



Renata Nowaczewska*
Szczecin

“Winning the Hearts and Minds”: The Intellectual Cold War and the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations’ Exchange Programs in Eastern Europe

Abstract

At the end of World War II, American private foundations hoped to restore the pre-war relations with the research institutes, universities, and individual scholars in Europe. The Iron Curtain that divided the continent prevented a further expansion of their programs. Planned for the betterment of humankind, to improve health and education, advance scientific research, and facilitate worldwide scientific cooperation, the foundations’ exchange programs aimed at breaking barriers, overcoming differences, and leading to international understanding. However, in the new geopolitical circumstances, they served other purposes. By providing access to knowledge and different perspectives on ideas and values, the exchange programs contributed to the formation of the elite intellectual networks that undermined and finally brought Communism down. This article provides an insight into the reasons for the two foundations’ early involvement in Eastern Europe and their distinct methods and compares these to the public diplomacy efforts. It also discusses the radically different reception of activities undertaken by public and private organizations that strengthened the plea for the “hearts and minds” of the people behind the Iron Curtain.

Keywords: Philanthropy, Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation, exchange programs, Cold War, Eastern Europe

Słowa kluczowe: filantropia, Fundacja Rockefellera, Fundacja Forda, programy wymiany, Zimna Wojna, Europa Wschodnia

In the study of the roots of the collapse of Communism, the frequently omitted or rather unappreciated causes are the effects of exchange programs facilitated by private philanthropic foundations. The purpose of this article is to discuss the prominent role played by the American private philanthropic foundations

* Uniwersytet Szczeciński; e-mail: renata.nowaczewska@usz.edu.pl;
ORCID: 0000-0002-3766-8966.

in opening up training and career opportunities to scholars, promoting international cooperation, enhancing the dissemination of knowledge, and, in consequence, contributing to the overall improvement of human progress. It is the contention of this paper that programs and projects supported by the foundations were a continuation of their pre-war activities in various fields of study that served purely scientific purposes. However, in the new geopolitical situation that emerged after the Second World War, every program gained immense significance of almost strategic relevance to East-West relations. In the ideological struggle for the "hearts and minds" of the people around the world, every effort to present the "truth" about the USA, in contradiction to Soviet propaganda, became part of a greater public diplomacy effort. In the two-system race for primacy and victory, equally to the American mass culture, the exchange programs turned out to be a dominant channel of disseminating information. The long-term effects the exchange programs produced were initially unintended. Nevertheless, they contributed to the formation of the elite intellectual networks critical of the Communist regimes, which generated new attitudes towards them, undermining and finally subduing the system.

The article provides an overview of private foundations' presence in Eastern Europe in the early Cold War period.¹ Firstly, it discusses the reasons for foundations' involvement in the region, the role they played in the international arena, and the methods they applied. Secondly, the article juxtaposes the foundations' efforts with the US government's initiatives towards the development of cultural diplomacy programs after World War II, providing a glimpse into the response they evoked both at home and abroad. Lastly, it addresses the short and long-time possible effects the programs brought.

In the beginning, the opposing ways private philanthropic foundations have been portrayed in literature should be discussed. American foundations and their donors have been subjected to several evaluations in the course of time, undergoing scrutiny by the US establishment, the public, and scholars, attracting equal criticism and praise, suspicion, and confidence: from the opinion of being the security investments of the industrial period's "robber barons" through the accusations of tax-evasion to making people dependent on charitable giving; from subordinating the American society to the values, norms, and aims of the wealthy, corrupting and abusing the foundations of the American system for the self-serving purposes, up to un-American activity, disloyalty, and the support of the Communist regimes.²

¹ By Eastern Europe, I mean here not the geographical region (part of Europe, differentiating the Central vs. the Eastern and the Western parts of Europe) but rather the geopolitical concept, defining the countries under the Soviet sphere of influence, behind the Iron Curtain, as opposed to Western Europe, referring to the countries remaining in the liberal, democratic, capitalist system in coalition with the USA.

