CHAPTER FOUR

The Long Reach of the American Empire

Japanese Mexicans, US Hegemony, and Mexican Propaganda, 1941–1945

The Axis powers have set up in Mexico a subversive organization so formidable in its ramifications and so efficient in its operations that the stability of the Mexican Government is at stake.

—"Secret Memorandum for the Chief, Latin American Section," June 2, 1941

In October 1942 a poster could be seen throughout Mexico depicting three individuals hanged by the neck, and with the following text, "*Así es el nuevo orden nazi*" [This is the New Nazi Order]. The poster, titled "Nazi New Order," by Taller de Gráfica Popular (Popular Graphic Art Workshop, or People's Graphic Workshop, TGP) artist Robert Mallary, was one of the first lithographs created by TGP that promoted the propaganda campaign of the Mexican government for the war effort (figure 4.1). The use of artists and their ability to reach and speak to the masses was part of an overall propaganda blitz that Mexico deployed in the early 1940s to rally the country for war and to silence US concerns of Mexican apathy toward the war effort. Even when Mexico declared war in May 1942, the United States remained unconvinced that the Mexican public supported such declarations. After Mexico announced its proclamation of war, a US-based writer assessed the situation and wrote the following:

> Does this decision mean that the generality of Mexicans are persuaded, that they now trust the United States, that they unitedly believe that Mexico's interest is served by joint action with the United States in ending the threat of the Axis, in working out a free brotherhood of democracies in the western world?[1]

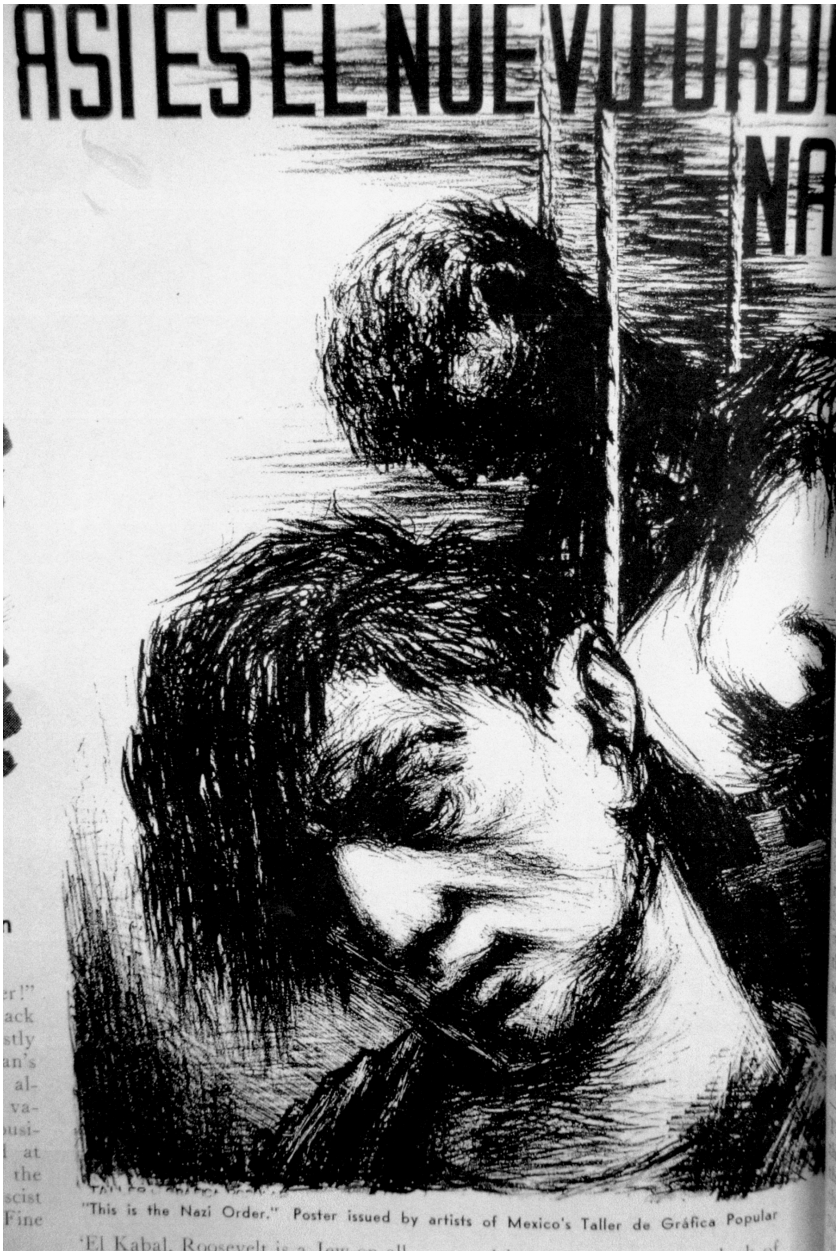

Figure 4.1. "Así es el nuevo orden nazi" [This is the Nazi Order]. The poster, titled "Nazi New Order," is by Taller de Gráfica Popular artist Robert Mallary. Taller de Grafica Popular created many images to promote the war effort and reach the masses in Mexico. Source: Verna Carleton Millan, "Propaganda War in Mexico," *Inter-American Monthly*, September 1943, 16–19.

Suspicion and concern from the Mexican public remained high in the early years of the 1940s, so much so that the country showed little enthusiasm to get involved with European or US affairs. Unlike the previous decade when Lázaro Cárdenas astutely rallied an eager nation against US aggression and imperialism as he nationalized American-owned land and the oil industry, Manuel Ávila Camacho faced a country reluctant to get involved in a war whose aims remained unclear to most Mexicans. As Camacho took office in 1940 he faced a public with varied views on the war in Europe where, on the one hand, many felt a sense of indifference toward Europe and its ongoing conflict. On the other hand, a significant portion of the Mexican public understood the dangers of the European conflict and the need for Mexico to make a strong stance against not only the aggression of fascism but also the tyranny of Nazism spreading across Europe.

This chapter examines the propaganda blitz that was launched by the United States and Mexico after each had entered into World War II. Prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor the Japanese in Mexico existed under a shield of invisibility partly due to their smaller numbers compared with other Asian groups, but primarily attributed to their assimilation and mixed marriages. However, this invisibility quickly disintegrated and their demonization commenced. This reconfiguration of the Japanese in Mexico is due in large measure to a barrage of propaganda and attributed to individual journalists and government agencies, who, for propaganda purposes, racialized the Mexican Indian and the Japanese so that any Indian might be a subversive Japanese and any Japanese could pass as Indian to hide among Mexico's populace. Individuals from the other Axis nations, such as Germans and Italians, did not encounter the level of hatred or racialization experienced by the Japanese in the Western hemisphere. The racial discourse of World War II had a distinct *otherness* attached to it that existed long before the outbreak of the war. The treatment of the Japanese at the hemispheric level is connected specifically to the racialization of the Japanese in the United States. As a result, US hegemony blanketed the hemisphere with a racial ideology that viewed Japanese not only as the enemy but also as inferior. When the United States entered World War II it unleashed a massive propaganda machine to sway public opinion and to deal with intractable Latin American countries to procure the allegiance of every country in the hemisphere.

Part of this campaign required that the hemisphere remain in a constant state of fear of Axis infiltration. This was partially achieved by journalists such as Betty Kirk (discussed later), and the United States—supported *Inter-American Monthly* and *En Guardia* popular magazines,

which initiated a hail of negative articles and images of suspected Japanese "fifth columns" and Japanese saboteurs disguised as Mexican Indians, merchants, or barbers. These magazines saturated the US and Latin American newsstands. In this manner and at a hemispheric level, every Japanese was racially profiled as a potential threat to national security. Although Mexico became a strong ally of the United States and the war effort, it often found itself at odds with the United States over its Japanese population. The Mexican population simply did not view the Japanese in the same light that the Americans did. The Mexican population did not display the same nationalistic fervor as the Americans after Pearl Harbor and for good reason: Pearl Harbor was not Mexican territory. As President Manuel Ávila Camacho and his secretaría de gobernación (secretary of the interior), Miguel Alemán, acquiesced to US demands to hunt down any Axis infiltrators and limited civil liberties during the war, they simultaneously balanced such efforts by accommodating Japanese Mexicans whenever possible.

