

May 19, 1942

To: R. Keith Kane, Assistant Director
From: Special Service Division
Subject: The Spanish Americans of the Southwest and the War Effort

Location and Nature of the Problem

There are more than two million Spanish Americans, persons of Mexican-Spanish descent in the Southwest who have not yet been told about the war in their own language. They live principally along the Mexican border in Texas, New Mexico, Southern Colorado, Arizona and Southern California. Many are illiterate; many more, despite schooling, cannot communicate in English. Spanish is the basic language among these people, most of whom are only one generation removed from Mexico.

Their isolation is by no means merely geographic. They are educationally and economically submerged, linguistically and culturally isolated. They are subject to intense economic, social, educational discrimination and often, in addition to political exploitation. As a group they present perhaps the most striking need for economic rehabilitation and cultural assimilation in the entire United States.

Pressing as is the need for this rehabilitation and assimilation, these are not objectives with which OFF can deal directly. OFF is confined to the war information problem created by their ignorance and isolation from the war effort, although their ignorance and isolation are a direct result of their economic and cultural status.

Three general types involved: ignorance the common denominator

The people of Mexican descent in the Southwest are of three general types.

First and most numerous is the urban slum dweller, an odd job holder suffering from economic insecurity and inadequate relief provisions. His living condition is, even by comparison with the Southern urban Negro, extremely low.

Second is the migratory worker. He lives in urban slums during the winter months, in agricultural areas during the long summer. His family accompanies him on his travels and his nomadic existence complicates the informational problem.

Third is the subsistence farmer, most numerous in northern New Mexico, Northwestern Arizona and Southern Colorado. Of Spanish Colonial lineage, he leads a primitive life isolated from the "Anglo" world which the urban slum dweller and migratory worker at least see, although they do not participate in it. War deprivations have already been very real among this

group. They comprised a large part of the New Mexico regiment which fought at Bataan and many families of Spanish descent in New Mexico number among them a casualty or a prisoner as a result of the defense of the Philippines. Yet these same families do not know what the war is about and, in many cases don't even know who are our allies, who our enemies.

All three groups have this in common: they are ignorant of current events to an extent which is inimical to our war effort and war aims.

Emotional and Geographical Exposure

Because these people are volatile and politically naive they are extremely susceptible to emotional propaganda appeals. Their vulnerability to excitement, while a potential advantage to an OFF informational campaign which utilizes it intelligently, also emphasizes the urgency of getting there first with convincing war effort messages. Their submarginal standard of living offers fertile ground for Axis propaganda attacks and for phoney promises which might actively antagonize them. They are already exposed to Axis shortwave broadcasts and to Fascist publications distributed from Mexico. The well-organized Mexican Falangists have adherents in the Southwest, and are, of course, attempting to sow discontent.

The fact that this unassimilated population is spread along our only "foreign" border may, too, be considered of some military significance. In the event of anti-democratic successes in Mexico itself, the emotional and geographic exposure of these two million people of Mexican descent to Mexican influences might produce a definite security problem.

Informational Recommendations

Because of the nature and location of the audience to be reached, special informational devices must be employed. Conventional modes of communication, those which will succeed with typical American groups, won't necessarily succeed here. Simpler, somewhat less advanced devices than are customarily used to reach English language audiences in the United States are deserving of serious consideration because the economic and cultural development of the audience to be reached is less advanced than the American norm. Consequently, the following outline for an informational campaign to reach Southwestern Americans of Mexican and Spanish descent places relatively more reliance on local town and village institutions than on the broader coverage of radio and newspapers.

1. Press

The established English language press does not offer facilities for an extensive informational campaign among people of Mexican descent.

Circulation of English language newspapers is negligible among Spanish Americans. Only an occasional column is printed in Spanish.

There are, however, 38 Spanish or Spanish-English language papers (32 weekly, 1 bi-weekly, 5 daily) with a circulation of upwards of 100,000, to whom specially prepared Spanish language material should be amply supplied.

