his comments and recommendations concerning this project.

Enclosure:  
Project authorization.
PROJECT AUTHORIZATION

Short Title: Aerfas Bernal's trip to Washington, D. C. to Draw Editorial Cartoons for Office of Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs.

Designation: Press Division

Program Authority: In line with the purpose of the Press Division to distribute printed materials relating to the war effort and other general subjects of interest in the other American republics by the employment of existing agencies and services.

Auspices: Aerfas Bernal, care of Coordination Committee for Mexico.

Description: Mr. Aerfas Bernal is one of the outstanding editorial cartoonists in the Western Hemisphere. He is, at present, employed by the magazine, "Hey", which is printed in Mexico City. His editorial cartoons ridiculing the leaders of the Axis have made him conspicuous throughout the American republics.

The Press Division wishes to bring Mr. Bernal to Washington, D. C. to undertake the drawing of numerous editorial cartoons. Suggestions of the purpose to be accomplished by the cartoons will be given to Mr. Bernal and he will then draw his interpretation of our objective.

It is proposed that Mr. Bernal spend a minimum of six weeks in Washington doing work for the Press Division and that provision be made for an extension of this six weeks' period if necessary.

Objective: To provide funds for the creation of editorial cartoons by Aerfas Bernal for distribution by this Office among the American republics.

Cost: In negotiations with Mr. Aerfas Bernal, it was agreed that he would undertake to work for the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs under a project for a period of six weeks during which time he will draw editorial cartoons on such matter suggested by this Office. He agrees to undertake this work for $2,500 including transportation to and from Mexico City and including a per diem of $10.00 in lieu of living expenses.

In addition, the Coordinator will provide Mr. Aerfas Bernal with an office for the six weeks' period together with necessary supplies and equipment. It is estimated that the total supplies consumed by this work including the use of desk, chairs, and etc., will not exceed $50.

DECLASSIFIED: Authority NND 775098
Total Cost: $2,750

Recommended Action: Action formally to approve this project is requested and the following resolution is accordingly suggested:

"Authorization is given to make available funds not to exceed $2,750 for bringing Aereas Bernal to Washington, D. C. to draw editorial cartoons for the Office of Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs."

Authorization: Resolution adopted as above
May 28, 1942

Instructions: To be cleared with the State Department and Legal Division to obtain necessary financial and legal clearance and prepare necessary documents for execution.
Mexico, July 1, 1942.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Department's instruction number 364 of June 16, 1942, transmitting a copy of the project entitled "Arias Bernal's Trip to Washington," and to report that the Embassy sees no objection to having Mr. Bernal go to Washington as planned by the Office of the Coordinator.

Mr. Bernal owes his local reputation largely to cartoons appearing on the front page of HOY. These cartoons ridiculing the Axis and Axis leaders have given him a reputation as a drawer of editorial cartoons. Mr. Bernal discussed the possibility of making a trip to Washington informally with an officer of this Embassy.

He said...
He said that he had not submitted drawings for poster ideas as proposed by the Office of the Coordinator for the reason that he was married only a short time ago and had been so busy that he was behind with his regular work. He said that he was very anxious to go to the United States and hoped that a formal invitation would be extended to him. He indicated, however, that he would probably not be able to leave for several weeks.

Respectfully yours,

For the Ambassador:

Guy W. Ray,
Second Secretary of Embassy.
From: Secstate
Date: July 14, 2:30 p.m.
No.: A-5
Received: July 16, 9 a.m.

Reference Department's instruction 864, June 16 and your despatch No. 2024, June 12.

Certain Mexicans of unquestioned friendship for the United States have intimated that the magazine Hoy, and Arias Bernal's cartoons in particular, are not as favorable to the United States cause as might be supposed. They say that Mexicans perceive in Arias Bernal's cartoons continued subtle digs at the United States despite a superficial tendency to favor this country at the expense of the Axis.

Before the Department gives approval to the project enclosed with the instruction under reference, please send by airgram your views concerning Arias Bernal's bona fides as a supporter of inter-American solidarity and the United States position in the war.

