

140 - (LATIN AMERICAN SECTION)

140 (Latin Amer.  
Section)

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4 April 1946 EC

MEMORANDUM

TO: Louis Swenson  
FROM: Charles Taff  
SUBJECT: Recent Developments in the Latin American Section

A. Personnel

1. Lester Farnum left UNRRA on 16 March and has been replaced by William V. Stalew.
2. For the period of Mr. Torres' absence, Mr. Schenker has been devoting special attention to the activities of the Section and I have been acting as Chief.
3. As you will note from the attached cable, we have finally revised the per diem rates for our Missions in Latin America. Efforts are now under way to make these rates effective as of the dates of the establishment of the Missions. We hope to get a decision on this matter very shortly. For your information, I am also attaching a copy of the old schedule of per diem rates.

B. Sayre Mission

Messrs. Sayre and Torres left headquarters on 26 February to visit Brazil, Uruguay, Mexico, Venezuela and Chile to take up with these governments questions pertaining to their contributions to UNRRA. Due to recent developments, they have changed their original plans and left for Argentina on 2 April. As yet we have received no final report from them as to their activities in Brazil. We do know, however, that:

1. the rate of conversion of the cruzeiro to the dollar and vice-versa has been fixed at 20 to 1;
2. the entire 1946 installment has been allocated and committed. I refer you to cables 490 and 493 from Rio which give the details on these commitments;
3. Messrs. Henson and Schenker are presently engaged in setting up a basic outline and priority schedule for procurement against the third installment of the Brazilian contribution and also their second contribution;



4. The Mixed Commission in Brazil has agreed to expedite the delivery of cotton goods to UNRRA. The precise terms of this agreement, however, have not yet been received by this office;
5. No definite decision has been reached as to when the third installment of the contribution will be made available or as to the exact amount of the new contribution which Brazil has agreed to make. Mr. Sayre has indicated that this figure will be "above \$10,000,000".

C. Records <sup>and</sup> Documents

1. As of the date of your departure, this Section had no formal record system on either procurement or shipments. To remedy this situation, we got up forms S-125 and S-126 and dispatched them to all field offices. Both forms request summary data with respect to procurement and shipment against each Request to Supply; form S-125 deals with the contribution left with the member governments, and S-126 with free funds. A copy of each form is attached hereto.
2. It was expected that initial reports would be slow in coming into headquarters. To date we have heard from Pareja, Moore, and Green; Gordon and Tapia have yet to return these forms. In addition to forms S-125 and S-126, the Section has recently drawn up form S-142 which is serving as a control record on individual shipments.

D. Operations

Except as noted below in our discussion of the Latin American countries, we have not been confronted with any serious problems of procurement. However, the questions pertaining to shipping continue to be vexing and difficult. In truth, our agents are not fully complying with the terms of Bureau of Supply Memorandum No. 31 dealing with shipments from Latin America. It appears that in some cases our agents have even gone so far as to arrange for shipping themselves without first contacting the Ocean Shipping Division here at headquarters. There is still considerable room for improvement in their forwarding to us semi-monthly reports of availabilities and their handling of documents. The terms of the memorandum are clear and in conjunction with the boys at Ocean Shipping we are doing our utmost to obtain full compliance by our agents. We give below a summary of procurement activities in the different countries.

1. Mexico

- a. Total funds made available to the Mixed Commission now amount to 5,000,000 pesos. This sum has been entirely obligated.



- b. Mr. Pareja has been authorized to expend up to \$1,800,000 on horse meat. Payment will be made in pesos from the Mexican contribution if such funds are available at the time of payment. However, we have agreed to provide such free funds as are necessary to cover the balance of the purchase price not provided for by the contribution. In view of the possibility that no funds of the contribution will be available it may well be that we shall have to cover the entire purchase with free funds.
- c. Letters of Credit authorizing the payment of \$140,000 from free funds have been established to cover the procurement of various medical supplies in Mexico.