The Long Reach of the American Empire

By the beginning of the 1940s Mexico had a population of Issei, Nisei, Sansei, and a smaller group of Japanese nationals with diplomatic cover.[2] A definitive number of Japanese in Mexico is difficult to gauge, especially for the 1940s. Several different rationalizations attempt to account for the flaws of the 1940 Mexican Census and its inability to provide reliable data on foreigners in Mexico. According to sources, the 1940 Census was never fully released by the Mexican government, primarily due to a lack of funds to publish the materials.[3] Delia Salazar Anaya, a Mexican demographer, indicates the same census failed to accurately enumerate the foreign-born population because many refused to identify their legal nationality due to the ensuing global conflict.[4] More significant was confusion over how Mexico defined nationality.

When war erupted in Europe with Germany's invasion of Poland in 1939, trade with Latin America became disrupted and "fifth column" fears were heightened throughout the region. From the US perspective, such an economic disturbance might bring political destabilization and push Mexico and other South American countries toward the Axis powers.[5] Overall, nearly 6,000 Japanese nationals and 13,000 Mexicans of Japanese ancestry resided in Mexico on the eve of Pearl Harbor.[6] The small number of sources on Japanese in Mexico neglect to enumerate the Japanese who became naturalized citizens and their offspring. When these numbers

are taken into account the combined Japanese population in Mexico is over 19,000, a significant revision from sources that only tallied Japanese nationals or naturalized citizens. On the whole, the Japanese population posed no numerical threat and certainly was not large enough to shift demographics or change *la Mexicanidad*.

The epigraph at the beginning of this chapter appeared in a secret memorandum in early summer 1941 from the US war department's Latin American section. The four-page memorandum outlined the general Axis threat in Latin America, which in turn, from the perspective of US officials, posed a danger to the United States. According to this report, "The extent and effectiveness of the Axis forces may be estimated from the following brief summary of their organization and activities. Statements concerning a few of those activities are not based on documentary proof at present available to this office, but are the result of analysis of trends and opinions of observers on the ground."[7] Overall, the report lays out various groups and organizations whose potential for subversive activities raised a security risk if not 'checked.' The obvious groups mentioned in the report included German immigrants and naturalized German Mexicans, Italians, and Japanese. The report also mentions threats from fascists groups such as the Spanish Falange and individuals attached to or who supported the Nazis party and any affiliation with the Gestapo. However, thrown into this mix were Mexican labor groups such as the Confederación Trabajadores Mexicanos, the Mexican Communist Party (Partida Comunista Mexicanos, PCM), and so-called patriotic groups. Indeed, the report stated, "It is the Mexican who is in the best position to do serious harm to the United States and the cause of democracy."[8] This concern regarding Mexico reverberated throughout the World War II period and attempts to rectify the perception that Mexico was inundated with subversives and provocateurs manifested on multiple levels. One of those manifestations was a coordinated propaganda campaign unlike anything ever seen before that placed Mexico at the forefront of both the Allied and Axis nations as they jockeyed for influence with Mexico.

For the forty years leading up to World War II, the Japanese were depicted, almost universally, as enemies to the state and the Western hemisphere. This image was carefully crafted in the United States and disseminated throughout the region. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, US influence in the Americas was nearly absolute through its military, economic, and political authority. Indeed, one scholar indicates that the United States "sent warships into Latin American ports a staggering 5,980 times between 1869–1897 to protect

American commercial interests."[9] Just as staggering was the economic control of US corporations over the natural resources of Latin America, in particular Mexico, where by the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution, US companies controlled nearly all the mining and oil industry. As a result, many Latin American countries were influenced by the onslaught of US propaganda and took punitive measures against their Japanese populations. However, some countries like Peru needed very little nudging and deployed anti-Japanese legislation in their country long before World War II. As Daniel M. Masterson points out, Peru, like the United States and Canada, began to develop anti-Asian legislation in the early twentieth century directed primarily at Chinese and Japanese in the country. Peru's anti-Asian efforts culminated with the passage of its 1936 Immigration Act that prohibited the immigration by "racial groups" and other restrictions simply meant to discourage the movement of Japanese to Peru.[10] Based on anti-Japanese sentiments throughout the Americas, an overarching pattern of racialization of the Japanese at the hemispheric level emerged before the 1940s, which fueled the Japanese hysteria during World War II.

When the United States and Mexico entered World War II in 1941 and 1942, respectively, the US government employed few people with a solid understanding of Mexico beyond what was read through popular magazines or newspapers. As a result, US military intelligence relied heavily on individuals whose "knowledge" was gleaned from having lived for extended periods of time in Mexico, whether or not these individuals truly had an understanding of all the nuances of Mexican society. In many ways journalist Betty Kirk (discussed later) falls into this category. Furthermore, Kirk and others were an extension of a well-designed official US propaganda machine seeping through the writings of US and foreign journalists based in the United States, Mexico, or Latin America. This cadre of individuals who wrote scathing articles on the presence and dangers of Japanese living in the Americas pushed an anti-Japanese agenda through the use of reportorial journalism.

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, reports of a Japanese invasion of the Americas substantially increased in newspapers and US government reports, as did the hysteria. An examination of many of these reports indicates that most were the result of overzealous and uninformed US military officers, biased journalists, unsubstantiated reports of Japanese sleeper cells, and the panic caused by anything that resembled a Japanese saboteur, including the morphing of the Chamula and Otomi Indians into Japanese waiting to undermine US and Mexican national security. In fact, American fears of a Japanese force infiltrating into Mexico are discernable

as early as the first decade of the twentieth century with dozens of articles suggesting Japan's intent to invade.[11] Regardless of any solid evidence, the first two decades of the twentieth century witnessed a flood of information, mostly based on rumor that alluded to an imminent attack by the Japanese and their desire to establish a military base somewhere along the Pacific Coast. On this last point, the Japanese were certainly desirous to establish a military presence in the Western hemisphere to counter the US military presence in East Asia. As mentioned earlier, Mexico used this to gain concessions from the United States without fully committing itself to any such Japanese designs. Overall, the hysteria and frenzy over motives of the Japanese in the Americas prior to the 1940s laid the basis for their treatment during World War II.

The FBI created a detailed report titled "Plan of Japanese Invasion through the Republic of Mexico." The invasion report was part of the 468-page analysis on Mexico developed in 1942, with sections devoted to each Axis nation and the threat it posed to the United States if and when it decided to use Mexico as a conduit for an invasion of the United States. Similar to my earlier comments, these invasion plans were not the result of Mexico or the United States intercepting military plans for an invasion, but rather was based on data gathered through hearsay and newspaper articles circulating rumors of invasions that the FBI included in its report as conclusive evidence. For example, while en route for internment in the United States in February 1942, Captain Kyoho Hamanaka, the Japanese naval attaché in Mexico, "voiced his implicit belief in Japanese victory and the extension of Japanese influence in Latin America."[12] Hamanaka further explained what his government could do to Mexico and other Latin American countries in its desire to extend control and boastfully iterated that Japan could send one battleship, two heavy and two light cruisers, ten destroyers, and one airplane carrier to the port of Acapulco, Mexico, and land and maintain a force of 10,000 soldiers. Hamanaka's very words were incorporated into the FBI report with a detailed map that illustrated Hamanaka's verbal invasion plan.