² E.C. Lindeman, 1936; F. Lundberg, 1968; Th.C. Reeves, 1970; J.C. Goulden, 1971; M. Cunnigim, 1972; W.E. Nielsen, 1972; K. Phillips, 2002. See also: Tax-Exempt Foundations, H.R. 561, 82nd Cong. Select Committee to Investigate Tax-Exempt Foundations and Comparable Organizations, 1952; Tax-Exempt Foundations: Hearings on H.R. 217, 83rd Cong. Special Committee to Investigate Tax-Exempt Foundations and Comparable Organizations, 1954.

In recent scholarship, the topic of American foundations' involvement in the processes of influencing the foreign public, reconstructing science while "hegemonizing" it, as well as their impact on the democratization of societies in Europe and elsewhere, have received some attention.³ They have been portrayed as both "the ends and means of hegemonic social and political forces," mobilizing academics overseas to create networks of scholars. The foundations are said to have targeted elite academic hubs. The intellectual influence these "centers of excellence" have radiated, according to one author, overlooks the expectations and the value of the invested resources.⁴ Particularly the big private foundations, such as the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, the Carnegie Corporation, or, more recently, the Gates Foundation, have been viewed as successfully combining "scientific advantage with economic and political leverage." What was presented by the foundations as "sharing" science, in reality, is seen as "promoting" American values abroad. On the other hand, their activities are evaluated as building a consolidated, stable Atlantic community that would resist the lethal impact of the -isms, including Fascism, Nazism, and Communism.⁵ Furthermore, it was understood that by keeping these short-range relations both with the countries in the West and the ones that had found themselves in the Soviet sphere of influence, the foundations helped counterbalance increasing anti-Americanism in Europe.⁶ On the other hand, the US government's public diplomacy efforts have been discussed as mostly concentrating on the approach to lure the regime nations into the realms of democratic systems by presenting the achievements of American science, technological advancement, and culture, as well as by presenting the benefits of the capitalist-driven modern lifestyle.⁷

Meanwhile, the foundations have instead been focusing on the formation of scientific networks, largely utilizing scholarships, fellowships, and various educational and cultural exchange programs. These programs have been adopted by the public, private, and non-profit sectors alike, formulating and disseminating the US government's foreign policy objectives, whose aim was to form global elites oriented towards democratic ideals, peace-loving open societies, and a liberal economy.⁸ In spite of the crucial role the programs have played in international scientific and political relations, their impact has, nevertheless, been both poorly researched and often underestimated.⁹

Private foundations' activities in Eastern Europe have been mostly analyzed from the standpoint of their engagement in the erection of democratic structures, the formation of civic societies based on the newly established non-profit

³ R.F. Arnove, 1982; D. Fisher, 1983; L.E. Kay, 1997; J. Krige, 2006; I. Parmar, 2012.

⁴ I. Parmar, 2012, p. 7–8.

⁵ J. Krige, 2006, p. 3.

⁶ J. Krige, 1999, p. 333–361.

⁷ M.L. Krenn, 2017; W.L. Hixson, 1998; J.C.E. Gienow-Heicht, 1999; L.A. Belmonte, 2008; A. Stephan, 2008.

⁸ G. Gemelli, 1998; V.R. Berghahn, 1999, p. 399–402; idem, 2001; F. Stonor Saunders, 2000; I. Parmar, 2004; T. Smith, 1995.

⁹ G. Scott-Smith, 2020, p. 39–40; L. Tournes, G. Scott-Smith, 2017.

sector, drumming up support for liberal capitalist reforms, and solidifying the inclusion into the Western world via shared values, ideas, norms, and alliances – scientific, political, and military. However, scholarly studies have concentrated mostly on the period after the fall of the Communist Block and the system transformation.¹⁰

This article is an attempt to reconsider some of the opinions and tackle the inadequacy of studies on the exchange programs, their effectiveness, and the likely impact the private foundations created in Eastern Europe in the early Cold War period.

First, before any evaluation of the programs sponsored by the foundations in the battle for the “souls” of the people behind the Iron Curtain is made, the reasons for their decision to enter and/or reenter the region need to be addressed.

