

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON INVESTIGATION OF ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS
FOR INTERVIEWING HUNGARIAN REFUGEES

I. Assumptions Concerning the Interest of the Ford Foundation
in Interviews of Hungarian Refugees:

1. The Ford Foundation has been approached by several organizations which desire support for Hungarian refugee interviewing projects aimed at increasing American knowledge concerning Hungary. Since the International Training and Research Program intends to add to American knowledge and competence in non-West European or western Hemisphere areas, it is interested in knowing whether such interviewing projects would meet a major need in this field.

2. The type of project on which the Program most needs information is that involving systematic interviewing techniques aimed at securing a considerable range of data on the social, institutional, and attitudinal development of Hungary as a Soviet satellite.

3. A very important aspect of this question is the extent to which systematic interviewing programs directed to the Hungarian refugees have already been undertaken by governmental and private agencies. The Program therefore desires to find out what projects of this nature are underway, and to have a preliminary evaluation of their utility. Such evaluation would be assisted by direct conversation with the project supervisors, and by securing the appraisal of other qualified persons.

4. While the Ford Foundation at present does not possess the information to enable it to reach a decision on any form of collaboration with Hungarian refugee interviewing, there is no certainty that it would be in a position to undertake such collaboration even if the preliminary survey should indicate that such projects are needed.

II. Results of Survey:

1. Academic Institutions. Apparently no major academic center for studying East Europe is planning to undertake an interview project. While I talked only to Prof. ROBERT

of the Russian Institute and the Program on East Central Europe, Columbia, I understand that Dr. SHULMAN of the Russian Research Center at Harvard and Prof. BYRNES of Indiana gave similar responses. Prof. ROBERTS, however, does feel that there is a considerable need for a broad interviewing project. He feels that the Russian Institute has a responsibility to keep in touch with developments in order to be able to consider taking action should other agencies fail to fill the need. Prof. ROBERTS particularly stressed the importance of an approach based on a thorough acquaintance with the specific Hungarian situation, especially the historical background. He feels that there is a danger that an interview project, while soundly conceived in general social science terms, might overlook many of the unique features of the Hungarian situation. In particular, it might neglect the opportunities for verification through cross-examination of respondents and comparison of responses on specific situations.

The Russian Institute and the Program on East Central Europe would find it difficult to undertake direction and supervision of a project as extensive as would be required, as they do not have the staff or administrative machinery set up for such an undertaking in the very near future. Consequently, they do not desire to take the initiative, but have a continuing interest in cooperating with any soundly based project.

In general, I believe that the East European research centers are in somewhat the same position as the Ford Foundation. They feel that they have a responsibility to investigate activities in this field, and might feel impelled to undertake or assist projects if they felt that the opportunities would otherwise go by default.

2. The Liberation Committees. The committees naturally have a very strong interest in use of Hungarian oral informants for their day-to-day programming. The Free Europe Committee (FEC) has done a certain amount of apparently superficial interviewing of refugees in Austria in connection with its immediate need for assessing its broadcasts. A much more substantial program is underway through the research analysis staff of the New York office. It is directed by Mr. Edmund STILLMAN, with the consultative services of Dr. Henry GLEITMAN, a psychologist from Swarthmore College. They began late

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in December to select a sample of 70 Hungarians, distributed by age and occupation. Each isto be interviewed by Hungarians from the FEC staff, or selected by it, under the close supervision of Messrs. GLEITMAN and STILLMAN, and probably other consultants. GLEITMAN tried some direct interviews in German, but found they did not work well even with intellectuals.

The interviewers are to be guided by a very extensive questionnaire. I saw a draft, but will be mailed the complete version next week. It is directed to the entire area of developments in Hungary since it became a Soviet satellite, and relates these developments to the historical background. This is by no means merely an opinion or attitudinal study. Still, it is very heavily social psychological in orientation, and appears to understress political and institutional elements to some extent. It does not undertake the type of case analysis of specific areas and events over a limited time which would permit thorough cross-checking and cross-examining of respondents, such as would be possible in a study such as Prof. ROBERTS suggested.

Though the interviewers are guided by a questionnaire, the interviews are primarily "non-directive," "depth" type; i.e., the respondent is to be encouraged to discuss each topic freely and at length. Each interview (about five had already been made) runs about two days, and it is estimated that the total interviewing process will take all of January and February. One thousand questionnaires asking for short answers to specific questions will be mailed. All respondents will be paid.

The government has cooperated by permitting the FEC staff access to the Camp Kilmer refugee center, and continued contact with the refugees is being maintained through the welfare groups which have relocated them.