The FBI also used a February 2, 1942, newspaper article from *La Opinion*, a Mexican language newspaper published in Los Angeles, California, articulating another Japanese invasion plan. According to the writer of the article, Waverly Root, the Japanese would cut communications and advance northward along the Mexican coast and with a fleet of small fishing boats formerly operating in Mexican waters, in conjunction with Japanese naval units, seize the Gulf of California and the Peninsula of Lower California. At Navojoa, Sonora, the Japanese force could establish an air base

and with the Japanese fifth column together with Nazis in the area, aid in the military operations. The Japanese would then disembark troops at Tortuga Bay and aim to capture Ensenada, Baja California, from which point they would attack San Diego, California. The source used for this newspaper article was the Syndicate of Railroad Workers in Western Mexico, who relayed their information to President Manuel Ávila Camacho.[13] The FBI report also contains information that resembles material from Betty Kirk's *Covering the Mexican Front*:

> Japan's military mission is to open a gateway through the states of Sonora and Sinaloa for an attack upon the southern border of the United States. These states sparsely populated and undefended, were honeycombed with Japanese "farmers" and "fishermen," and the Japanese fishing fleet, operating in Magdalena Bay, knew every inlet and cove.[14]

Both of the scenarios just mentioned were plausible, but unlikely. Japan was not interested in invading the Americas. Japan was interested in keeping Mexico neutral and out of the camp of the United States. Such invasions as those discussed by Kyoho Hamanaka and *La Opinion* countered such objectives. If Hamanaka had actually uttered the plans above, it can be characterized as a captured sailor boasting and venting to his captors. As a trained naval officer and attaché, chances are slim that Hamanaka would have divulged plans for invasion of the United States. In addition, the article in *La Opinion* plays upon the fears of the Mexican and American public by resurrecting rumors that had been circulating for decades about imaginary Japanese designs for the region. For example, for decades leading up to World War II, the US media, government officials, and military intelligence often wrote that Japanese fishing boats in Mexico were actually Japanese naval spy ships in disguise. According to these reports the Japanese boats, rather than fishing, conducted reconnoiter operations and were mapping the coastlines for an invasion. And in Navojoa, Sonora, rumors circulated that it was a bastion for Japanese soldiers and fifth column elements. The importance of such reports lies not in their veracity, but in how such reports and newspaper articles were a catalyst and source for a massive report by the FBI on Mexico with detailed invasion plans based primarily on rumor and allusion. Additionally, such reports coupled with a nervous public fueled the hysteria of Japanese fifth columns and an imminent invasion, which in turn configured all Japanese into saboteurs, imperial soldiers, subversives, and terrorists well depicted in the propaganda literature disseminated by the Office of Inter-American Affairs (OIAA),

Figure 4.2. The title of the article where this picture appeared was "Jap Threat to Latin America." The actual caption read "Japanese children in class of secret school. Children are often taken to school after midnight to absorb Japanese ideology from saboteurs rattling books. Schools are thorn in the flesh of multi-racial Brazil, whose government tries hard to unify her forty-million children." *Inter-American Monthly*, June 1942.

reports by the FBI, or unreliable intelligence gathering. And as figure 4.2 illustrates, even school children were depicted as possible threats to the Americas.

A Prelude to War

During the 1930s and early 1940s, hemisphere-wide initiatives were introduced to relieve tensions created by US foreign policy decisions that had rattled numerous Latin American nations during the first half of the

twentieth century. First, Franklin D. Roosevelt announced the Good Neighbor Policy in his inaugural address on March 3, 1933, which was reinforced by his secretary of state, Cordell Hull, at the Seventh Inter-American Conference held in Montevideo in December 1933 outlining a new US strategy of nonintervention.[15] As US foreign policy shifted away from direct intervention and the global status quo began to unravel, the United States found it prudent to extinguish any lingering animosity to lay the foundation for a Western hemispheric front against Nazism and fascism. As early as 1936 the United States put in motion its hemispheric plan for solidarity by sponsoring the Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Peace held in Buenos Aires. The result of this conference was the "principle of consultation," which ultimately meant that an aggression against one American nation would be considered an aggression against all.[16] Put another way, collective security of the hemisphere was emerging due to the threat from abroad. An early effort at this approach came in September 1939 with the Panama Conference where a US resolution was submitted and approved that became known as the General Declaration of Neutrality. This declaration of neutrality was coupled with the Declaration of Panama, another US initiative that created a security zone for the Western hemisphere.[17]

Developments in Europe brought major changes to the Western hemisphere. In late 1939 the United States and Latin American countries were more concerned with keeping the war away from the region than with its defense. Thus, as Europe plunged into war Western European nations such as Great Britain and France immediately recognized the importance of the Western hemisphere and the potential for Axis penetration. As a result, in 1939 the British and French created the Inter-Allied Propaganda Committee to counter German propaganda in Mexico and sway Mexican opinion toward the Allies.[18] The fall of France to Hitler in May 1940 increased the possibility of Axis penetration in the Western hemisphere. To counter this possibility the 1940 Act of Havana declared and rejected the transfer of possessions between European powers and the taking of European territories in the Caribbean if necessary to protect the hemisphere from German encroachment.

Mexico also viewed the changing global atmosphere as a means to seek economic concessions in order to relieve the pressure from the United States that stemmed from continuing claims against it, but Mexico also saw this as an opportunity to commit to the fight against tyranny. By the end of the Cárdenas administration many within and without Mexico felt Cárdenas' social programs had leaned too far to the left. In fact, nearly half

of the state governors in Mexico were in opposition to President Cárdenas and his social initiatives. The 1940 election of Manuel Ávila Camacho ushered in a center right president for Mexico to the pleasure of the United States and business community.

In December 1940, shortly after the election of Camacho, negotiations between the United States and Mexico began for a defense agreement and the construction of naval bases in Mexico. On December 26, 1940, the Mexican government gave permission to the United States Army to use Mexican airfields en route to the Panama Canal. On March 7, 1941, the Foreign minister of Mexico, Ezequiel Padilla, announced that Mexico would aid in the defense of the Western hemisphere should any nation in the Americas be attacked by a foreign power. In June 1941 Mexico solidified its position with the Allies and announced the Douglas-Weichers Agreement, which stipulated that Mexico would sell all strategic minerals to the United States. On July 10, 1941, Mexico prohibited the exportation of "basic and strategic materials" to all non-American countries as well as to any country that had not established similar export restrictions.[19] As the United States strengthened ties with Mexico it began a mobilization effort that included the direct penetration into the political, cultural and economic spheres of Mexico. It also meant that American aid and assistance was turned off and on at will depending on the level of cooperation and alignment of Latin American countries with US policies.

Propaganda Leviathans

During the late 1930s and early 1940s the United States mobilized to counter Japanese penetration into Mexico. As a pretext the United States pushed hemispheric cooperation, development, and modernization. What erupted was a massive propaganda war with US penetration into Mexico and the rest of Latin America to saturate the region with US goals and views on the war. However, this campaign of words and views was much more than simply convincing Mexico and the rest of Latin America that the Allied fight was the right fight. The United States embarked on a mission to penetrate and change Mexican culture to make Mexico more conducive to economic infiltration and social conditioning by American corporations and US government agencies. Numerous US government agencies infiltrated Mexico during World War II, but the Office of Inter-American Affairs stands out due to its sheer size and efforts in Mexico and other regions of Latin America. It should also be recalled that the OIAA

had a predecessor and relied on this historical past to create the largest propaganda machine during World War II.

In many ways, the establishment of the OIAA in 1941 was fashioned after, or at the very least, resembled two entities. The first was the Committee on Public Information (CPI), a US propaganda office that emerged as the result of US entry into World War I in April 1918. At the time CPI was the largest propaganda unit in existence and became the prototype for the development of propaganda for the sole purpose of swaying public opinion toward war. One of the major achievements of CPI was its deep incursion into US newspapers and its sweeping campaign to gain the confidence of the American public for the war aims of the United States. Further, CPI published the *Official Bulletin*, a state-supported newspaper in the United States that reached a circulation of 118,000 at its height.[20] Similar to the journalists used during World War II by the OIAA, CPI had a cadre of journalists willing to not only write for the US government but also slant their stories toward the aims of US policy, collude with the government to censor information, and lie to the American public.[21] From the position of CPI its effectiveness at utilizing the US press was an extraordinary success, but after the war writers and journalists hit back recognizing that their credibility as trustworthy reporters of the truth hung in the balance. The backlash against the saturation of propaganda from World War I resulted in journalists and newspaper owners taking back control of their news reporting.[22] As successful as CPI was in winning the minds of the US public, it did little in swaying public opinion or enlisting the help of the other republics in the Americas. The short duration of US involvement in World War I may have contributed to its limited aims regarding the reach of its propaganda message. However, before the outbreak of World War I another organization emerged that in conjunction with the development of CPI, provided US strategists of World War II with another model to shape their propaganda machine.

