

THE FORD FOUNDATION
Pasadena Inter-office Memorandum

TO: Rowan Gaither

DATE: October 11, 1951

FROM: Hans Speier *Hans Speier*

SUBJECT:

The attached seven outlines were presented to Mr. Katz at a meeting on October 10th which was attended by the following persons: MacDaniel, Berelson, Marquis, Speier.

We told Mr. Katz that these outlines of projects would be incorporated, in a somewhat modified form, in a broader memorandum dealing with the Institute for International Communication and its program.

Attachments
Copies of seven outlines

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Organizational Research

Research can be helpful to those who make political decisions, if it succeeds in eliminating or narrowing down the area of uncertainty in which the consequences or alternative courses of action are judged to lie. Sometimes when decisions brook no delay, such studies require more time than can be spared. Sometimes time would be available but the opinion of advisers derived from experience, precedence, or hunches is deemed superior to more careful studies. Sometimes such studies neglect the intangibles which rightly appear to be of great importance to men of practical political experience.

An effective organization of political analysis, corresponding to the "operational analysis" which proved invaluable to the British and Americans in the last war in solving military problems, has not yet been found. The various organizational arrangements in the Federal Government for the utilization of research resources in policy making have not demonstrated the full value that might be derived from research.

The optimum administrative arrangement, which would maximize the productivity and applicability of "policy research" and the effective communication of its results to those who make decisions, is itself a problem that can be attacked by study and experimentation. To be most pertinent, such studies must be conducted experimentally in life situations, i.e., be closely attached to agencies and persons actually engaged in policy decisions. Considerations of security and resistance to such projects on the part of executives present formidable difficulties to the conduct of such studies. It should be borne in mind, however, that they could be conducted simultaneously with customary staff work.

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October 8, 1951

General Remarks On Opinion Studies of Foreign Populations

In recent years a number of opinion surveys have been conducted abroad. These surveys have taught us more than we knew before about the content and distribution of political opinions in foreign countries. At the same time they have often raised questions which cannot be answered by opinion surveys. Generally speaking, panel studies, experimental studies of life situations, and intensive interviews in crucial groups should be undertaken a broad to improve knowledge.

For example, the findings of a recent survey in the United States zone of Germany included three statements:

1. "The belief that the United States is not trustworthy more seriously deters from cooperation with the West than the belief that the United States is weak."
2. The professionals are least sympathetic to the United States (whereas farmers and businessmen are most sympathetic).
3. The professionals are the group with the highest percentage of "self-identified" opinion leaders (60%)

Leaving aside the fact that "the people" do not cooperate with the United States in as real a sense as the Government does (or does not), the three cited findings suggest that it would be desirable to study intensively German professionals who are opinion leaders in order to get at the nature, ramifications, and roots of their belief that the United States is "not trustworthy". The understanding of this belief which the survey is able to offer is tantalizingly inadequate. Only intensive studies can offer a more concrete and more meaningful understanding which would be needed for measures one might want to take to dispel this "distrust".

Similar illustrations can be given with respect to opinions expressed on the A-bomb, the Marshall Plan, and other aspects of United States civilization and policy.

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Study of Opinion Leaders Abroad

Recent research has shown that the influence of the so-called opinion leader upon the formation of political opinions is greater than was previously assumed. His influence is more personal and direct than that of the impersonal mass media.

The leader, that is the person whose opinions are sought by others, does not necessarily exert his influence by virtue of his position in the community, as may be the case with a minister or a teacher, but often exercises his leadership function informally without the prestige which economic or social position might give him. It is therefore difficult and costly to identify the informal opinion leaders.

Foreign information programs are governed by the assumption that reaching large masses by a weak stimulus, the mass media, is preferable to concentrating effort on reaching small groups of influential people abroad. In radio broadcasting relay stations are used to increase the power with which the signal reaches the foreign audience. The corresponding use of "social relay points", i.e., of persons and groups occupying strategic positions in the social communications network has not been exploited, although there can be little doubt that the views of native opinion leaders carry more weight than those coming directly from abroad. During the last war, the most effective communication with foreign audiences depended on contact with resistance and partisan groups in enemy-occupied countries. For example, the information and propaganda activities of the Polish underground exceeded in both bulk and impact those of the British Broadcasting Corporation; in fact, the main function of the B.B.C. broadcasts to Poland consisted in furnishing material to the psychological warfare activities of the Polish resistance. There is no reason why this wartime practice of international communication cannot be adapted to peacetime conditions in countries allied with the United States and not occupied by any enemy power.

Research can identify informal opinion leaders so that communication with foreign publics could be focused on these leaders rather than exclusively on the masses at large or on sympathetic newspapermen, radio broadcasters, etc.

In a preliminary (and in this regard, technically defective) study in France (1950), it has been shown that opinion leaders are found in equal proportion in the pro-Soviet group and the pro-American groups of Frenchmen. It may be assumed that opinion leaders rather than impersonal mass media are capable of reducing the number of persons who are apathetic about political matters or who have become disappointed in politics and turned away from it, i.e., the alienated parts of the population. In France, these two groups constitute about 40% of the population.

Explaining Foreign Policy

All recent public opinion surveys in France, Italy, Sweden, and western Germany have shown that the problems most pressing on the minds of the people are not the danger of war, the fight against Communism, or the external economic position of their country; they are, rather, domestic economic and political matters, food, housing, unemployment, etc. (The only characteristic exception in this regard is Great Britain, where more people said they were preoccupied with the danger of war than with domestic problems of their country.) This finding is corroborated by wartime studies of "morale" conditions in enemy countries conducted by official enemy agencies and captured after the war. It was found, for example, that a lowering of food rations influenced morale at home more strongly than did military defeats..