While no binding assurances could be made, Mr. STILLMAN felt confident that all the raw data from the interviews would be made available to qualified scholars in March; in addition, the FEC staff hoped to have some thorough, long-range studies made and published from the material.

Opinions on the FEC project vary widely. One of the outstanding East European academic specialists feels that the study is in competent hands, and is off to such

a good start that it might well fulfill the primary need for interview projects. Other academic and private specialists--perhaps less well acquainted with the FEC project--expressed strong reservations. Government circles in Washington had little if any knowledge of it, but almost unanimously doubted that FEC was equipped or oriented to do a complete job, stressing the tendency of FEC projects to become heavily directed to programming needs. Some well-informed men in other aspects of liberation work expressed much the same reservations.

The American Committee for Liberation is only peripherally engaged in Hungarian interviewing, principally in connection with Hungarian-Soviet relations and attitudes. My conversations with the Chairman, Mr. Howland SARGEANT, and the East European specialist, Mr. Isaac PATCH, led me to believe that these modest aims will be well taken care of. However, they have been able to locate only a very few Russian defectors; consequently the whole aspect appears to be of third-rate importance.

III. Government Agencies and Contracts:

Until last month, according to well-placed informants, there was a general government policy against interviewing Hungarian refugees for informational purposes, arising from a desire to avoid appearance of exploitation of the Hungarian situation for U.S. interests. Some tentative efforts were made by various agencies operating in a more or less sub-rosa fashion to do interviewing, but these efforts were limited, superficial, and uncoordinated. Last month this policy was reversed when it became clear that it was very important to the U.S. to obtain information from the refugees. At the present time, intelligence interviewing is going on, and Col. LIVELY, G-2, Ft. Meade, is keeping a file of refugees and their potential value, in order to undertake if feasible broad interviewing later on.

At present the only organized government-sponsored project beyond the intelligence field is a contract arrangement made by the Department of Defense with the Special Operations Research Bureau of American University, headed by Col. RASMUSSEN (USA, ret.). The situation has changed drastically within the past few days, and still is not entirely clear to me. Apparently, however, the RASMUSSEN project precludes other Defense Department arrangements for the time being. Unfortunately, I was able to talk only to Lt. Col. John WILSON, Coordinator

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of Research, Office of the Chief of Special Weapons Activities, Department of the Army, among those directly involved in making this contract. Mr. Edward WETTER, the executive secretary of the Coordinating Committee for Research and Special Operations of the Department of Defense (the agency responsible for the contract decision) was not in Washington, nor were two important consultants on the Advisory Panel on Special Operations, Mr. Leonard COTTRELL of the Russell Sage Foundation, and Dr. Jack RILEY of Rutgers University.

Col. WILSON feels that Col. RASMUSSEN is competent to proceed with a thorough study of the communication processes by which the Hungarians received information, and of the reasons which led them to seek flight. At present, this is all that Col. RASMUSSEN is authorized to investigate. In order to do this, he has arranged sub-contractual services from the Social Science Research Bureau, an independent agency, formerly with American University and apparently still non-profit, and Psychological Research Associates, Arlington. Most if not all of the work so far has been done by the Social Science Research Bureau. I talked to its director, Mr. Robert BOWER, by phone, and obtained additional information direct from Col. RASMUSSEN, who gave me copies of the questionnaires BOWER had prepared. These consist of a long series of questions requiring short answers (yes, no, specific facts, etc.) which can be correlated statistically. They will be administered to 300-500 refugees. As noted, they are directed almost entirely to communications and escape and rebellion motivation, and provide only a slight coverage of the basic sociological, institutional, and attitudinal questions. Col. RASMUSSEN says that he will probably make his raw data available to outside scholars.

Mr. BOWER said that he intended to carry out the project with the aid of about three other social scientists and a team of Hungarian interviewers. All questioning will be done in the U.S. Both he and Col. RASMUSSEN would like to do a much more extensive project, which they say would cover all the aspects noted above. They feel confident of their ability to do this, but everyone in the government with whom I talked (most outside did not know the RASMUSSEN operation), except Col. WILSON, were extremely skeptical. They point out that the Psychological Research Associates is a small organization of psychologists without any experience in a broad problem of this nature; and that RASMUSSEN and BOWER

themselves are limited. After talking to both these men, I am bound to say that this is certainly my impression; and that I believe that they do not even understand the implications of a broad interview project. Col. WILSON, however, is very concerned that too many projects will attempt to deal with the refugees, and thus "spoil" them. He intimated that the commanding general at Camp Kilmer felt very strongly on this point, too, and intended to keep "outsiders" away.