The second entity, the Pan American Union (PAU), was created initially under the name "International Union of American Republics," in 1890 at the First International American Conference in Washington, DC, and at the behest of the United States.[23] The PAU was under the control of the United States, specifically the secretary of state, with an executive committee made up of the US secretary of state and four members taken in rotation from the Latin American countries. As stated in its 1923–27 report, the PAU's mission was to work cooperatively for the "broader economic, financial, and cultural interests of all the Republics of this continent and prompt collection and distribution of commercial data

and information."[24] Thus, under the auspices of the US government the PAU reached into all sectors of commercial and cultural interests in Latin America. I submit that the OIAA was simply a wartime version of the PAU and adopted many of its objectives and ideas:

> The Pan American Union is in constant touch with educational and scientific institutions, philanthropic associations, and commercial organizations, placing at their disposal all the facilities of the Pan American Union in the solution of the problems which they are called upon to solve, and at the same time endeavoring to bring them into close touch with one another in order that they may be mutually and increasingly helpful. The contacts thus formed afford effective means of bringing about better understanding and closer relations between the nations and peoples of the Western hemisphere.[25]

Other points in common between the OIAA and PAU include the OIAA's affiliation with the US Department of State and that the PAU issued a monthly publication titled the *Bulletin* in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. In fact, many of the goals of the *Bulletin* appear to have been adopted by the OIAA sponsored *Inter-American Monthly*, which "continues to be the official record of actual conditions and trends, both material and cultural, in each of the countries members of the PAU, particularly with respect to commerce, legislation, education, public health, labor, social services, industry, and international communications by land, sea, and air."[26] Furthermore, the PAU and OIAA considered their publications as authoritative and keenly insightful to the Latin American way of life as stated first by the general director of the PAU:

> That it is [Bulletin] widely regarded as the authoritative interpreter of the Latin American Republics is shown by an increased use of its material in the government departments of the American Republics; in the extensive reprints constantly appearing in the Latin American and United States Press; in the growing desire for its cooperation in movements related to *inter-American affairs*, public and private; and in the increased recognition accorded it by economic, industrial, and social organizations throughout the American Continent.[27]

As articulated by the PAU, much of the labor of the organization was devoted to acquainting the people of the various American Republics with each other's history, economic and social development, their particular

contributions in the fields of art, music, literature, and drama, and of encouraging movements that have for their purpose the fostering of common cultural interests. Lastly, the PAU created an effective mechanism for the distribution and dissemination of information, that if used for the purpose of propaganda could achieve its desired effect. In addition to its *Bulletin*, the PAU maintained a public relations department to supply the press of the United States and Latin America with news items and photographs. The PAU also utilized the radio to initially broadcast Latin American music, but eventually and more important, to disseminate speeches on Pan American themes. To this end, the PAU became an important conduit for the commercial and cultural exchange of ideas between the American Republics. It also appears the PAU may have influenced the development, implementation, and designs of the OIAA to strengthen the US position in the Americas.[28] Not mentioned in the PAU report is any attempt at Western hemispheric defense initiatives, but this is to be expected as the PAU saw itself primarily as a commercial and cultural entity. The importance of Western hemispheric mutual defense emerged in the late 1920s and early 1930s as it became clear that US policy of unilateralism and intervention in Latin America was counterproductive to regional commercial cooperation and defense, and as the European and Asian conflicts unraveled the political status quo of their regions, it was only a matter of time before the Western hemisphere was drawn into the confrontation. This last point made it imperative for the United States to shore up anti-American sentiments in Latin America brought about largely by its long history of intervention.

The Impact of the Office of Inter-American Affairs

To infiltrate the minds of the Latin American republics, operations were conducted by an array of US agencies, but the OIAA, initially created under the name "Office for Coordination of Commercial and Cultural Relations between the American Republics" in 1940 to "respond to perceptions of a massive threat to the security of the United States," merits some attention.[29] The OIAA became the largest propaganda machine during World War II, dwarfing any like agency from the Allied or Axis power countries. In its infancy the OIAA received a paltry $75,000 annual budget, but as it gained in importance and influence, its budget increased to $3.5 million and swelled to $60 million by 1943.[30] The Communications and Cultural Relations Divisions of the OIAA became the main arm of US

wartime propaganda in Latin America.[31] The OIAA, because of concerns over Mexico's and in general Latin America's perceived lack of enthusiasm toward the war effort, put in motion a plan to create a state of fear in the Americas concerning enemy infiltration into the region with the hope of mobilizing Mexico's civilian population. In some regards Mexican apathy toward the war was accurate, and a number of Latin American countries leaned closely to pro-Nazis and fascist ideology. Furthermore, over 100 newspapers and magazines circulated throughout Latin America that were either sympathetic to the Axis nations or received financial assistance from them.[32] In fact, according to Monica Rankin, "the OIAA could also pressure periodicals to shift allegiances by threatening to cut off their supply of news print."[33] The OIAA went beyond this by developing its own publications, using an array of journalists, writers, and pseudospecialists on Mexico and Latin America to push the US and Allied agenda to counter any apathy in the hemisphere.

This propaganda apparatus, created and unleashed with the design of swaying and changing public opinion on the war, was especially worrisome to the Japanese in the Americas because, first, individuals of Japanese ancestry in the Americas were the largest of the Axis nations, and second, their configuration as undesirables began long before the outbreak of World War II, with anti-Japanese sentiments just below the surface in most Western hemispheric nations. The demonization and level of distrust of the Japanese in the Americas began to reach new heights with the outbreak of World War II as popular articles reached the general audience and increased suspicions. These popular articles increasingly suggested any indigenous person could be Japanese in disguise or that all Japanese were a threat. Additionally, beyond the negative discourse constructed by the court of public opinion, various US agencies adopted similar views as they developed fact sheets, reports, and studies aiding and abetting the racialization and fear of the Japanese population in the Americas. The monolithic image of all Japanese as the enemy created an atmosphere where a constant state of surveillance, harassment, relocation, and confinement were seen as the only possible solution to the Japanese population in Mexico and elsewhere in the Americas.

The Terror of the Machine: The Racialization of the Japanese

Any discussion on the Japanese experience in Mexico during this period must be filtered to distinguish the real, the imagined, and sometimes a

combination of the two. The OIAA used many methods to keep the propaganda machine churning. For example, the OIAA had two major monthly publications to propagandize and disseminate information to the English and Spanish-speaking worlds: *En Guardia: Para Defensa de las Américas*[34] (*On Guard: For the Defense of the Americas*), a Spanish language magazine filled with images depicting the war effort, and the *Inter-American Monthly*, an English language publication used to promote the US and Allied positions on the war (see figure 4.3). Because of the popular nature of the glossy magazines, they were attractive to average people in their respective regions, and each had a substantial readership.

These monthly magazines were part of the overall design to promote inter-American cooperation through commercial and cultural interests during the 1940s. In the 1942 inaugural issue of the *Inter-American Monthly*, Nelson A. Rockefeller, the coordinator of OIAA, wrote an article, "New Economic Frontier," where he expounded on the need for economic solidarity in order to "secure the hemisphere against the enemies of freedom."[35] The *Inter-American Monthly* was designed for popular readership in order to reach a wide audience and in this manner mold and slant general sentiments about the war effort in a pro-US fashion. Central

Figure 4.3. Propaganda free-for-all. *Inter-American Monthly*, September 1944.

to the objectives of the United States was the need to make it appear that the United States supported an equal partnership with its Latin American neighbors while surreptitiously maintaining its hegemony through defense pacts and economic inducements. Throughout the war period these monthly periodicals used articles and images to convey the sweeping solidarity of the Americas, which the Axis powers had no chance of breaching, even when that solidarity was vulnerable.

The *Inter-American Monthly* attempted to achieve these objectives by disseminating positive propaganda about the cooperation between the United States and Latin America in a series of articles that ranged from regional military cooperation to economic relationships, popular culture, and US aid to various countries south of the Rio Grande. Furthermore, each issue carefully and deliberately discussed the dangers of Axis "fifth columns" in Latin America and that through hemispheric cooperation these countries could eradicate such perils. It is important to understand that most of these articles were based on flimsy evidence and used sources that had ulterior motives regarding the Japanese presence in their communities, such as competing merchants with cause to fabricate evidence about their Japanese neighbors. Based on this propaganda every Japanese Mexican became a suspected saboteur and Japanese merchants were reconfigured as hidden Imperial soldiers. The *Inter-American Monthly* not only racialized Japanese and Indigenous groups in Mexico but also created and sustained a constant state of suspicious alertness against everything Japanese. For example, a 1943 *Inter-American Monthly* issue featured an article by Betty Kirk, "Mexico's War on Hidden Japanese," accompanied by a map of Northwest Mexico and the Baja peninsula (see figure 4.4) which identified thirteen locations of Japanese activity and had the following caption, "West Coast Centers of Jap activities before Mexican Government cracked down on them."[36] Kirk's article failed to mention that these locations were the major ports of entry and settlement for Japanese immigrants. By the beginning of World War II Baja California had the largest concentration of Japanese in Mexico. The activities the Japanese were engaged in were primarily fishing and cotton farming in and around the Baja California region, which required boats and trawlers that were often suspected of engaging in espionage.

