

## SPANISH-SPEAKING GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES

*THE SPANISH SPEAKING IN THE UNITED STATES: A GUIDE TO MATERIALS.* CABINET COMMITTEE ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPANISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE. (Detroit, Mich.: Blaine-Ethridge Books, 1975. Pp. 175.)

*SPANISH-SPEAKING GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES.* By JOHN BURMA. (Detroit, Mich.: Blaine-Ethridge Books, 1974. Pp. 314.)

These two books have in common only three things: they have the same publisher, are both reprints, and both concern Spanish-speaking residents of the United States. There the similarity ends. The first is a research tool for those interested in further study and is a reprinting of a compilation made by the Cabinet Committee on Opportunities for Spanish-Speaking People. A brief new foreword, by Francisco Cordasco, points out that this book is "compact, yet . . . comprehensive, . . . the best concise bibliographical guide to the enormous literature on Spanish-speaking peoples in the United States." The new printing resulted from the earlier Government Printing Office edition having gone out of print and the new publisher's belief that such a bibliography should be available, in view of the fact that it contains useful lists of books, monographs, articles, dissertations, audio-visual materials, published serials, Spanish language radio and TV stations, and an index. Mexican-American listings clearly predominate in these compilations, reflecting the existing status of bibliography concerning the *hispanoparlante*.

Upon inspection of the listings, it is as hard for this reviewer to determine the criteria for inclusion or exclusion of works as it was perhaps for the compilers to reach these initial decisions. Many items seem to have been omitted, and some nongermane or marginal listings are found. More surprising is the inclusion of much professional educational material in proportion to history items. Of the sections included, that which devotes seventeen pages to a listing of radio and TV stations that have some Spanish language programs seems of least value.

Burma's book has only six pages added as a new preface to the Duke University Press edition of 1954. In this addition he states the matter succinctly when he indicates that now "this volume has perhaps its greatest value as a history, a broad record of the life and times of a social group as it existed shortly before the beginning of a period of some of the greatest social change this country has yet known."

The original brief study was presented in six chapters and an appendix. The first chapter concerned the oldest and most conservative Mexican-American group of the U.S. in which the descendants of Spanish colonials have greatly influenced regional history; namely, the Hispanos of New Mexico. A second chapter deals with the Mexican migrant whose arrival in the Southwest was the

result of both attractive and expulsive forces. Some were "wetbacks," others were short-term contract laborers, but most were a product of the continuing northward movement of Mexicans that had started in the colonial period and grew in intensity, particularly after 1900.

The third chapter, inappropriately titled "Major Mexican-American Institutions," concerns educational problems, religion, the family, housing, health, social classes, and the press. It is an effort to give perspective to certain problems which are further developed in chapter four, "Some Current Problems."

In chapter five the author moves off to treat the Filipino-American who, for the sake of convenience, is considered Spanish-speaking. Though some of this minority group came for an education and others to engage in "stoop labor" at a time when the Philippine Islands were a U.S. dependency, by the date of publication of this book the Filipino-American constituted a rather insignificant factor in U.S. population. This was in part due to the unbalanced sex ratio of immigrating Filipinos, men outnumbering women by about 20-to-1 or even more.

The sixth and final chapter treats the Puerto Ricans in New York, since, for all practical purposes, that was the only area in which they had established themselves in 1954. Puerto Rican immigration resulted in great measure from a high birth rate and a decreasing standard of living on the home island, and, in the slum sections of New York City, Puerto Ricans were able to reproduce many culture patterns of the "old country." Written at a time when the concept of cultural pluralism was first being suggested as an alternative to assimilation, Burma was early in stating: "This relatively new approach to the problems of divergent cultures postulates that a temporary selective heterogeneity is the best avenue of approach to an ultimately larger homogeneity and that every culture has many valuable aspects which should be retained by the immigrant group or even incorporated into the larger culture—the goal being progressively more tolerant integration of diverse cultural tendencies" (p. 183). Since this book was originally written before Castro's takeover in Cuba, there is no consideration of that minority except in the new preface.

Finally there is an appendix, which by any standard is intrusive. It is entitled "Los Hermanos Penitentes: A Case Study of the Cultural Survival of Flagellation." These eleven pages seem to have nothing to do with the theme of the book, nor is there any new information concerning the Penitentes of New Mexico. Burma made his best statement on this topic when he wrote that "within a generation it is probable that Penitente processions, at least with scourging, will be a matter of cultural history only."

In summary, though the original Burma book was good for its day, so much has happened to the Spanish-speaking in the U.S. that it seems a new book is needed rather than a reprinting of much that is long out of date. Though the earlier publication represented a convenient up-to-date sociological summary with a bit of historical background, the reprint is only history and is neither very complete nor comprehensive, having lost the immediacy of its original intent.

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