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SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS, AMERICA, USIS
APR. 1945

HEADQUARTERS ALLIED COMMISSION
Education Subcommittee
APO 394

FD/AL/2.0/AS

21 April 1945

SUBJECT: Preparation of Social Studies books for Italy.

TO : Miss Louise Mohr,
Skokie School,
Winnetka, Illinois.

Dear Louise:

1. The United States Information Service (USIS) in consultation with the Education Subcommittee and with the approval of the Minister of Public Instruction is proposing to prepare three books in the social studies field for free distribution to Italian school children.

2. One of these books will, according to tentative plans, be for fifth-grade elementary school children. It will give a general picture of the history, geography, and government of the principal countries of North and South America. It will be based upon an existing American text book, such as "The New World, Past and Present" by Webb, Campbell, and Fiske (Scott Foresman). It will run approximately 70,000 words (220 pages with illustrations) and about 300,000 copies will be printed in Italian.

3. The second book, aimed at the last year of junior high school (i.e., grade 8) or first year of senior high school, will, it is proposed, be on American Government -- the story of the constitution, how our government works, and elections in the United States, with an appendix of significant documents, from the Declaration of Independence to the Atlantic Charter. This will probably be based on a group of USIS publications on these subjects. It will run about 50,000 words.

4. The third book will, according to the plan, be an adaptation of a good American civics text book of junior high school level and will stress the rights and responsibilities of the individual citizen in a democracy. Length, about 40,000 words.

5. All three books will be copiously illustrated. They will, of course, be translated into Italian.

6. The editor will have much latitude in selecting the American publications on which to base the Italian ones. "The New World, Past and Present", for example, is a suggestion, rather than a final recommendation. I have examined it rather carefully and believe that in its simplicity, its concreteness, and its scope, it might well be adopted, after considerable abridgement. The abridgement would not, of course, consist of making any given episode or description less vivid, but rather of reducing the number of episodes and descriptions, or omission of whole sections. The section on the making of the constitution, or any other civic element, however, might even need expansion -- the book doesn't give as much stress to civic responsibility and democratic forms as might be desirable for Italy right now. The editor will doubtless want to see whether a better, more readily

adaptable book is available. The editor will similarly see whether the OWI publications are suitable as a base for the second book, and will select the diving book to be used as a base for the third.

7. The preparation of these books, it is contemplated, will be by an American editor, working in the United States (probably in Washington) while being processed to come over here, and then working in Italy with an Italian collaborator and translator. It is hoped that the preliminary editing, the gathering of original photographs from the publishers of the books on which the Italian adaptations will be based, and so on, will be completed in the four to six weeks which it will take to get immigration, passport, transportation, etc. OWI in Washington will handle copyright releases, arrangements for the editor's coming over here, and so on. It will also arrange payment to the editor, and assist in getting any materials, photographs, drawings, etc., desired by the editor.

8. On arrival in Italy the editor will work with a bilingual Italian educator, under the direction and with the help of USIS and with whatever assistance is desired from the Education Subcommittee, AC, and the Ministry of Public Instruction.

9. The USIS has today called this proposal, in outline, to Washington, and has recommended you as editor of the series. OWI in Washington, however, may have different ideas as to who should be editor, or may turn down the whole proposition.

10. If, however, OWI accepts the proposition and asks you to be the editor of the series, I hope you can arrange with RAE and the Board to give you the necessary leave. It would necessitate immediate acceptance on your part since we are working to have the books all published by 1 October. You would, therefore, miss the last few weeks of this school year, and possibly the first few weeks of the fall term -- although if all goes according to schedule, you might get back for the opening of school. The Board should be requested, however, to make your leave sufficiently elastic so that you could get back a few weeks after school opens.

11. In recommending you for this work I have had in mind the following facts: a) You have been in Italy and have studied and written about the early and renaissance origins of Italian culture.

b) You have had extensive experience in writing social science material for children in a vivid and interesting way.

c) You have the kind of mind that can select essentials and present them clearly.

d) You have a sympathetic understanding of other cultures as well as our own.

e) You have scholarship.

f) You have had practical experience with getting manuscripts ready for publication.

I know of no other person with all these qualifications in equally high degree. I therefore hope that you will not hesitate to accept if the offer is made. You can make a basic contribution to the education of the oncoming generation of Italians and to their cultural relations with the United States.

12. The Winnetka Board of Education and Rae have in the past been so generous in making contributions to our basic war purposes that I have little doubt as to their willingness to help in this matter if you are willing to take it on. And I know that if you really see the picture clearly, and have the opportunity, you will be equally unhesitating.

13. While you may discuss the matter freely with Rae and the Board, or any persons whose advice you desire, it should have no publicity until O W I officially requests your services. I repeat, we have merely recommended from this end; decisions will be made in Washington. But I am writing to you immediately so that if the offer does come to you you will be prepared.

Warm greetings always,



CARLTON R. WASHBURNE
Lt. Col., A.U.S.
Director of Education.

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AS A RESULT OF AGREEMENTS WITH MINISTER OF EDUCATION WITH EMBASSY
CONCERNING LIEUTENANT COLONEL WASHBURN AND WE HAVE DECIDED ON
THREE TEXTS FOR ITALIAN SCHOOL BOOKS AND SUGGEST A PLAN FOR
QUICK PREPARATION AND PRODUCTION PERIOD FIRST A BOOK FOR FIFTH
GRADE ABOUT 70000 WORDS HISTORY OF WESTERN HEMISPHERE WITH GEO-
GRAPHICAL BACKGROUND SUGGEST CONDENSATION OF THE NEW WORLD PAST AND
PRESENT BY WEBB CAMPBELL NIDA PUBLISHER SCOTT FORESMAN UNLESS EDITOR
HAS OTHER PREFERENCE PERIOD SECOND A BOOK FOR EIGHTH GRADE ABOUT
50000 WORDS ON AMERICAN GOVERNMENT INCLUDING STORY OF MAKING OF
CONSTITUTION HOW US GOVERNMENT WORKS ELECTIONS IN US AND A FEW PER-
TINENT US DOCUMENTS FOR APPENDIX SUGGESTION IF EXISTANT OLD TEXTS ARE
USED THEY SHOULD BE CAREFULLY REEDITED EXPANDED AND INTEGRATED WITH
AUDIENCE IN MIND HOW US WORKS ESPECIALLY NEEDS ENLARGEMENT PERIOD
THIRD FOR NINTH GRADE ABOUT 40000 WORDS ON CIVICS BASED ON ONE
OR MORE RECENT HIGH SCHOOL TEXTS AND EMPHASIZING RIGHTS AND
RESPONSIBILITIES OF INDIVIDUAL CITIZEN IN A DEMOCRACY PERIOD ALL
THREE TO BE GENEROUSLY ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOS AND OR DRAWINGS
PERIOD AS EDITOR FOR WHOLE SERIES WASHBURN RECOMMENDS LOUISE MOHR
OF MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND WE SUGGEST YOU ENGAGE HER OR SOMEONE
ELSE YOU MAY SELECT TO COME TO ITALY WHILE PROCESSING SHE SHOULD
TENTATIVELY PREPARE TEXTS AND OWI SHOULD CLEAR RIGHTS AND OBTAIN
GLOSSES ON MANY SUITABLE ILLUSTRATIONS FOR HER TO BRING PERIOD
WE MEANTIME SELECT GOOD BILINGUAL EDUCATOR HERE TO ADAPT TEXTS IN
COLLABORATION WITH EDITOR PERIOD WE CONSIDER THIS MOST IMPORTANT
PROJECT AND ARE WORKING FOR OCTOBER DEADLINE

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