The same issue contained two photographs: one of Hoshiko Brothers mercantile store in Mexicali and another of two men inside a barbershop (see figure 4.5). The sensational caption read, "Japanese agents often operated as small merchants, such as the Hoshiko Brothers in Mexicali, and as barbers, like [the] one shown above in Ensenada."[37]

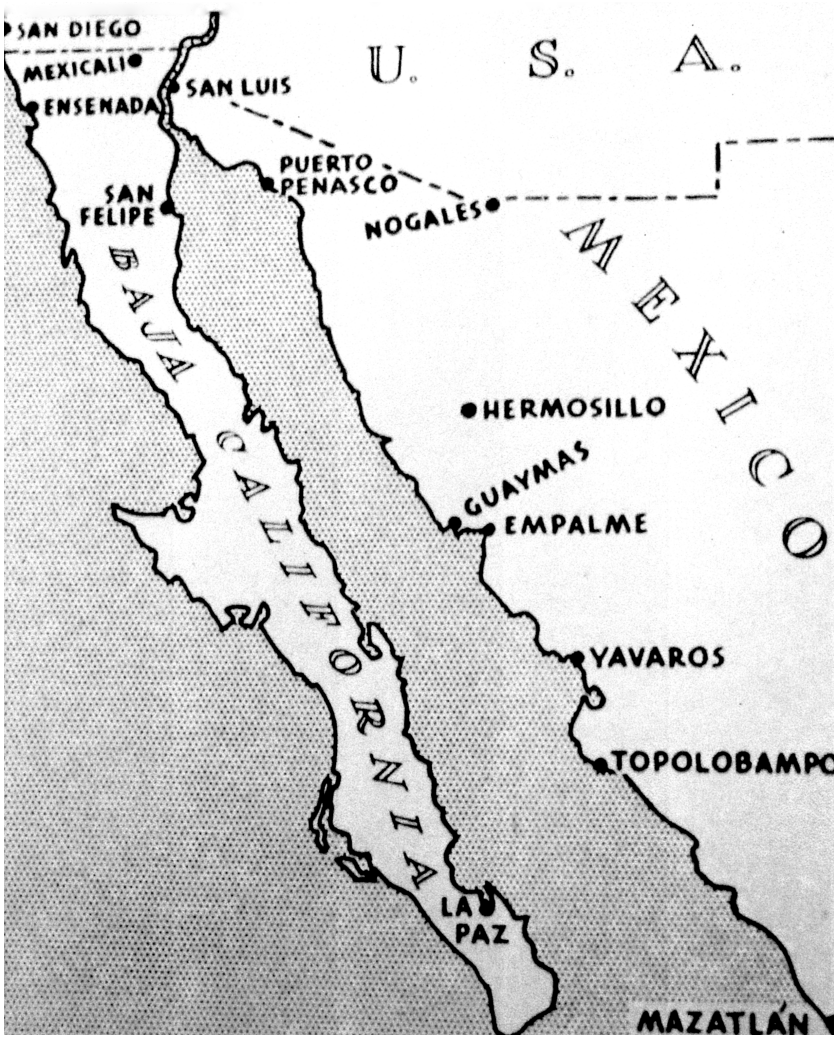

Figure 4.4. "West Coast centers of Jap Activities before Mexican Government Cracked Down on Them." *Inter-American Monthly*, January 1943

The article provides no evidence of the Hoshiko brothers' involvement in espionage as alluded to and the image taken of the barber with a client not only appeared to have been two Mexicans but also could have been taken almost anywhere in Mexico or perhaps even in the Southwest United States. As mentioned earlier, Japanese Mexicans used the barber

Figure 4.5. Japanese fifth column fears. *Inter-American Monthly*, January 1943.

trade as an accessible means to earn a living and a significant number were employed in this manner. Nonetheless, the images were powerful in their insinuation that all Japanese were suspect and were used as part of the public's indoctrination into the Axis threat in the Americas. The OIAA also encouraged mainstream forms of popular culture, such as the *Saturday Evening Post*, to create exposés on the Japanese population throughout Latin America using identical techniques to the *Inter-American Monthly* that reinforced to the public the wary and suspicious nature of the Japanese population. These images also highlight OIAA's prevalent use of popular culture, reportorial journalism, and propaganda.

This next example illustrates how the United States took a broad approach in reaching its audience and conveyed multiple messages with the use of popular culture through the OIAA sponsored *Inter-American Monthly*. A February 1944 issue featured a "Yaqui" Indian in full baseball catcher's gear (see figure 4.6) with the article discussing how the American pastime had become equally popular in Latin America. If we are to believe that the individual underneath the catcher's mask is actually a "Yaqui" Indian, then we can also assume that that author is making several underlying assumptions about Mexico's indigenous population. First, that modernity is defined and linked to the United States and can only be transmitted through US culture and customs. Second, fundamental to the article is a discussion on how Latin Americans have discarded the antiquated sport of bullfighting for the progressive and modern sport of American baseball. Bullfighting is associated with the colonial empire of Spain and depicted as leftover cultural baggage from a conservative and nonprogressive era of colonization. And since baseball is a "team" sport and requires "unity," Latin Americans learned valuable lessons required during times of war.[38]

Figure 4.6. "A 'Yaqui' Baseball Player—Promoting Modernity and Solidarity." *Inter-American Monthly*, February 1944.

US and Mexican officials used various forms of popular culture to connect with the masses that reached beyond race and baseball in order to convince the Americas the Axis threat to Latin America was real and not imagined. One of the most incendiary images supplemented Betty Kirk's article mentioned earlier, that attempted to convince the general public

Figure 4.7. "Looking like the Enemy," Betty Kirk's tableau on racial profiling. *Inter-American Monthly*, January 1943.

of Japanese infiltrating into Mexico by disguising as various indigenous groups.

The images in figure 4.7, aligned side by side, were viewed with the following caption: "Which is the Japanese? The old Chamula Indian from the state of Chiapas, left, and the young Otomi from Hidalgo, right, bear a striking racial resemblance to the Japanese, center, now held prisoner in Mexico's penal colony in the Island of Tres Marías"[39] The photographs appeared in a 1943 edition of the *Inter-American Monthly* in an article titled "Mexico's War on Hidden Japanese." The *Inter-American Monthly* is a sample of the propaganda machine created by the United States to engineer a state of hemispheric peril. More specifically, Kirk's article, photos, and maps illustrate the wide net of suspicion thrown at the Japanese diaspora throughout Latin America in order to manufacture a hemisphere-wide defense against Axis penetration into the region.

The images also provide important insight on the process of racialization and the use of racial profiling of the Japanese and indigenous populations in Mexico. In this case, Betty Kirk deployed the optical illusion or sleight of hand in order to confuse the reader and cement the propaganda of fear that all Japanese in Mexico are a threat. More important, Kirk's article provided the basis for the justification of the racialization of Mexico's Japanese population by stating, "The Jap bears a racial resemblance to the Mexican Indian. When mingled with the pure Indian type found in the undeveloped regions, a Japanese can pass without notice, if he is garbed

as the Indians are and speaks their colloquial language. Such disguises are part of the armor with which the Japanese Fifth Column is girded to carry on its subversive work."[40] Such statements, positions, and attitudes were commonplace during this period. In fact, a similar juxtaposition was entertained decades earlier in a US popular magazine known as *The Outlook* in an article titled "The Hyphen in Mexico." The author proclaimed, "One thing that may lead the observers to form an exaggerated opinion of the number of Japanese in the country south of the Rio Grande is the fact that those Mexican Indians of an Oriental cast of the countenance already mentioned look even more like Japanese than like Chinese."[41]

As the Americas became entangled with World War II, the Allied and Axis nations struggled for the hearts and minds of the region, and Mexico became an important staging ground for such efforts. Indeed, mobilization for the war effort went well beyond the recruitment of troops. For the United States and Mexico it became vital that public opinion and support for the war remain unfettered to deter Axis penetration into Mexico and other areas of Latin America. In order to gain public support for the war a massive propaganda campaign was unleashed in Mexico. Betty Kirk's article is but one example of that battle.

