

SECURITY INFORMATION

March 6, 1952

To: Director, PSB

SUGGESTION FOR IMPROVING FACILITIES FOR IDEOLOGICAL WARFARE.

A. THE PROBLEM

1. In some sectors of the cold war we are making substantial progress. In the most important and fundamental sector, however, we are still dangerously outgunned. In fact, we are practically unarmed.
2. This is the area of ideological or philosophic conflict, with particular reference to book distribution. Here the performance of the communists is shrewd, effective and often inspired.
3. They have been conducting for 30 years a well-planned campaign, aimed at inspiring the will to win among their own supporters, obtaining new converts, and sapping the strength of opposition, in which the permanent literature of communism plays a fundamental part.
4. Their basic strategy is simple; they are throwing the book at us. Long ago they adopted the sound principle that ephemeral types of propaganda, such as the radio, pamphlets, newspapers, are ineffective unless they are related to a philosophic frame of reference embodied in a permanent literature. They have recognized that this literature must be in book form, scholarly in tone, that it should refer constantly to philosophy and history. They have recognized that a give-away book or pamphlet always carries the suspicion of propaganda. Therefore, they have subsidized standard books to bring them down to a price level which the native population could pay. Then they have promoted them with great vigor. By its very quantity, this permanent literature creates the impression of validity and growing strength. By vigorous promotion, it gains the glamour of inspiration and enthusiasm. A Soviet broadcast may be pegged to the news, but it is intimately related to the basic philosophy developed in the permanent literature of communism. The fact that our radio broadcasts are forced to reply to this without reference to any universally available literature of our own, only adds to the significance of theirs. It is proof to the world that we are on the ropes.
5. They have taken advantage of the weakness of book distribution systems in many parts of the world by building up their own, then enjoying an insulated readership. There are reported to be some 200 communist book stores on the Continent. It is claimed that the Soviet book trust has spent \$4 million in France alone. They are making substantial progress in the libraries of India and the recent growth of the Communist Party there is in substantial part the result.

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6. The communist philosophy is full of internal contradictions and assumptions that can stand only when they are unchallenged. Communist criticisms of our society are largely false and cannot stand refutation. They can, however, stand up against a piecemeal defense, which is the essential weakness of the radio and other types of ephemeral propaganda, such as pamphlets, magazine articles, newspapers, etc. A political and economic philosophy can only be upset by the same type of media upon which it based its original strength. It is upon the quantity of their permanent literature and the vigor of its promotion that the communists have based their concept of the inevitableness of their revolution. Thought leaders in critical areas throughout the world are every day being profoundly influenced by the communist concept of "historic fatalism." The communists have adapted our political bandwagon technique to their ideological conquest of the world, and it is working. And their ideological conquest is the first step toward military and political domination.

7. The success of their tactic is illustrated by "The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union -- Short Course." This 364-page book, beautifully printed on excellent paper, sells for \$1 in this country and much less abroad. The world circulation to date is said to run in the neighborhood of 25 million. It is probably out-selling any other book in the world, including the Bible. Under the guise of a scholarly history it is violently biased, and full of internal contradictions and specious reasoning based on dubious unilateral assumptions of fact. Yet, it is a powerful agency in making converts to the communist cause, because of its unchallenged assumption of the invincibility and historic destiny of the Party. There is no anti-communist book to challenge it, although it is an obvious target. Moreover, as we are now organized, any reply to this book -- even if it were the perfect rebuttal -- would get a circulation in this country of no more than 6,000 copies and practically no foreign distribution.

8. Our lack of preparedness in this area of ideological warfare is indefensible, especially in view of our huge expenditures in the military and economic fields. The communists emphasize their Agitprop as much as they do the Red Army or the Five Year Plan, and we must be prepared to meet them on even terms here as elsewhere. It is an open question if we dare enter any plan for world disarmament as long as we are so completely outclassed in this field.

9. One of the results of our neglect of world book distribution has been to discourage scholars, scientists and philosophers from serious work in this field. There are little or no financial rewards and even more important, few rewards in terms of world reputation. As a result, writers competent to produce excellent propaganda material in the ideological sector are devoting their energies elsewhere.

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10. The lack of a world readership has tended toward ideological isolationism. The existence of an international audience would stimulate efforts to reconcile our beliefs with the prevailing social philosophies of liberal thinkers in Europe. Many of our differences are merely matters of semantics, but we are allowing the communists to drive a wedge between us.