WELLES, Acting
From: American Embassy, Mexico City.
To: The Honorable, The Secretary of State, Washington.

A-23, July 17, 3:45 p.m. 1942

Reference is made to Department’s A-5 of July 14, 2:20 p.m., 1942.

Most of Bernal’s recent cartoons have been strongly anti-Axis making no reference direct or indirect to the United States. Members of Subcommittee on Communications who are old residents of Mexico, experienced in public relations and publicity fail to see hidden digs at the United States in Bernal’s cartoons. Editors of rival magazines who take advantage of every occasion to criticize HOY agree that Bernal’s cartoons are strong and effective anti-Axis and pro-Democratic propaganda. Bernal has an unusual punch as a cartoonist; he is very bohemian; those who know him well feel that inter-American solidarity is one of the least of his worries and that he knows or cares little about the position of the United States in the war. However, the Embassy sees no reasons why his cartoons should not be used by the Office of the Coordinator provided he can be induced to do the necessary work and the cartoons are considered suitable.

HOY is pro-United Nations at present, presumably for political
political reasons. In its 4th of July edition it devoted 11 pages to Independence Day, praising the United States and the cause of the Democracies. Editor Llergo is a great admirer of Japan and is reported to be anti-American and anti-British. Burstein, the assistant editor, is an Argentinian of German birth. He professes friendship for the United States but reliable information is that in private conversation he is strongly anti-American. It seems safe to say that the political policy of HOY is almost entirely dictated by expediency.

MESSERSMITH

GWR/mjs

Sent 3F
Dear Mr. Ambassador:

With further reference to your despatch No. 2024 of June 12, I have taken up the matters referred to and want to report my findings in each case.

In view of your objections, which we agree are well taken, the project for the establishment of a humorous magazine in Mexico City has been withdrawn. This project was originally prepared upon the oral request of the Coordination Committee, based, of course, on conditions which have since changed. We are grateful to you for checking us on this.

No doubt by now you have received inquiry from the State Department concerning the proposed project to have Arias Bernal come to Washington to draw editorial cartoons for this office. As you of course know, before we proceed with any of our projects pertaining to the other American republics, we obtain State Department approval, which gives them the opportunity to check with their missions on any matters of foreign policy involved. In addition, we frequently find it desirable to have preliminary discussions with our Coordination Committees (of which copies are sent to the State Department and Ambassador involved) and also with the State Department directly. Preliminary inquiries on having Mr. Bernal do some work for us were made in letters of February 28 and March 28 to Mr. Woodul. I certainly agree that it is most essential to obtain the advice of the men right on the ground. I, too, am constantly stressing this point.

Since submission over a year ago of Mr. Corry's report covering his survey of the northern part of Latin America, this office and the State Department, through our Joint Committee, have been grappling with the problem of establishing a general policy in furnishing aid to American schools in the other American republics. Mr. Corry has recently returned from his second survey trip, which covered the southern American republics, and is now in the process of preparing his final report, which it is hoped

Honorable George S. Messersmith
Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary
Embassy of the United States
Mexico City, Mexico
will make it possible to give extensive aid to American schools generally based on some uniform pattern. However, in view of the delay which will be involved in establishing a general policy and the urgency for aid in some cases, don't you think that the most practical policy we can pursue at the present time is to give limited aid to already established American institutions where emergency conditions exist? Perhaps these actions will help point the way to an over-all policy.

In the case of the project for aid to the American school in Guatemala City, Mr. Corry has stressed the need for substantial and prompt assistance. With the closing of the German school, reputedly the best school there, an unusual opportunity has been created for the American Government to replace the educational and cultural influences of the former Nazi institution. State Department approval has been received and the contract has been drawn up and submitted to the contractor for signature.

Again I want to tell you how much help your advice always is and to thank you for taking the time to bring these matters to our attention.

With personal regards,

Sincerely,

Nelson A. Rockefeller,
Coordinator
Mexico, July 22, 1942

My dear Mr. Rockefeller:

I have your letter of July 14th, referring to my despatch 2024 of June 12th to the Department of State, and note that in view of the objections which you agree are well taken, the project for the establishment of a humorous magazine in Mexico City has been abandoned. I am very glad that you have taken this action and I am confident that it is a wise course for us to pursue in this matter.