Betty Kirk's diatribes against the Japanese in Mexico and Latin America were not limited to the single article mentioned. Kirk's articles and book chapters were heavily quoted by other authors, which entrenched the negative image of an already suspect Japanese population in the Americas.[42] The average reader made no distinction between Japanese officials in Mexico, such as military attachés, who by design carry out suspicious activities for their home country and Japanese Mexicans. Kirk's recipe for racializing groups, such as the Japanese and Indians of Mexico, morphed into an amalgamation of race, ethnicity, and nationality where the Mexican Indian, Japanese national, and Japanese Mexican became fused and undistinguishable from each other. Authors like Kirk, through their writings, provided the popular discourse justifying the round up and detention of the Japanese population.

According to Josephus Daniels, who was the US ambassador for Mexico from 1933 to 1941, and who wrote the introduction to Betty Kirk's book, *Covering the Mexican Front: The Battle of Europe versus America*. Kirk became a foreign correspondent in Mexico a year after Lázaro Cárdenas was elected president of Mexico (1934). Kirk began covering Mexico for a number of US and British newspapers and magazines; her only credential was having lived in Mexico for an extended period of time, which

somehow qualified her as an expert on Mexican affairs.[43] Nevertheless, Kirk's various publications resonated with the public and within the confines of US government agencies that developed case studies on the Japanese diaspora in Latin America and assessed Mexico's ability to counter any fifth column activities. One author, Stephen Naft, lifted, verbatim, Kirk's article "Mexico's War on Hidden Japanese," published in January 1943, as part of a study he prepared for the OIAA titled *Japan's Menace to the Americas*, internally released to the US government in 1943 as well.[44] And, as mentioned earlier, Kirk's article was written for the *Inter-American Monthly*, an OIAA-supported publication. Thus, Kirk and Naft were each commissioned by the OIAA to propagandize for the agency, with Naft relying entirely on Kirk's position on the Japanese in Mexico. Finally, Naft used a subsection of Kirk's book, titled "Japan's Skeleton Army," to drive home Japanese fifth column fears. These articles, filled with half-truths, hearsay, and propaganda and lacking sources, coupled with a long-standing mistrust of the Japanese in the Americas, created a hemispheric wide frenzy toward the Japanese diaspora, but more important, these positions made their way into US government reports to develop policy regarding the Japanese in the Americas.

These types of articles and fears were not limited to just the United States or Mexico. In June 1942 the *Saturday Evening Post* ran a five-page exposé on the Japanese in Brazil titled "The Japanese Pincers in Brazil." With the exception of the title and author, this article is identical to Kirk's "Mexico's War on Hidden Japanese," with the obligatory images of Japanese men, women, and children all somehow undermining the Allied war effort for Japanese emperor Hirohito. This particular article contains depictions of Japanese-Brazilians and their daily lives, but the images are transformed into fifth column fears by the captions attached by the author. When such images are repeated and reinforced by the Inter-American Monthly, the image of the Japanese menace becomes all to real (see figure 4.8). The images and captions below are of Japanese Brazilians and typical of articles on Japanese in Latin America during this period.[45]

Although Brazil played an active role in the Allied effort during World War II, its contributions are often forgotten or diminished. Brazil allowed the United States to build airfields and to have control over its navy and air forces during the war. Brazil, with the largest Japanese population in the hemisphere (nearly 200,000), did not round up and intern any of its Japanese. In some cases and similar to Mexico, Brazil required some Japanese to relocate away from "strategic" locations. However, a large number of Japanese had settled in frontier regions of Brazil in and around São

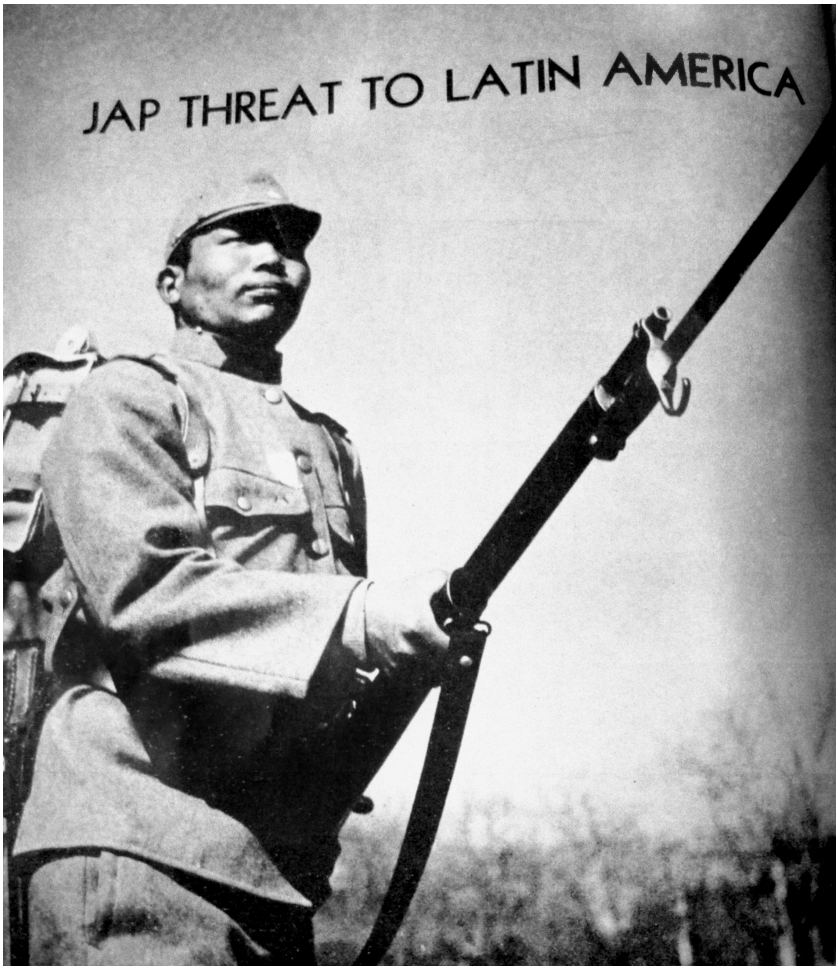

Figure 4.8. Throughout the Americas, propaganda portrayed ordinary Japanese children, schools, and merchants as a subversive threat. By reconfiguring ordinary Japanese of the Americas, they became, in the eyes of the public, the "Jap Threat to Latin America," as pictured in this image. *Inter-American Monthly.* Courtesy of US Library of Congress.

Paulo and Paraná in areas considered so remote as not to pose any security risks. The logistics of rounding up 200,000 Japanese made it unrealistic, and Brazilian authorities also understood that Japanese farmers were vital to their agricultural industry.[46] Nonetheless, Brazil, under the dictatorship of Getúlio Vargas, implemented nationalistic policies that closed down

Japanese language schools and restricted their movement, which applied to all foreigners in Brazil. And, according to Fidelis Reis, a federal deputy from Minas Gerais, "Asians were almost a great menace because their alleged failure to assimilate would guarantee the presence of 'yellow cysts in the national organism,' which would be as great a danger to Brazil as the concentration of Asians in California was to the United States."[47]

Although the process of racializing the Japanese predates World War II, entities such as the OIAA, and the US government in general, escalated fears and tensions within Japanese communities throughout the Americas through a 1940s version of racial profiling. I argue that the United States influenced the views of the Japanese in Mexico and Latin America. In fact, legislation limiting the movement of Japanese to Brazil and Peru was fashioned after the US 1921 and 1924 immigration acts, which established a quota system for the movement of immigrants to the United States. However, after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Japanese in Mexico and elsewhere were reconfigured from undesirables unsuitable for American societies to spies, saboteurs, and threats to democracies. As this image gained a foothold in the imagination of the public, the demonization of the Japanese escalated to dehumanization as depicted in popular culture and the mainstream media. This image primarily constructed by the United States and exported, intensified efforts to hunt down any so-called fifth columns in Mexico. And, as discussed later, US propaganda, influence, and pressure were directly responsible for the roundups, arrests, and deportations of thousands of Japanese in the Western hemisphere. The OIAA spent a considerable amount of time, energy, and money convincing the United States and Latin American public that Japanese individuals were threats to their way of life. Using a variety of approaches, the OIAA organized a propaganda campaign to bring countries like Mexico in line with US positions on a level never seen before or since.