The first reason derives from the experience, cooperation, and direct relations that were established mainly by the Rockefeller Foundation (RF) during the interwar period, which brought philanthropic programs up to new levels of quality. With the atrocities of WWII coming to an end and the people of Europe having faced an overwhelming destruction and human loss, the RF was the first to take up the challenge of reconstruction. Established by John D. Rockefeller in 1913, the Foundation embraced many of the previous Rockefeller organizations’ projects, such as the International Health Board and the General Education Board. They were mostly focused on education, medical research, and public health projects. During and after the First World War, the Foundation not only continued to “promote the wellbeing and to advance the civilization of the peoples (...) in [the] acquisition and dissemination of knowledge,” as we may read in its charter, but also expanded beyond the American borders, establishing long-lasting relations with partnering institutions and individual scholars in, among others, European countries.¹¹

The devastating consequences of the Second World War triggered a fully-fledged response from the Foundation, which reached out to the scientific communities with the intention to provide war relief, similar to the one organized after the Great War, and to rejuvenate the scientific life and help catch up after the “years of silence and intellectual darkness.”¹² The RF’s willingness to restore scientific cooperation with the countries behind the Iron Curtain bore similarities to the drive to keep up the connections with the totalitarian states before World War II. At the time of the Nazi regime’s rising to power and

¹⁰ S.M. Wunker, 1991, p. 89–107; S.L.Q. Flaherty, 1992, p. 335–50; M. Lazar, 1996; K.F. Quigley, 1997; F. Pinter, 2001. There have been several works on the Rockefeller Foundation activities in Poland in the interwar period, such as: P. Weindling, 1993, p. 253–67; B.B. Page, 2002, p. 265–87; M.A. Balinska, 2000, p. 419–32; S. Kuźma-Markowska, 2018. Nevertheless, they all discuss the work of the Foundation as a wider plan of improving knowledge and practices in, for example, public health, drumming up scientific cooperation, or creating a global network, rather than acting out of the concern for political reasons. There are studies looking into the snowball effect of American philanthropy supporting the development of Polish non-governmental organizations that have become engaged in the democratic transformation in the region. P. Pospieszna, 2014.

¹¹ *An Act to Incorporate the Rockefeller Foundation, New York Laws of 1913, Charter 488, Approved, May 14, 1913.*

¹² Rockefeller Foundation [hereafter quoted: RF], *The Annual Report, 1946*, p. 7.

Japan destroying the Chinese University, which had been generously supported by the RF, the further commitment of the Foundation to these countries was debated. However eccentric it might have seemed, the RF nevertheless persisted, as its aim was to promote scholarship “without consideration of flags or political doctrines or creeds or sects.”¹³ The Foundation strove to retain political neutrality, no matter if Fascist, Communist, or Nazi. “The regimes (...) would have no bearing on [the] desire to promote scientific work’ in medical research and public health,” it declared. The Foundation understood that the fields of natural sciences and social sciences appeared not to be “free from political control or coloration.” Despite the strong reservations the work and cooperation in these fields generated, the Foundation was far from resigning.¹⁴ It sought to keep cooperation active and efficient for two reasons: reducing the knowledge gap and providing access.

However, it must be pointed out that many expressions of the foundations’ largess were not welcomed by the European academic world. It was seen as yet another way of usurping cultural domination. The plan to bring German history teachers to the United States as part of the “German rehabilitation program” was heavily criticized. While the RF anticipated that the “new converts to genuine democracy will return with their heads full of bright ideas learned in the U.S.”¹⁵ to spread knowledge, it was missing a key point. The teaching methods, contexts, or knowledge could not possibly be transplanted from the US directly onto European soil. Nevertheless, this case did not prevent it from further engaging in the rebuilding of European science.