While the RASMUSSEN project is the only thing actually undertaken by the government at present, it seems desirable to summarize the views of two very important officials with whom I talked. Dr. Nathan PELCOVITS, Director of the External Research Bureau, Department of State, has a strong interest and very definite views. He was originally interested in the possibility of setting up an interview project under the Air Associates, Inc., in Cambridge, but this seems definitely to have fallen through. At present, his hope is that some high-level scholar in the East European field will undertake to direct a major interview effort with foundation support. PELCOVITS believes that such a man could attract a team of half a dozen competent area and discipline specialists from various universities, who could do the job in a six months' period, using Hungarian interviewers. He believes the Office of Intelligence Research could lend two social scientists specializing in the Hungarian area. PELCOVITS thinks the job could be done for about \$100,000 and, as noted, in six months. He believes that any dispersed foundation support would be far less valuable. PELCOVITS thinks that the problem of "muddying the waters" through over-interviewing is not severe, in view of the large number of refugees available; as a result present FEC projects and others should not preclude more extensive efforts. Mr. Edward CARROLL of the UBIA generally concurred in Dr. PELCOVITS' views.

Mr. Robert AMORY, Dep. Director of the CIA, has a quite different view. He thinks that no large, coordinated project by private organizations is necessary, but that a considerable number of scholars working on small or individual projects should be encouraged and supported. He believes that neither the time factor, nor the over-interviewing factor, within reasonable limits, presents a problem. He knows of no CIA-sponsored projects, however.

IV. Other Channels:

Mr. Larry FINKELSTEIN indicated that the Carnegie Foundation has no plans for supporting an interview project. Apparently the Carnegie Corporation and the Rockefeller Foundation are in the same position.

As indicated above, Air Associates, Inc., Cambridge, a commercial organization, had hoped to secure a government contract to operate in this field, but has no immediate prospects. Mr. SANDERS, in charge of its activities in this field, indicated (by telephone) to me that his organization felt in an especially good position to undertake a Hungarian interview project because it had done the Human Resources Area Files handbook on Hungary, and had as associates a number of qualified scholars, including a social psychologist, Dr. Perlmutter, and Prof. Gyorgy in political science. It also has a close association with the Harvard Russian Research Center and MIT. Their planning in the field had not proceeded far.

According to indirect information, Prof. Jack RILEY, sociology, Rutgers, had attempted some interviewing in Kilmer, but was "chased out" by the commanding general. His present plan is to train a number of refugees at Rutgers, with the hope that they can be used considerably later in an interview project.

International Research Associates, New York, a commercial agency, formerly part of the Elmo Roper organization, did a study of "Media of Communication and the Free World as Seen by Hungarian Refugees" among earlier defectors in 1952, for the Division of Radio Program Evaluation of the Department of State. Since Nov. 25 it has conducted a large number of short-answer interviews lasting about one hour each in Austria, and will have the project completed for International Public Opinion Research, Inc., by January 15. Both of these studies were strictly on communication and motivation, and the organization, its director Mr. Elmo WILSON, told me, would like to continue in a broader field, but has no immediate prospects. It, I learned elsewhere, tried unsuccessfully to get a contract from the Free Europe Committee. I saw little to indicate that this organization is more than a public-opinion poll set-up, although it doubtless has some contacts from its earlier effort.

Mr. CARROLL of USIA told me that the Fessel Institute,

The Austrian affiliate of the Gallup organization, is making a small interview project related to communications and expectations of refugees before flight. Part of its work is for the Gallup organization, part for a group of U.S. publishing houses.

V. Summary

At present only two substantial interviewing projects have been set up, with the possible exception of the Austrian Fessel Inst. and the special project of the International Research Association, both working in Austria.

The Free Europe Committee project is broad and comprehensive, will be available to scholars, and draws on considerable resources. It is rather strongly psychological in orientation, and limited to refugees in the U.S. Evaluations of this project differ rather sharply.

The "RASMUSSEN" project, the only one now government-sponsored, appears to be wholly inadequate except for a limited investigation of recent opinions and experiences. There is grave reason to doubt that these channels could undertake a broader project.

While other private research organizations (other than academic) have more advantages, they have no immediate prospects, and all seem to have considerable limitations. They do not seem to have sufficient understanding of the problems involved in broad research, and it is questionable whether they have the administrative resources to carry out such a project.

The major academic research centers on East Europe and the foundations are reluctant to proceed in this field unless their work appears indispensable.

With a few exceptions, well-informed specialists feel that the present efforts are insufficient to utilize the opportunity presented by the Hungarian refugees, and feel that coordination, support, and encouragement by the Ford Foundation or other private source would be very valuable. Their concrete concepts of the best way to undertake support, and the types of projects which should be encouraged vary widely, however.