Although a full-scale examination of OIAA's methodology of delivering propaganda is beyond the scope of this study, it can be said that it used almost every conceivable means to achieve its objectives. By this I mean the OIAA, in general, used economic incentives and threats, and culturally saturated every Latin American country with music, theatre, cinema, radio, and the use of graphic novels by enlisting prominent artists, musicians, directors, and actors. The OIAA used US and Latin American journalists to dispense US policy and positions on the war effort. The OIAA also created newsletters, funded newspapers, and created glossy magazines in its endeavors to drive home its message of hemispheric solidarity. To effectively propagandize and reach the masses throughout Latin America, it

was vital that the appropriate method of delivery be used, and this varied from country to country. Propaganda also had to be tailored to specific audiences within the country as determined by geographic, demographic, social, and economic considerations. For example, because each Latin American country had groups with varying degrees of literacy, multiple delivery systems were deployed. There were deliberate attempts to convey messages to Latin America's middle and upper classes by using the most widely used form of communication for those classes during this era, print media and radio.

Overall, the popular periodicals, the *Inter-American Monthly*, *En Guardia*, and the *Saturday Evening Post* were just one weapon in an arsenal created to combat any pro-Nazi or pro-fascist sentiment in Latin America. The evidence of this period indicates strong leanings toward Germany and Italy by some Latin American countries, including Mexico. One of Nelson Rockefeller's primary missions as Coordinator of the OIAA was to fill Latin American newspapers and airwaves with US official policy in order to discourage opposing views and increase hemispheric solidarity. Brazil, with the largest Japanese population in South America, initially resisted US efforts and segments of Argentina's and Chile's populations were openly supportive of fascism and Nazism.[48] In Mexico, US officials painted La Unión Nacional Sinarquista (National Synachist Union of Mexico), in operation during the late 1930s and 1940s, as a pro-fascist and pro-Nazis organization. American intelligence reports indicated that the Sinarquistas might have been collaborating with the Japanese in Baja California.[49] According to a Mexican government report La Unión Nacional Sinarquista was formed in 1937 in Leon, Guanajuato by a group of "fanatics" who numbered approximately 400 young middle-class professionals with the following goals: "To plant in Mexico a new Christian social order through a patriotic militia and unite all Mexicans for a better country. Our motto will be Fatherland, Justice and Liberty."[50] The scholarship on the Sinarquistas indicates they were generally considered to be a pro-Catholic organization primarily made up of farmers at the base and middle class professionals at the leadership level.[51] Although the Sinarquista literature points to a strong anti-totalitarian position within their ranks, from the Mexican and US perspective this organization still posed a risk to Mexico and the region.

Although President Manuel Ávila Camacho was aware of German and Japanese attempts at espionage within the country, the United States remained concerned that many in the Mexican government leaned too far toward the Axis powers. In fact, María Emilia Paz, writes that American

officials concluded that the "only sectors of Mexican society that could genuinely be regarded as anti-Axis and prodemocratic were the organized labor movement and the Mexican Communist Party."[52] Based on this perceived lack of enthusiasm for the war, the Mexican government amplified its propaganda machine to ignite Mexican zeal for the war effort. Like their American counterparts, the Mexican government used many forms to disseminate their propaganda. The use of art became a prevalent medium to illustrate the Allied fight against the Axis nations, while concurrently advancing the US policy on the war. Along these same lines, leftist artists and the Mexican government used an array of visual imagery to convey their concerns about fascism and Nazism, how ordinary Mexicans contributed to the war effort and the general social conditions in Mexico from the 1930s through World War II.

Mexican Perception of US Propaganda

A portion of the Mexican public had little interest in a war fought thousands of miles away and for many the memory of the Mexican Revolution remained vivid. Prior to 1941 Mexican support against the Axis nations vacillated and much of this ebb and flow is attributed to the historical treatment of Mexico by US imperialism, which left long lasting animosity and suspicion. Furthermore, many Mexicans remained suspicious of US and British financial interests and aims and felt that perhaps this war was not about defeating tyranny but further exploitation of the working class in Mexico. From the Mexican perspective there was also the observation that US and British visitors to Mexico came merely to sojourn, whereas the Germans and Japanese sought to make Mexico their permanent home, became citizens, intermarried with Mexicans and treated the Mexican people more as their equals socially and commercially.

In addition, prior to Mexico joining the war in 1942, Axis sympathizers in Mexico used a large of array of propaganda techniques to sway public opinion. A large number of newspapers and periodicals were pro-fascist and pro-Nazi. Papers such as *El Hombre Libre*, a Catholic paper, and the *Omega* carried such headlines as "Virile Attitude of Argentina and Chile before the Violence of Mr. Wells" and "Jews over America," respectively. Other groups in Mexico sympathetic to the Axis nations included the National Sinarquista Movement founded in 1937, and Acción Nacional founded in 1938 and loosely connected to the Spanish Falange. Axis propaganda had penetrated deep into Mexico in its attempt at keeping

Mexico neutral during the war. The Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941 and Mexico's declaration of war in May 1942 created a shift toward the Allied effort. Another important factor in changing public opinion was the Good Neighbor Policy and the perceived need for hemispheric solidarity. With this momentum Mexico enlisted all sectors of society to neutralize and counter Axis propaganda throughout the country.

Emulating the OIAA and with its assistance, but on a smaller scale, the Mexican government and other political entities produced their own forms of propaganda aimed at different segments of its population. In this section my discussion focuses primarily on the use of art as a medium for propaganda purposes. In many ways the role of Mexican artists as disseminators of propaganda for the government or as agents of change for their communities can be traced to the nineteenth century with their most influential period emerging with the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution, especially the period after 1920 and the advent of cultural institutions supported by various Mexican administrations.[53]

With the emergence and rise of fascism and Nazism battles were fought along multiple fronts including the ideological that used art as a weapon of choice for propaganda purposes. All sectors and sides of World War II deployed this intellectual combat by the foot soldiers of the artist communities. Mexican artists began to illustrate the dangers of fascists and the goal of world domination by Hitler and the Nazis. Further, in their attempts to keep the Mexican population neutral during the war the Axis powers went on a propaganda free-for-all utilizing all means at their disposal such as groups within Mexico considered pro-fascist or pro-Nazis or at the very least sympathetic to the Axis war effort. To counter these efforts Mexico went on the offensive and unleashed a barrage of propaganda that illustrated Mexican solidarity with the Allied war effort. In these important endeavors, artists from Mexico united with the Mexican government to create images of a Mexico in harmony with the Allies and ready to combat the aggression of Germany, Italy, and Japan. With its rich history of graphic and satirical art and many celebrated artists of the early twentieth century, Mexico was well prepared to use this medium for propaganda purposes.

Mexican Art and Propaganda: Beyond Aestheticism

As briefly articulated, long before the outbreak of World War II, Mexico had a tradition of producing graphic art in newsprint, engravings, wood

cuts, and broadsides. José Guadalupe Posada's years of greatest influence popularized many of the techniques just mentioned by incorporating them into the daily lives of the Mexican people, producing art relevant to the masses, and making art accessible. The onset of the Great Depression in Mexico only deepened the conviction of many artists that capitalism and the exploitation of labor were important subjects to address within their art. With nearly 500,000 Mexicans repatriated from the United States, the economic global collapse, the rise of fascism and Nazism in Europe gave a sense of urgency to the art produced during this period. Diego Rivera's mural *Detroit Industry* (1932–33) remains one of the great artistic masterpieces of the twentieth century while simultaneously providing an important social commentary on society.[54]

Furthermore, the Spanish Civil War of 1935–39 provided material for Mexican artists to comment on the fear and rise of fascism and the threat it posed to the left. Indeed, emerging leftist artists of Mexico gained invaluable experience speaking out against Spanish Falangists or fascists during this period. In fact, a small group of young and veteran Mexican artists such as Leopoldo Méndez, David Siqueiros, and Pablo O'Higgins started a collective known as the Liga de Escritores y Artistas Revolucionarios (League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists, LEAR) in 1933 as a popular front against the rise of fascism. These were many of the same individuals that started Lucha Intelectual Proletaria (Intellectual Proletarian Struggle) in 1931, LEAR's predecessor. This collective lasted from 1933–38 and became the catalyst for TGP, an important artist collective from Mexico City that continued the tradition of Mexican graphic art that was utilized to combat fascism, Nazism, and promote the war effort for Mexico.[55] LEAR was a highly politicized collective that grounded many of the artists to the PCM, although membership was required. Nonetheless, this group was influenced by the international communist struggle and introduced into their organization basic precepts such as class struggle and created in 1934 *Frente a Frente*, a newsletter used to promote the communist struggle, which was also a space for art that followed a similar ideology.[56]