B. SUGGESTED SOLUTION

1. In recent interviews with representative book publishers it developed that the book trade has long been conscious of the situation, but that a lack of overall planning and policy direction from the Government has handicapped cooperation from publishers and others connected with book production, distribution and use.

2. It was stated that the cost of printing books in America is so high that there is practically no market for American board-bound books except in the technical classification. It is entirely up to the American publisher whether or not he makes any effort to arrange for publication in a foreign country and he would rarely gamble on a book in the philosophic field. Our successful experience in manufacturing and distributing inexpensive reprints has not been applied to the foreign field. The Information Centers Service Division, International Information Administration (formerly The Division of Libraries and Institutes of the State Department) operates on a very small appropriation; as one publisher expressed it: "They operate on the scale of worrying about getting one book into one foreign library." A few books have been distributed in CARE packages, but apparently there is not much drive back of this effort. The Media Guaranty program of MSA has been of some assistance in limited areas, but is handicapped by policy with respect to counterpart funds. The Committee for Free Europe has paid little attention to book distribution. The book trade's own overseas distribution organization, USIBA, had to be liquidated in 1947 because it could not operate profitably on a strictly commercial basis.

3. The most promising attack to date on the problem is a recent proposal by a group of publishers representing the three book trade associations (ABPC, ATPI and AAUP) originated in cooperation with interested members of the State Department. Proposed is a non-profit organization, eligible to receive Government, foundation or private funds for its general support and special projects. Inasmuch as book publishing is not a sufficiently profitable trade to yield the funds necessary to finance what needs to be done, an appropriation of approximately \$5 million has been requested of Congress, and the matter is now under consideration by the Mooney sub-committee. The purpose of the corporation is to procure, produce and distribute existing works in English and in translation, to create suitable works where none exist, to meet Soviet competition and

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to ensure a climate in Asia, Latin America and elsewhere sympathetic if possible, and at least tolerant, to our economics, culture, education and technology. The book trade has through its association offered a slate of possible publisher members for a board of directors for this corporation, it being understood that the directorate would include also representatives of government, foundations and the public. The book trade has further indicated that the right people could be secured from within the industry to staff and operate such a corporation here and abroad.

(a) Previous experience has indicated the practicality of such industry-government cooperation. Two notable examples have been Editions for the Armed Services, Inc., which during the war produced millions of cheap books on a closed market basis; and the Bibliography Committee, which through the American Council of Learned Societies and with joint industry and government contributions, has produced two large volumes of a selective bibliography of U.S. scientific, medical and technical books.

(b) Open to the corporation are many types of operation, some commercial, some eleemosynary, some purely propagandistic. For example, in the first category might be a provision for supplying convertibility of currency in a country like Argentina, receptive to U.S. books, but without present means of acquiring them; in the second the gift, through foundation, Point IV or other funds, to school and college libraries; in the third the introduction of carefully chosen titles (sometimes written for the purpose) for sale at less than cost and at a level appropriate to the native economy in countries like India and China. To know what should and can be done, on-the-spot surveys by experienced persons must be made as quickly as possible. These surveys should include a study of book needs, practices and opportunities in designated countries; book production facilities abroad; and a survey of all official and unofficial groups here (such as TCA, MSA, USIS and CARE) concerned with getting books abroad. These surveys should be made quickly and thoroughly, under authoritative direction. They would cost, on a broad estimate, between \$250,000 and \$500,000, and while the first recommendations should be made within six months, the work would be carried on as a continuing study for a now unpredictable length of time. In this study cultural and commercial attaches of the State Department would be of the greatest collateral use.

(c) Coincidentally, and independently of the projected corporation, the work of The Information Centers Service Division, International Information Administration should be broadened and intensified.

(d) A special group, chosen with particular care, should be assembled from American education to study the textbook problem,

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particularly the supply to Asiatic areas of illustrated low-level texts in the native tongues, written in collaboration with native scholars and printed in the country of use. This is a delicate matter, but one of grave future importance.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

Inasmuch as a promising solution to a problem underlying all our psychological warfare activities is now in a critical state, it is suggested that PSB take whatever action is possible to help push the project through. This might include obtaining the official blessing of NSC, making representations to Congressional committees to hasten affirmative action, and searching for other sources of more immediately available funds. In particular, between [REDACTED] should be sought at once, possibly from such agencies as CIA, for the preliminary surveys which might otherwise delay the major project.

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Consultant

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