With regard to the proposed project to have Arias Bernal go to Washington to draw editorial cartoons for the Office of the Coordinator, we received an instruction from the Department of State #864 of June 16, 1942, requesting us to submit our comment on this project, and in my despatch 2518 of July 1st we informed the Department that this Embassy saw no objection to having Mr. Bernal go to Washington as planned by the Office of the Coordinator for this purpose.

In this connection you may have also seen the Department's telegram to us of July 14th, to the effect that certain persons had raised objections to Bernal on the ground that his cartoons contained subtile digs at the United States; also our airgram of July 17th to the Department in which we stated that we thought Bernal's cartoons very strong and effective anti-Axis and pro-Democratic propaganda.

In the last paragraphs of your letter you refer to Mr. Corry's report covering the school survey of northern Latin Republics. I have not seen Mr. Corry's report and so am not able to comment thereon, but I think you know of my interest in this problem. In giving aid to schools we shall have to proceed very wisely and soundly. My general impression was that Mr. Corry had made a very careful study. I think his general

Nelson A. Rockefeller, Esquire,
Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs,
Commerce Department Building, Washington, D.C.
general conclusion was that we had to confine whatever aid was given by our Government to schools, to one-time, non-recurring aid. With this basic idea I am very much in accord. If there are any specific phases of the school problem concerning which you may feel that my views will be worth while, I shall be very glad to have you write me.

Believe me, with all good wishes,

Cordially and sincerely yours,

G S MESSERSMITH

GSM:KCT
Mr. James R. Woodul,
Chairman, Coordination Committee for Mexico,
c/o The United States Embassy,
Mexico, D.F., Mexico.

Dear Mr. Woodul:

There is enclosed with this letter a copy of a project authorization for Mr. Aureas Bernal's trip to Washington, D.C., to draw editorial cartoons for this Office. Mr. Bernal will, while in the United States, work for the Press Division and it is our intention to supply him here in Washington with an office and suitable equipment for his work.

I would sincerely appreciate your getting in touch with Mr. Bernal and arranging for him to receive a $500 advance from your funds in order to permit his departure from Mexico City on or about August 15. We will reimburse you for this $500 advance by you. Any courtesies which you or the other members of the Committee will be able to extend to Mr. Bernal, in order to expedite his departure for Mexico, will be appreciated. I would also appreciate your advising me the date and the hour of Mr. Bernal's arrival in Washington so that we can arrange to have him met, and I would also appreciate your discussing with Mr. Bernal the problem of his accommodations while in Washington. If it is his intention to stay at a hotel we will be very glad to make the necessary reservations.

If there is any further information you wish in connection with this project, please do not hesitate to call on us.

Sincerely yours,

Francis A. Jamieson
AIR MAIL

August 4, 1942

To the American Ambassador,
Mexico, D. F.

The Secretary of State transmits for consideration by the appropriate officer a copy of a project authorization from the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs entitled "Aereas Bernal's Trip to Washington, D. C. to draw editorial cartoons for the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs."

This project has received final approval by the Department subject to the following provisions: That the Department have the opportunity of seeing some of Mr. Bernal's work before it is distributed in the other American republics and that some of the ideas to be given to Mr. Bernal in accordance with the procedure set forth in the project authorization be discussed at the information policy meeting.

COMMENTS:

[Handwritten notes]

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 77598
PROJECT AUTHORIZATION

Short Title: Axercas Bernal's trip to Washington, D. C. to Draw Editorial Cartoons for Office of Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs.

Designation: Press Division

Program Authority: In line with the purpose of the Press Division to distribute printed materials relating to the war effort and other general subjects of interest in the other American republics by the employment of existing agencies and services.

Auspices: Axercas Bernal, care of Coordination Committee for Mexico.

Description: Mr. Axercas Bernal is one of the outstanding editorial cartoonists in the Western Hemisphere. He is, at present, employed by the magazine, "Hoy", which is printed in Mexico City. His editorial cartoons ridiculing the leaders of the Axis have made him conspicuous throughout the American republics.