The goal of reconstructing the scientific community was not confined to Western Europe only. The Foundation had already diverted part of its interest and resources to Eastern Europe after the First World War. With new countries gaining their independence, the RF saw a great opportunity of creating a “new middle Europe based upon the recognition of even justice with international team play substituted for German domination,” wedged between “German militarism” and the spread of Bolshevism.¹⁶ In this scenario, Czechoslovakia and Poland were to become model countries for the region. Similarly, after the Second World War, these countries drew much of the Foundation’s attention as they were relatively open to the West, at the same time offering the most active cooperation with the USSR, exerting a potential impact upon the Soviet sphere through their publications, scientific networks, and the random exchanges.

Another reason for the foundations’ engagement was related to the endured isolation that was understood to persist after the hostilities were over, having a detrimental impact on scientific life in Europe. Sooner or later, it would stall

¹³ Rockefeller Archive Center [hereafter: RAC], Rockefeller Foundation Records [hereafter: RF], Record Group [further: RG] 1.1, series 717, box 2, folder 10, Raymond Fosdick to Felix Frankfurter, Dec. 7, 1936; RF, *Annual Report for 1937*, p. 13–14.

¹⁴ RF, *Confidential Monthly Report*, October 1, 1937, quoted in: M. Richardson, 1990, p. 56.

¹⁵ RAC, RF, RG 2, series 700, box 465, folder 3118, German rehabilitation program.

¹⁶ RAC, RF, RG 1.1, series 712, box 3, folder 16, Wickliffe Rose, Selskar M. Gunn, The Public Health Situation in Czecho-Slovakia, a report of a visit, 17–26.02.1920. This diversion of the attention towards Eastern Europe is presented by P. Weindling, 1993, p. 253–267.

the scientific community on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean as well. Devoid of inspiration, cooperation, and competition, American researchers not only owed much to their European partners but also needed them. That at least was the conviction that the RF shared and the second reason for the Foundation's decision to counter highly disturbing conditions, to reconnect, and to generate “the worldwide community of scholars and scientists.”¹⁷

The third reason was the method adopted by the Foundation at the earliest stages of its formation: the conviction that change is brought about by people. It inclined the RF to establish a fellowship program that would focus on individual talents, help create networks, train experts in European and American institutions, and drum up interest in the application of the most modern scientific solutions. Since Rockefeller's philanthropy had been grounded upon humanist ideals, it became apparent that personal contact mattered the most, making people establish bonds that would endure despite geographic and political barriers.¹⁸

These barriers would never “prevent diseases from spreading,” which had become the principal reason for the establishment of the International Health Board, whose activities were later taken over by the RF. Initially, it was pure science that had the Foundation distribute the vast resources at hand. It aimed at creating broad support in the medical sciences and public health programs, improving the quality of nurses' training and the education of medical doctors and public health officials, and eradicating the diseases such as malaria, hookworm disease, yellow fever, tuberculosis, and many more.¹⁹ Thus, the result was that the betterment of humanity and the conditions people lived in served as the permanent foci of the Foundation's post-war engagement and a logical and most natural direction of the program's expansion rather than a political one.

Consequently, once the RF established its field office in Paris after the First World War, it extended its comprehensive program also to Eastern and Central Europe, encompassing first Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Yugoslavia, and later Bulgaria and Romania, taking it further to the Balkan states. Similarly, after the Second World War, in spite of the changing political climate, the RF took to the same countries, now stranded behind the Iron Curtain, to continue its programs and support science and the expansion of knowledge.

The three major methods undertaken were the rehabilitation of science, restoring normal cooperation, and giving general access to information, facilities and resources. The first initiative by the RF in cooperation with the Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation was the library program. The foundations sponsored a multitude of projects conducted by the American Library Association (ALA), one of the organizations that were acting as an intermediary

¹⁷ RAC, RF, RG 1.1, series 700S, box 23, folder 169, Letter from Robert Crane to Willits, Director of Social Sciences, October 6, 1947; RF, RG 1.1, series 700 S, box 23, folder 170, Crane Robert Treat- Reports of his visit to British and French Universities.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ For more on the programs conducted by the Rockefeller Sanitary Commission, International Health Board and later the RF, see: J. Farley, 2004; J. Ettling, 1981.