Pablo O'Higgins, Leopoldo Méndez, and Luis Arenal founded TGP in 1937.[57] TGP became one of the most important collectives in Latin America and widely respected elsewhere. The Mexican government enlisted the help of the artist collective TGP during World War II to create poster art, broadsheets, and printmaking for the promotion of Mexico's war efforts and to rally its citizens. During World War II the primary artists for TGP were Alberto Beltrán, Angel Bracho, Fernando Castro Pacheco, Leopoldo Méndez, Ignacio Aguirre, and Raúl Anguiano. In many ways,

TGP reflected the Posada tradition of using a Mexican visual style to connect to its mass audience in the form of lithographs, prints, woodcuts, and linocuts. As a collective, TGP supported the efforts of the Lázaro Cardenas administration and its expropriation of the oil industry by creating art for the campaign. During the 1940s TGP supported Manuel Ávila Camacho's drive to unite the country during World War II. The founders were also connected to the communist party and the antifascist movement.[58]

Ideologically, many Mexican political groups contributed to this propaganda campaign, with the PCM providing an excellent example. In 1945 PCM published *Un Programa para Unir Más a la Nación* (*A Program to Further Unite the Nation*), a forty-page exposé on uniting the Mexican people, preparing the communist party for the next presidential election, industrializing the country, and an attack on the Axis powers. As fascism ascended in Europe during the 1930s and 1940s PCM became one the strongest supporters of the Allied effort due to the threat fascism posed to the left, especially to the Soviet Union. As a result the PCM launched a strong propaganda campaign of its own to garner Mexican support for the Allies, but also to promote the PCM agenda regarding the direction of the country. *Un Programa para Unir Más a la Nación* is an example of PCM propaganda that served multiple roles. Within the text the authors provided the nation with twelve major points to further the development of Mexico.[59] For example, the exposé opened with its first stated goal as "Conquista de la Victoria Completa y Organización de la Seguridad y la Paz" (Achievement of Complete Victory and Organization of Security and Peace), which promoted the destruction of fascism and supported the various declarations espoused by the Allied nations.[60] The PCM also issued a call for national unity that could only be achieved through a fair and equitable distribution of wealth and placing national interests above the interests of individuals or groups. The PCM also viewed such ideologies and groups as Nazis, the Spanish Flange, the Sinarquista Movement, and the National Action Party as detriments not only to the PCM but also to achieving national unity within Mexico.[61] *Un Programa para Unir Más a la Nación* was filled with images such as the two below that depicted the Allies defeat of the Axis powers, but also addressed internal concerns such as national unity, equality for the indigenous population, and the allocation of resources to the workers in Mexico (see figure 4.9). The cartoon caricature of Hitler, Hirohito, Franco, and Mussolini and their defeat by the Allies is not unusual, but it is important to point out this was not Mexican or US government propaganda; rather these images were developed and disseminated by the PCM who considered fascism and Nazism

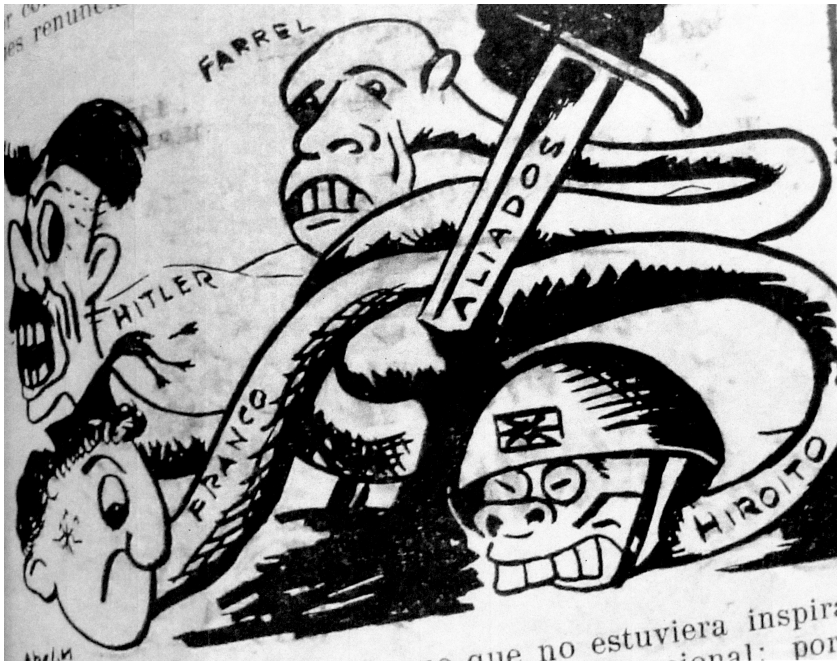

Figure 4.9. Mexican Communist Party propaganda. From *Un Programa para Unir Más a la Nación*, Archivo General de la Nación, March 1945.

a threat to the Soviet Union and the communist movement, in general. Images like the ones above reveal the importance of art and its use as a propaganda tool. Whether Mexican, United States, Japanese, or German, the state liberally utilized various forms of art as a medium to reach the masses with their message. Nation states understood the power of art and used all means at their disposal to create images that sold their message.[62]

Conclusion

Decades before the bombing of Pearl Harbor the United States laid the groundwork to consolidate a hemispheric defense against the Axis powers. This was achieved first with the rise of US imperialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Second, military coercion was supplemented with economic dominance of Latin America. Third, US culture had pervaded so deeply throughout Mexico that a Phelps-Dodge

engineer stated, "It takes just four years to complete the Americanization of the Mexican."[63] The reach of the American empire reigned so absolute throughout Latin America that even its domestic policies reached beyond its national boundaries. More important, the United States' development of misinformation agencies during World War I and the creation of the international Pan American Union allowed it to hone its skills at churning out propaganda that infiltrated the Western hemisphere economically, politically, and culturally.

The creation of the OIAA was a natural progression and necessity from the US perspective. The propaganda campaign unleashed by the United States after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and eventually by Mexico, achieved many of its objectives. First and foremost, the United States and its legions of agencies that spread throughout Latin America brought all of the Western hemisphere under the banner of the United States and Allied Powers. Through the use of propaganda, especially the print media, the United States was able to convince much of the hemisphere that behind every door and under every rock was a Japanese waiting to wreak havoc. By creating this sense of fear, the United States and Mexico justified the necessity to hunt, interrogate, detain, and if necessary, intern individuals of Japanese ancestry. This, of course, came at the expense of ordinary Japanese Mexicans and nationals in Mexico who were further racialized during the war. The use of journalists from the United States and throughout Latin America reshaped the war effort and views toward the allied perspective and was paramount in reconfiguring the Japanese as "public enemy" number one. The racialization of the Japanese diaspora dehumanized and demonized an entire ethnic group and resulted in a near universal Western hemispheric internment program.

The United States, already the hegemonic force in the hemisphere, also used financial incentives rather than military force or occupation to persuade countries like Mexico that it was in their best interest to join the allied effort. The OIAA played an important role in these developments. Although this chapter spoke mostly of its propaganda efforts, the OIAA had many subagencies that included economic development, media, and public health that utilized their respective areas to provide incentives to Mexico and other Latin American nations. As the United States spread its propaganda throughout the hemisphere, it simultaneously prodded reluctant Latin American republics to join the campaign. In the initial war years Mexico was seen as less than enthusiastic toward the war effort.

To counter this perception Mexico unleashed its own propaganda campaign to shore up any lingering doubts about its commitment. With the

help of the OIAA and the use of art as one form of dissemination, Mexico attempted to educate the masses on the dangers of the Nazis and fascist infiltration and the importance of supporting the war effort. The US propaganda campaign and Mexico's renewed enthusiasm increased anxiety for Japanese Mexicans as their future became uncertain. The level of US control in the hemisphere during the war meant that Japanese Mexicans and nationals were not going to be allowed to roam freely. Although Mexico complied with the hemispheric policy of rounding up its Japanese population, it did not have all the intended results the United States anticipated. The next chapter explores Mexico's response to the hemispheric directive to round up and intern the Japanese population and how the Japanese population in Mexico reacted to their forced removal and relocation to the interior of Mexico.