This material should be at least 50% pictorial and should show and describe American troops, particularly from the Southwest, in action. Other subjects should include simple statements of war aims, explanations of German religious persecution and treatment of the Roman Catholic clergy, German race concepts, and cooperation between Mexico, other Central and South American Republics and the United States. The Spanish and Spanish-English papers to whom this material should be sent are:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Paper</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Circulation</u>
Tucson, Arizona	El Tusconense	Bi-weekly	2,300
Calxico, Cal.	Voz - Mundo	Daily (ex.Sun.)	
Los Angeles, Cal.	La Esperanza	Weekly	2,200
" " "	Heraldo de Mexico	Weekly	6,000
" " "	La Opinion	Daily	15,331
Sacramento, Cal.	El Informador	Weekly	3,545
San Diego, Cal.	El Latino	Weekly	1,100
San Francisco, Cal.	Hispano America	Weekly	
" " "	Imparcial crat	Weekly	
San Luis, Col.	Costilla Co. Demo-	Weekly	401
" " "	Heraldo del Valle	Weekly	300
Trinidad, Col.	El Annunciador	Weekly	1,320
" " "	El Progress	Weekly	
Walsenburg, Col.	El Clarin	Weekly	1,025
Albuquerque, N. Mex.	Independiente	Weekly	1,850
Belen, N. Mex.	News	Weekly	
Clayton, N. Mex.	Union Co. Leader	Weekly	1,320
Espanola, N. Mex.	La Espanola Valley Developer	Weekly	1,200
" " "	La Voz del Rio Grande	Weekly	
Las Vegas, N. Mex.	San Miguel Co. Star	Weekly	
Mora, N. Mex.	Sun	Weekly	1,000
Santa Fe, N. Mex.	El Nuevo Mexicano	Weekly	7,082
Santa Rosa	News	Weekly	506
Socorro	Defensor del Pueblo	Weekly	1,800
Taos	Taoseno	Weekly	1,900
Tierra Amarilla	La Opinion de Rio Arriba	Weekly	650
Corpus Christi, Tex.	El Paladin	Weekly	
Del Rio, Tex.	Las Noticias	Weekly	2,100

<u>Location</u>	<u>Paper</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Circulation</u>
Eagle Pass, Texas	International News	Weekly	1,320
El Paso, Texas	El Continental	Daily (ex.Mon.)	12,204
" " "	Revista Catolica	Weekly	6,000
Houston, Tex.	El Tecolote	Weekly	
Laredo, Tex.	Times	Daily	8,865
Raymondville, Tex.	El Tiempo	Weekly	776
Rio Grande City, Tex.	Herald	Weekly	1,450
San Antonio, Tex.	La Prensa	Daily	14,915
San Diego, Tex.	El Democrata	Weekly	1,238
" " "	Libertad	Weekly	800

In addition to this obvious exploitation of the existing Spanish language press OFF should publish and arrange for the circulation of a 4 or 8 page tabloid newspaper produced for the exclusive purpose of reaching Southwestern Spanish Americans. It should appear at regular intervals, preferably semi-monthly, and should be divided into a Texas, Colorado-New Mexico, and California-Arizona edition. Local news about local interests and local men in the armed forces should be featured in each edition; the remainder of the editorial content can be the same in all editions.

The first issue should be devoted largely to the Selective Service Act, and how it works, with detailed description of deferment standards, army pay and benefits, what army life is like. The Department of Agriculture's production goals should be explained and the "Food for Freedom" campaign brought home to this predominantly agricultural people. And further, opportunities for employment in war industries should be exposed.

Watchword for this publication should be: "Assume no previous knowledge about the war on the part of the reader."

(The Special Service Division is making a more detailed study of the reading habits of the Mexican-American population in the Southwest which will be completed shortly.)

2. Radio

It is impossible from the information now available to determine exactly the incidence of radio ownership among this group. It is certain that radio sets are far less common among them than among the other inhabitants of the region, due principally to two factors: poverty and lack of electrification in rural areas. Radio can, however, be used to reach the urban groups and some rural residents.

The programs most welcome and attended to are musical or simple colloquial playlets. Radio stations in the Southwest report sizable responses from the Mexican population to programs of these types. OFF should have recorded in Spanish the necessary material for illumination of the several OFF themes, in language and music suited to the tastes and habits of this

audience. In addition, recruiting, War Bond and other war effort material should be supplied in Spanish language script form to stations in the area. In the main, recordings are preferable to "live" programs as they reach many more listeners per dollar (through repeats, etc.) and are, in most cases, more effective. Stations to which such material should be supplied continuously are:-

<u>State</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Call Letter</u>
Arizona	Jerome	KCJR
"	Phoenix	KOY
"	"	KPHO
"	"	KTAR
"	Prescott	KYCA
"	Tucson	KTUC
"	"	KVOA
"	Yuma	KYUM
California	Berkely	KRE
"	Long Beach	KGER
"	Los Angeles	KFVD
"	Los Angeles	KCFJ
"	Los Angeles	KMTR
"	Merced	KYOS
"	Modesto	KTRB
"	Oakland	KLS
"	Sacramento	KFBK
"	San Bernardino	KFXM
"	San Francisco	KYA
"	Santa Barbara	KTMS
"	Stockton	KGDM
"	Visalia	KTIC
Colorado	Alamosa	KGIV
"	La Junta	KOKO
New Mexico	Albuquerque	KGGM
"	Carlsbad	KAVE
"	Las Vegas	KFUN
Texas	Abilene	KRBC
"	Austin	KNOW
"	"	KTBC
"	Brady	KNEL
"	Brownsville	KEEN
"	Corpus Christi	KEYS
"	"	KRIS
"	Dallas	KSKY
"	Harlingen	KCBS
"	Laredo	KPAB
"	Pecos	KIUN
"	San Angelo	KGKL

<u>State</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Call Letter</u>
Texas	San Antonio	KABC
"	" "	KMAC
"	" "	KONO
"	Victoria	KVIC
"	Weslaco	KRGV

(The Special Service Division is making a more detailed study of Spanish language programs and of Mexican-American listening habits in the Southwest which will be completed shortly.)