between the foundations and receipt institutions, government institutions, and libraries. The devastated libraries throughout Europe required extensive funding for rebuilding, refurbishing, and renewing the destroyed equipment, as well as personnel training. Most importantly, however, the libraries needed the replacement of lost volumes, destroyed by fires and bombardments, stolen, or deliberately devastated by censorship, hence everything that “destroyed the foundations of free intellectual and artistic activity and expression.”²⁰ Besides sending thousands of books from various fields, from reference books and books on medicine, technology, and economics to books on sociology, philosophy, and education, the libraries were receiving over 365 periodicals that had been bought with a special grant and stored for later shipment until the right time permitted. So, the libraries in 33 countries, including Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, and the USSR received the first shipments of 9,320 sets of books and 6,037 journal titles spanning the years of 1938 to 1946.²¹ Contrary to most of the European libraries, which required only an update in publications that the libraries missed during the war, Poland was among the few countries with the largest percentage of lost holdings. It was estimated that about 30 to 100% had been lost – so up to 1.5 million volumes had been destroyed or removed by the Nazi occupants. The RF, with the help of the Committee for the Rehabilitation of Polish Science and Culture and the United States International Book Association, composed a list of the most essential titles that were distributed to ten libraries with UNRA assistance.²²

In the RF’s understanding, the special library project that continued well into the 1950s, supplemented with the complex exchange program, was designed as an opportunity for Europe to catch up with the developments across the Atlantic. The initiatives were to bring countries closer to one another, providing the platform for intercultural understanding based on democratic ideals seen as most advantageous in rehabilitation from the past of Nazism and Fascism and protecting against the detrimental influences of Soviet indoctrination.²³ The books replacing the ones that had been censored, forbidden, or destroyed paved the road to new, inaccessible levels of intellectual understanding, opinions, and world views, leading to not only symbolic but also structural defiance against the existing systems.²⁴

²⁰ C.H. Milam, 1944, p. 100.

²¹ RF, *Annual Report*, 1947, p. 267. The second shipment reached libraries in Austria, Germany, China, Japan, Great Britain, Philippines, Australia, Hungary, and India. ALA International Relations Committee, 1957, p. 445–446; D.H. Clift, 1959, p. 20–21. For more on the cooperation in library programs, see: Y. Zhou, C. Elliker, 1997, p. 191–226; H.J. Maymí-Sugrañes, 2002, p. 307–338.

²² Books worth over \$50,000 (worth an estimated \$664,000 in 2022) were sent to the national Library in Warsaw, the University of Warsaw, UMCS, Universities in Cracow, Lodz, Poznan, Torun (indicated as the former Vilnius University), Wrocław (former Lwów/Lviv University), and the Medical Academy in Gdansk and Business School in Warsaw. RF, *Report*, 1946, p. 12, 263–4.

²³ On the program, see: American Library Association, *Report: Role of Books and Publishers, Libraries and Librarians in International Cultural Relations*, quoted in: L.E. Fay, 1943, p. 116, 312–4.

²⁴ See: G.W. Breslauer, 2021.

The other key program conducted by the foundations provided unlimited opportunities for research in the most modernly equipped labs and clinics and for the presentation of American scientific and artistic attainment. Through the educational and cultural exchanges, scholarships, and fellowships, it opened up universities and research institutions to new advantages of scholarly cooperation and permitted individual participants to gain access to the facilities and resources of those centers. The exchange programs were planned as long-term projects, focused primarily on scientific results and relatively neutral. On the other hand, the initiatives launched by the US government in the Western Hemisphere and much later in Western Europe, targeting similar groups of recipients, were seen as directed towards political gains, cultural reorientation, re-education, and denazification. They were thought to be drumming up support for short-term goals and pro-democratic changes, receiving quite a negative reception as being only anti-communist campaigns and political propaganda, not true cooperation.²⁵