## 2. Cuba

- a. We have been faced with serious difficulty re the Cuban contribution on two problems: (1) What is the non-convertible quota of the Cuban contribution; and (2) How shall this fund be expended. Dr. Gutierrez, Chairman of the Mixed Commission, has advised George Moore, Mr. Schenker and myself personally that the non-convertible quota should consist of a total of \$200,000 as agreed to by the Sayre Mission and an additional \$1,000,000 which President Grau originally agreed would be returned to headquarters as part of our reimbursement for sugar procured in 1945. He was also under the impression that the Cuban Government, itself, would exclusively determine how this was to be expended. Mr. Schenker advised him that we may be prepared to spend the \$1,200,000 in Cuba if they could provide us with supplies which we could use in our relief and rehabilitation programs but that the determination as to what was desirable was to be made jointly by the representatives of Cuba and the Administration. Dr. Gutierrez agreed to forward to us a summary list valued at about \$2,500,000 of supplies in the immediate future.

## 3. Costa Rica

The Costa Rica Government presented a contribution to UNRRA of \$88,967. However, we continue to have difficulty in translating this contribution into supplies. All materials that have been offered to us to date have been either unfit for human consumption or price-rates that are utterly prohibited. This matter is still open.

## 4. Uruguay

In Uruguay, too, we are faced with the problem of translating their \$520,000 contribution into supplies. We had hopes of obtaining much needed cheese but Wesley Green seems to have run into some difficult political snags. We are hoping that Messrs. Sayre and Torres will be able to resolve the problem in their current negotiations.



5. Brazil

The basic problems dealing with the Brazilian contribution are being handled by the Sayre Mission. I wish only to note here that we have recently procured some \$60,000 of U. S. Government owned surplus property in Brazil. Material bought consists primarily of raw and semi-fabricated materials, i.e. steel plates, wire cable, etc.

6. Procurement in other countries has been proceeding smoothly and without serious difficulty of any kind.

CTeff/lis

FORM AD-87  
(25 FEB 1946)

UNRRA

CROSS REFERENCE SHEET

DATE

20 September 1944

CROSS INDEX

140 (Camps Div. Functions)

TO

Bernard L. Gladieux

FROM

E. R. Fryer

SUMMARY

In accordance with your request of 15 September, there is attached a statement of functions of the Camps Division, and a series of Rhetorical Questions relative to Camp Operations, for use of the UNRRA Mission to Latin America.

RECORD FILED

252 (Latin American Mission)

TYPIST

fmw

DATE

11 May 1948



## MEMORANDUM

140-(Latin American Desk)

TO : Morse Salisbury  
Room 1018

FROM : Leonidas Avilés

SUBJECT : Information for Latin America : A 4 month old baby who has grown and request a lot of things

Although I came to work here August 15, I first got an office, a typewriter and a secretary in October, so I don't know if the 4 month designation accurately describes the age of the "Latin American Desk" as I have been calling it. When I first started this work the almost all-exclusive activity consisted in getting out the fortnightly letter in the three languages. However, at the start I realized that this was only one avenue of approach limited to a restricted public, and furthermore, because of the long process involved, when it reaches even this public it is only good for their reference files. Also, the seeping down process to the general public by this method is slow and has many hurdles to jump.

For these two reasons I started to explore other avenues of approach, such as press articles, radio programs, pamphlets, film distribution, etc. From the onset it became clear that the Latin-American desk had to utilize all the various media used by the Public Information Office, if it was to accomplish its job. In addition, the different units in our Office began to look upon the Latin-American desk as a good outlet for certain projects they were working out.

I think you will agree with me that these developments were only natural when one stops to consider what "Latin-America" means. There are 18 nations and more than 100 million ~~people~~ people involve, excluding Argentina. These countries are committed to a contribution of approximately 42 million dollars for the first contribution, of which 13 million dollars has been made available, leaving over 28 million dollars still to be turned over, with the second contribution of 42 million dollars pending. That means during the coming year the figure of over 70 million dollars is involved in this Latin-American perspective. And that's not hay!