3. Social Life

The Southwestern Spanish American is gregarious. Anything musical or oratorical is assured a village or small-town audience. OWF might successfully enlist the speaking services of university students of Mexican descent to tour the area during the summer months, possibly in sound-equipped autos. The music will invariably attract a crowd and the speaker can do the rest. However, due to the vast distances between settlements, a sound-wagon campaign would be extremely expensive.

4. The Church

These people are devout Roman Catholics and the church is a primary means of communication to them. Although its utilization as a disseminator of Government information presents real problems, the church's authority is so great that it must not be overlooked.

In certain areas priests might be persuaded to pass on to their communicants Government information from the pulpit. Bishop Lucey of San Antonio is one Catholic dignitary who might profitably be approached with such a suggestion, and there are others. On the whole, however, too much from-the-pulpit cooperation cannot be expected because many Mexican-American priests have shown their sympathies for the Sinarquisti (the Pro-Franco, Falangist organization of the Southwest reportedly numbering 50,000 adherents.)

The church may possibly be used as a distributive mechanism for the Government-prepared Spanish language newspaper suggested above. Its responsibility for educating its people in the Nation's war aims can be put to church officials in such a way as to identify refusal with Divisionism. If this is done, the material distributed in the church, or in the vestibules of the church, or even just outside the church, will carry with it the church's influence and authority.

5. The Schools

The schools are probably the best agencies for the promulgation of the informational program. The new, WPA built, shiny red brick school is

frequently in striking contrast to the other village buildings. It is usually the best adult meeting place.

Although compulsory school attendance regulations are not enforced in the Southwest, the school has a far reaching influence and provides a means of reaching a majority of the families of Mexican descent.

Teachers should be instructed to present war-effort information to their classes and to distribute material in Spanish for children to take home to their parents.

A manual about the war, dramatizing in simple language the United Nations' war aims, with parallel pages in English and Spanish, would find a warm reception in every household if it bore the imprint of an American flag in color. It could be addressed, in Spanish, to the citizens of the Southwest and signed by the President. The impressiveness of such a booklet to these simple people would be difficult to exaggerate. Color must, however, be used.

Schools can, of course, be utilized for civilian defense meetings, conducted in Spanish, at which the customary civilian defense literature would be distributed. This, too, must be printed in Spanish.

6. Posters

Fancy posters, long on pictorial presentation and color and short on Spanish text, would be extremely effective, in the gathering places frequented by Mexican-Americans. Posted at their schools, bars, post offices, filling stations, churches, these decorative innovations would be the source of much comment and appreciation.

7. Government Agencies

The aid of Government agency field staffs and local offices (including post offices) should be enlisted in the campaign. All work done for the Government by the Spanish-Mexican residents should have its war relation clearly pictured and publicized.

These agencies should act as distributors of Government publications. The Farm Security Administration has the most extensive direct contact, although other welfare bureaus should also be utilized.

8. Direct-by-Mail

Mail is a rarity to these people; its receipt is viewed as a genuine symbol of personal importance. Interesting or impressive letters are read over and over to relatives and friends by the recipient, or for him if he cannot read himself. An official letter to the next-of-kin of each Mexican-American in the armed services from the President, or from

some military personnel would be an almost interminable source of good will. This would be an inexpensive means of reaching many isolated families whose sons and husbands have gone off to fight in a war which as yet has no personal significance to those at home.

Mailing lists can be secured from War and Navy Departments and checked by local postmasters.

9. Organizations

Although there are no strong organizations among the Southwestern Americans of Mexican descent, existing organizations should be won to the support of the war effort and their leaders urged to coordinate their work with the Government.

One organization which might be considered an exception to the above generalization is the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union which is 90% composed of Spanish-speaking mine workers. Their headquarters are in Denver and their leader, Reid Robinson, is liberally inclined. Membership is largely in Colorado.

10. Movies

An effort should be made to distribute, for special showing in existing movie houses, or as part of regular programs, Spanish language films produced for South American consumption. Cooperation from CIAA would produce a number of short war effort subjects which could readily be adapted for this purpose; some would be special productions for the Southwest, others adaptations of films prepared for the other Americas.

Direction of the Informational Effort

A number of considerations indicate regional, as distinguished from Washington, direction of this campaign. Not only is the problem essentially peculiar to a region distant from Washington, but its solution depends upon close observation of the conduct of the campaign in the field. The campaign is local, not national in scope. It must be idiomatic in idea as well as in language and its conception in and direction from a regional office in El Paso or Albuquerque will, it is believed, contribute more to its success than any other single factor.

Sources

U.S. Census
 War Production Board
 Bureau of Indian Affairs
 Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs
 Oliver La Farge
 Standard Rate and Data Service - Radio Section
 N. W. Ayers Newspaper Directory
 Paul Horgan