Despite the US government not presenting much activity in the field, the private foundations' exchange programs were shunned as unnecessarily doubling and even competing with the public diplomacy initiatives. The government had not viewed such public diplomacy as relevant until the negative effects of the growing Nazi influence in the Western Hemisphere were noticed. It undertook an attempt at a more coordinated approach to public diplomacy in 1940 when Nelson Rockefeller was appointed to the new position of the Coordinator of Commercial and Cultural Affairs for the American Republics. To facilitate better relations with the countries of the region, one year later, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt established the Office of Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, putting Rockefeller in charge.²⁶ Nelson Rockefeller readily jumped into the opportunity the challenge offered, running ads in the newspapers, inviting journalists from Latin America to the United States, and launching many cultural projects. From here onwards, the Bureau was working intensely to counteract Nazi, Fascist, and later Soviet propaganda with the method it thought would be the most effective, resorting to cultural diplomacy and delivering "the truth."²⁷

There were three focal dilemmas to be confronted at this point. The first issue was the conviction that the American-led Western alliance would only survive if it were not based on the "successful assertion of American hegemony."²⁸ The second was determining what "kind of truth" was to be delivered, meaning what picture of a diverse nation to show, what content, and in what form, and how to select the media and the recipient.²⁹ The final predicament seemed to be the worst as it aimed at diverting the European anti-Americanism, deeply

²⁵ M.L. Krenn, 2017, p. 72–74, 78–81.

²⁶ Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *History and Mission of ECA*; F.D. Roosevelt, *Executive Order 8840 Establishing the Office of Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs*.

²⁷ C. Reich, 1996, p. 199–201, 214–27.

²⁸ V.R. Berghahn, 2002, p. xiii.

²⁹ M.L. Krenn, 2017, p. 67.

rooted in an “older cultural superiority complex,” despising American mass culture, seeing it as “a modern, secular opium for the gullible,” equally inhumane as Stalinism, keeping the “naive” Americans in a “civilizational abyss.”³⁰ The impasse remained unresolved even with two major laws passed, launching programs to bring American culture, values, and goals to the world.³¹ The newly established exchange programs suffered from constant debates in Congress over adequate funding, the lack of general public support, and the inadequacy of trained professionals employed to produce a uniform message to the nations around the world.³² It was not until aggressive Soviet propaganda started reaping its harvest that desirable changes in cultural diplomacy took place. Nonetheless, the programs were limited to the countries of Western Europe and the Western Hemisphere. There was no access to the countries behind the Iron Curtain due to the lack of an official agreement between the United States and the USSR on exchanges. The possibility of those was raised for the first time during a meeting in Geneva in 1955.³³ Not until 1958, however, was any agreement signed allowing any form of educational or cultural exchange.³⁴

In the absence of official routes of cooperation between the West and the East, restricted travel, and no open access to information beyond the propaganda-driven systems of communications of the totalitarian states, the non-governmental representations enjoyed legitimacy, space for maneuver, and the means of entry into the societies behind the Iron Curtain. Additionally, public diplomacy and exchange programs under the auspices of the US government in Eastern Europe were perceived as intrusive, politicized, and attempting to topple the communist system from the inside, whereas the American foundations bore the opinion of independent institutions, more interested in genuine scientific cooperation, in assistance and development, rather than infiltration and westernization. Both the exchange programs and grants-in-aid projects funded by foundations were very much sought by the Soviet regime countries to boost their knowledge and scientific research in the race for primacy.

The first attempt at re-establishing mutual scientific relations with the East was made by the RF as early as 1946 and 1947, when several groups of representatives were sent to practically every country in the world, including Czechoslovakia,

³⁰ See: V.R. Berghahn, 2002, ch. 4, 5, p. 288

³¹ Namely: Fulbright Act of 1946 (PL 584, 78th Congress) and the so-called Smith-Mundt Act-US Information and Exchange Act of 1948 (PL 402, 80th Congress).

³² Even the first exhibitions of American modern art that were well received in Latin American countries and in Western Europe, outperforming the French avant-garde and gaining popular acclaim, were fiercely criticized at home. Seen as a sign of total “freedom” the American artists enjoyed, the exhibition lacked any understanding among local viewers, who were appalled by the nonsense of “spending the public money on watercolor paintings that are completely incomprehensible to an average audience.” The paintings were auctioned for the pittance of their value and the US Congress began closer scrutiny of cultural relations. See: M.L. Krann, 2017, p. 72–4.