Up to this point this humble "desk" has started quite a number of pans frying to try to meet <sup>the</sup> obligations which "Latin America" requires. To mention a few : I have placed a number of articles, and have requests for more, with the Feature Service of the OIAA; sent articles direct to Latin American magazines and newspapers who have used these and requested more; sent material to short-wave radio commentators; which has been used (this aspect of the work needs an alive regular contact to catch certain situations as they come up), as well as material for dramatic programs, forums, etc., which are in the process of being drawn up for

✓ 140-Avilés, Leonidas  
✓ Latin America Area - 500



use and require attention; am working on the publication of a pictorial pamphlet; working out film distribution; discussing with and advising the Missions in Latin-America on public~~ation~~ information activity. How this has been done is a secret from which you can get an inkling from my non-turned in over time sheet and the assistance of a secretary who ended up sick in bed.

If what is already in the works is to be complete and capitalized on, if new avenues continue to open up as they have to date - some organizational steps will have to be taken immediately. Either we go ahead to the proper organizational set-up or this work will stagnate. In other words, your 4 month old baby has come of age and should be organized as a Latin-American Unit of the Public Information Office. For this I would like to make a number of proposals :

STAFF : Unit Chief  
Two writers(Spanish & Portuguese)  
Unit Secretary  
Two stenographer-typist(Spanish & Portuguese)

A New York contact agent ( Up to now Carlos Garcia-Palacios has been used as a consultant in this work as well as other matters; he should be used on a regular basis with a retaining fee covering this activity and some other work for which he is so valuable.)

Public Information reps attached to the Missions in Latin-America, particularly in Mexico, Colombia and Brazil, and also Chile, where we do not as yet have a Mission, and there is a man, Mario Vergara, who has already given us excellent assistance.

In addition to this regular staff, the unit should be in a position to continue to utilize outside writers for special assignments.

The work of the Unit will include the following :

1. Follow daily developments in order to provide spot news to short-wave radio news service of the OIAA and the press associations; also to keep the radio commentators in NY informed.
2. Prepare press releases in Spanish & Portuguese for Latin-American press and press associations. These would be short stories of three to five hundred words that can be used within two or three days after release, using cabled in stories and they will serve also to complement the short items moved on the press association wires.
3. Prepare and place feature articles with magazines, newspapers and feature services.
4. Prepare material and place ~~xxxx~~ for radio programs on short-wave stations in NY and on local stations in the Latin-American countries.



5. Establish regular contact with local press and radio in the Latin-American countries so that material will be used and requests for material forthcoming. Coordinate the activities of Public Information reps in these countries.
6. Change the fortnightly letter to a monthly publication similar to our Monthly Review, but keeping its present size and format, to give a round-up of our manifold activities.
7. Publish pamphlets.
8. Arrange film distribution in Latin-America.

In addition there are two projects on which I would like to start working at : (1) Organization of picture exhibits in galleries, universities, cultural centers, etc., in the main cities of Latin-America. (2) Organization of tours of small groups of Latin-American people to countries where UNHRA is operating, not only with a view to utilize these tours for Public Information purposes, but also with a view to bring back to Latin-America the experiences and lessons that the application of new methods in the fields of Agriculture, Industrial, Health and Welfare rehabilitation have for all these countries. The people for these tours should be specialist in the fields mentioned.

All these recommendations are being made on the basis of my short experience with UNHRA and my general knowledge of Latin-America, but within a short time after the unit begins to operate I think it would be advisable for me to make a tour of Latin America in order to get some first hand knowledge of the reaction down there to UNHRA and to see in the field the results of our operations.

While these proposals are in the process of being discussed, may I most strongly recommend that I get the assistance of a Spanish writer. I have someone in mind, Manuel Crespo, who lives in Washington, D.C. and is well qualified for the job.

I should also like to recommend for the Portuguese writer, Jose Campos Mello, at present working with UNHRA in the Bureau of Supplies.

cc: to: Louis Swenson, Chief Procurement Coordination Division

Marie Ferrario, Assistant to Diplomatic Adviser