The Press Division wishes to bring Mr. Bernal to Washington, D. C. to undertake the drawing of numerous editorial cartoons. Suggestions of the purpose to be accomplished by the cartoons will be given to Mr. Bernal and he will then draw his interpretation of our objective.

It is proposed that Mr. Bernal spend a minimum of six weeks in Washington doing work for the Press Division and that provision be made for an extension of this six weeks' period if necessary.

Objective: To provide funds for the creation of editorial cartoons by Axercas Bernal for distribution by this Office among the American republics.

Cost: In negotiations with Mr. Axercas Bernal, it was agreed that he would undertake to work for the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs under a project for a period of six weeks during which time he will draw editorial cartoons on such matter suggested by this Office. He agrees to undertake this work for $2,500 including transportation to and from Mexico City and including a per diem of $10.00 in lieu of living expenses.

In addition, the Coordinator will provide Mr. Axercas Bernal with an office for the six weeks' period together with necessary supplies and equipment. It is estimated that the total supplies consumed by this work including the use of desk, chairs, and etc., will not exceed $250.
Total Cost: $2,750

Recommended Action: Action formally to approve this project is requested and the following resolution is accordingly suggested:

"Authorization is given to make available funds not to exceed $2,750 for bringing Aereas Bernal to Washington, D. C. to draw editorial cartoons for the Office of Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs."

Authorization: Resolution adopted as above
May 28, 1942

Instructions: To be cleared with the State Department and Legal Division to obtain necessary financial and legal clearance and prepare necessary documents for execution.
Mexico, August 10, 1942.

Dear John:

You may recall we have had considerable correspondence with the Department (instruction of August 4th) and the Coordinator, regarding a proposed trip of Arias Bernal to Washington.

I finally succeeded in pinning him down and getting him to promise to leave by air on August 22nd. We have passages via Brownsville for him and his wife and he should arrive at the Washington airport on August 23rd about 6:15 a.m., I think it is. His wife is only 22 years old but a member of the bar and a rather brilliant woman. She furnishes most of the practical brains of the family. Bernal is a strange mixture; quite sophisticated about some things and surprisingly naive about others. He has obtained his passport and I'll try to get him in this week for his visa. We'll do our best to get him off on the 22nd.

He doesn't seem to have much idea regarding accommodations. Room, bath and sitting room at some moderate hotel probably would be best; he'd like to have something close to $5.00 a day but he probably will have to go higher than that. I'd certainly suggest that the Coordinator's Office have something for him on arrival. I understand they expect to have someone meet him. He does not speak English.

An official communication is going forward from the Committee, but it might be just as well if you would pass this on to the proper person in the Office of the Coordinator.

He should be well received, of course, but I suggest he be made to understand he is in Washington for work rather than for a round of parties and social activities.

Regards.

Sincerely,

Guy W. Ray.

John C. Dreier, Esquire,
Assistant Chief, Division of American Republics,
Department of State, Washington, D.C.
P.S. (to letter of August 10, 1942 to John C. Dreier, Esquire, Assistant Chief, Division of American Republics, Department of State, Washington, D.C., from Mr. Guy W. Ray)

Please ask the Office of the Coordinator to note that the name is:

"ARIA BERNAL" and not "AEREA"
To: American Consul  
    Matamoros, Tamps., Mexico  
Date: August 21, 1942  
No.:  
Charged to: Contingent  

Code: Clear  

Please meet and render appropriate assistance  
Arias Bernal and wife arriving Brownsville, plane due three fifteen tomorrow, Saturday afternoon.  
Bernal going to Washington on business for Coordinator Inter-American Affairs.  

MESSERSMITH  

GWR/mjs
The Honorable
George S. Messersmith,
American Ambassador,
México City, D. F.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to your telegram of August 21, 1942 requesting me to meet and render appropriate assistance to Señor Arias Bernal and wife, arriving by plane in Brownsville from México City Saturday afternoon, August 22nd.