These findings suggest that foreign policy should be "sold" to the population at large, not so much in its own terms, but that special attention should be given to "translating" it into terms of predominant relevance to the personal life of the foreign public.

Research can:

- a. Design an index of the dominant concerns in any given foreign population, which is more sensitive to changes in time than that provided by irregular surveys;
- b. Design and test the most effective translations of a given foreign policy into the language of predominant concerns among foreign populations.

If information on these two sets of data were readily available, foreign information programs would not be shaped exclusively in terms of events and of opinions and hunches held by the communicator, but could be more effectively adapted to the concerns of the persons to whom he speaks.

HS:mp
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Communist Deviation

The effort to defeat Communism in peacetime has by and large been predicated upon the assumption that the power of Communism must be reduced by turning Communists into non-Communists or anti-Communists. The history of Communism shows, however, that the most severe blows have been dealt to the movement by deviationists - Brandlerites, Trotskyites, Titoists, etc. - that is, by men who remained Communists but turned against the Soviet Politburo.

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Titoism, the first case of Communist deviation of a State rather than of individuals or factions within a national Communist party.

Every effort of anti-Stalinism in Europe should be bent upon the promotion of Titoism (and other forms of deviation within the national Communist parties.) The promotion of factionalism within the Communist parties of Europe is potentially more effective than efforts to reduce the size of the Communist parties by other means, because Communist parties are conspiratorial parties: their power cannot be measured by the number of party members and followers.

Research can determine:

- a. The political conditions under which deviationism has occurred;
- b. The experiences which have turned individual Communists into deviationists;
- c. The grievances of those Communists in western Europe who are critical of Stalinism - no less than about one out of every five Communists in France;
- d. The political and organizational techniques useful in promoting deviationism.

At present there are available accounts of intellectual defectors and deviationism (e.g., The God That Failed); classified studies of Soviet defectors who deserted to the West; political histories of deviationism (by Ruth Fischer, etc., and State Department studies), political polemics against Stalinism by heretics (e.g., Trotsky). No systematic effort has been made to study deviationism in western Europe by means of intensive interviews of former orthodox Communists in all walks of life and formerly active on all levels of the party apparatus hierarchy.

Because of the special personnel requirements, such research is difficult to conduct, but the difficulties can probably be overcome. The findings of such research would be more useful to anti-Communist measures than are ideological studies.

Ideological Aspects of the Cold War

It is not possible to commission the invention of ideas that will stir the minds of men. In general, research on the ideological aspects of the cold war is a subject of little practical value. There is one study, related to the "ideological" struggle between East and West, however, which is both scientifically interesting and practically important.

The non-Communist left in Europe is anti-Stalinist yet to a large degree pro-Marxist. Stalin (and Lenin) are widely regarded as the corrupters of the Marxian heritage which is held in high respect.

It can be shown, however, that the politics of Marx (as distinguished from his theoretical work) closely resembles the cynical and practical practices of Lenin and Stalin. Marx, like Lenin and Stalin, engaged in power politics without regard for the moral tenets of progressivism. In his dealings with the Socialists of the 1840's, like Weitling, Karl Grün, etc., and in his later struggle for power involving Bakunin, Lassalle and members of the First International, Marx ruthlessly applied all those means which are today associated with totalitarian politics in general, and with Lenin's and Stalin's political conduct in particular. Marx can be shown to have been as contemptuous of the masses as was Hitler, to have engaged as much as Lenin in character assassinations in order to eliminate political rivals, and to have had as little respect for liberal and humanistic values as Stalin.

A major descriptive analytic study of Marx's political record and the code of his political conduct, undertaken by a scholar or an institution above suspicion of partisanship and known for strength of liberal convictions, might substantially contribute to disabusing the European non-Communist left of its traditional belief in Marx as a great man in the history of radical progressivism. Such a study might help close the present gap between Marx and Stalin and identify the former, as well as the latter, as "the Machiavellian" he was. Marx could be left to the Communists, and the non-Communist left could reinforce its anti-Stalinism by anti-Marxism, thus ridding its ideology of its present paralyzing ambivalence.

In countries like France, Italy and western Germany the influence of the intellectual upon political life is greater than in the United States. Wide intellectual circles are still preoccupied with Marxism and the problems it raises. In this context, a study of the politics of Marx is likely to have more than merely historical interest and esoteric appeal, since it would be related to an ideological key problem of the present struggle between the East and the West.

German Nationalism

Many Frenchmen are apprehensive of a revival of German militarism and nationalism if Germany's contribution to European rearmament is not carefully enough balanced and if no measures are taken to protect France and Europe against a renewed abuse of military power by the Germans. Many Germans, in turn, resent distrust and political discrimination directed at Germany at a time when Germany may become the field of the first battles in a future war and when Germans are being called upon to fight in those battles not only for western Germany but in the interest of the West at large. There are other Germans who fear that the revival of a German military caste in connection with European rearmament may jeopardize the stability and growth of their new democratic institutions.

The crucial element in the situation is the military requirements of NATO for the defense of the West, but these requirements have to be weighed against the political risks feared by Frenchmen, Germans and others, including some Americans.

Research can help to determine these risks more closely than fear, prejudice and guess-work can do. It is possible to study:

1. The past traditions, aspirations and political influence of the German military class - subjects largely hidden behind cliches created during the last two world wars;
2. The present economic and social status of former members of that military class, i.e., former officers of higher rank;
3. Their present political affiliations and aspirations;
4. Their estimates of Germany's military and political role in the future.

No systematic study of this important subject has been undertaken.