Mr. and Mrs. Bernal were met by me upon their arrival, and the U. S. Immigration and Customs officials at the airport, having been informed in advance of their arrival, the Bernal's entry was expedited, thanks to the courtesy of the abovementioned officials. Mr. and Mrs. Bernal proceeded by Eastern Airlines plane to Washington that same evening.

For the possible information of the Embassy, I may add that the Colombian Ambassador, Señor Jorge Zawadsky, and his wife, also arrived on the same plane bound for Canada. By chance, discovering their presence on the plane, I was able to pass the word to the U. S. Customs and Immigration officials, who were most courteous in giving them the attention their position merited. I assisted them in transferring to the Braniff Airliner bound for Chicago that same evening. It is a pleasure to state that the Ambassador and his wife were very appreciative of the courtesy rendered to them at the airport on the part of all the officials.

Respectfully yours,

Nelson R. Park,
American Consul.
MEMORANDUM

To: Mr. Ray

In connection with the projected visit of Bernal, the Mexican cartoonist to the United States it has occurred to me that possibly in one way or another his superb work for the covers of HOY might very properly and with possible excellent results be brought more to the attention of the North American public.

Many are the Americans who do not know that there is a well-developed detestation in Mexico for Adolph Hitler and certainly there are few American caricaturists who so consistently and so brilliantly portray the evil side of the creature as Bernal. It seems to me that this side of Mexican thinking is worthy of advertisement. Incidentally, I cannot but think that the contests of HOY, even if the papers are no more than leafed, will give the casual reader an interesting picture of Mexico.

With this in mind I would like to suggest the possibility of a project to send weekly possibly 1000 copies of HOY to various libraries in the United States. In this connection, I would think first of the libraries of our State universities and principal large privately endowed universities and colleges particularly those of the East and the Northeast and secondly of the public libraries of the cities and larger towns where one library supplies the community. I would be very much inclined to add the suggestion that such libraries keep an announcement on their bulletin boards to the effect that the magazine is available.

Two results might be hoped for: a greater knowledge of Mexico's daily life and attitude toward the war; a possible stimulation in the study of the Spanish language.

One suggestion, which I think is of importance, I would make with regard to Bernal's covers, namely, that the word "México" be displayed in an obvious manner somewhere on the page.

S\to

Charles H. Stevens

cc: Mr. Trueblood.

CHS: lpc
M-666

AIR MAIL

September 14, 1942

Mr. James R. Woodul, Chairman
Coordination Committee for Mexico
c/o American Ambassador
Mexico City, Mexico

Dear Mr. Woodul:

As of possible interest, there is enclosed herewith an amended copy of Project Authorization No. PR-1184, concerning the trip of Arias Bernal to Washington, D.C. to draw editorial cartoons for the Office of the Coordinator.

Sincerely yours,

Philip Raine
Mexican Section

Edward H. Robbins
Director, Regional Division

Enclosure

CC: Department of State
American Ambassador
Mr. Robbins

PRaine:PW

Original sent to Committee 9-23-42

LPC

820.02 - Propaganda Projects: Arias Bernal's Trip to Washington

Ref: IO3 - CCM - A.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 775018
October 6, 1942

Mr. James H. Woodul, Chairman
Coordination Committee for Mexico
c/o The American Ambassador
Mexico City, Mexico

Dear Mr. Woodul:

Reprints from New York newspapers

Hereewith are enclosed reprints from three New York newspapers covering the activities and opinions of Antonio Arias Bernal, the cartoonist sent by your Committee to do special work in the United States.

The press interview from which this noteworthy showing resulted was organized by members of our New York staff and from all the evidence New York's impression of the Bernals has been highly enthusiastic. The Mexican Committee's inspiration to send them here indeed was a happy one.

Sincerely yours,

Francis A. Jamieson
Director, Press Division

Enclosure

cc: State Dept., (2)
    Ambassador
    Mr. Robbins
For Coordintam. Arias Bernal telegraphed Ray requesting assistance obtaining extension permission remain United States. Suggest you inform your New York office what steps necessary with immigration and have it assist Bernal.

MESSERSMITH

GWR/mjs