³³ *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter cited as FRUS), 1955–1957, *Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Merchant) to the Secretary of State*, December 21, 1955, p. 216–17.

³⁴ The Department of State, 1958, p. 243–247.

Hungary, Poland, and Romania.³⁵ The evaluation of the dire situation and the urgent needs of scholars and institutions they represented led the Foundation to offer several individual scholarships, fellowships, and grants-in-aid.³⁶ However, the programs did not last long due to the tightening grip of Communist ideology and Soviet control over any international exchange taking place within the Eastern bloc. It led to even more widespread alienation, suspicion, and mistrust, erecting more barriers and making the RF's plan of reducing international tensions, which in its opinion resulted from misunderstandings, even less plausible.³⁷

The free exchange of ideas and all forms of "artistic and literary productions," were outlined as the most conventional and, at the same time, most effective methods adopted by the Ford Foundation to foster the advancement of a harmonious world. The Foundation, which entered the field of international philanthropy in 1951, presumed that the accord facilitated by cooperation would help achieve consensus, promoting the conditions for moral and cultural liberal democracies.³⁸

The Ford Foundation was established in 1936. Not until the death of Edsel Ford and his father Henry in the mid-1940s was it recognized outside Michigan. Having obtained the majority of non-voting shares in the Ford Motor Company, the board of trustees faced the challenge of the Ford Foundation becoming the world's largest philanthropic foundation.³⁹ The recommendations of the Study Committee, under the chairmanship of H. Rowan Gaither, Jr., outlined the five program areas for the advancement of human welfare that became the core of the Foundation's international philanthropic enterprise.⁴⁰ The three areas: the establishment of peace, the strengthening of democracy, and education in a democratic society, harmoniously fitted not only in with the campaign for the hearts and souls of intellectuals behind the Iron Curtain but also for the improvement of democratic systems elsewhere.⁴¹ The Foundation immediately adopted a similar approach to the objectives it sought to achieve in Europe but with a converse methodology. Recognizing the benefits brought by the exchange programs implemented by both the RF and the US government with the support from the Institute of International Education, the Ford Foundation put forward a collective program of intellectual, cultural, and political projects in Europe.

³⁵ Both Bulgaria and the Soviet Union were not visited, as it was impossible to establish contacts with scholars and scientists and no visas could be obtained. RF, *Annual Report*, 1947, p. 11.

³⁶ RF, *Annual Report*, 1946, p. 10, 128; RF, *Annual Report*, 1947, p. 30, 86, 127–30; RF, *Annual Report*, 1948, p. 151–2; RAC, RF, RG 2, series 789 SE, box 351, folder 2378, Tracy B. Kittredge to Joseph H. Willits, July 9, 1946.

³⁷ RAC, RF, RG 2, series 789, box 351, folder 2378, Kittredge to JHW, July 9, 1946; RAC, RF, RG 3, series 911, box 2, folder 11, The Humanities Program of the Rockefeller Foundation: A Review of the Period 1934 to 1939; RAC, RF, RG 2, series 789, box 351, folder 2378, Kittredge to JHW, July 9, 1946.

³⁸ The Ford Foundation [hereafter: FF], *Annual Report*, 1951, p. 14.

³⁹ FF, *Our Origins*.

⁴⁰ FF, 1949, *Report of the Study for the Ford Foundation on Policy and Program*.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 21–22, 28–29, 30–31.

Along with the RF, it saw the European universities as the nucleus of the democratic institution building for stable and vital international cooperation.⁴² However, contrary to the RF, which supported well-established, distinguished, and mature scholars, the Ford Foundation saw more potential in young leaders. They were the ones who would add political value to educational and cultural exchanges, dumping “provincialism and nationalism” and bridging chasms.⁴³

Yet another discrepancy between the Rockefeller and Ford Foundation was the latter’s approach to educated elites. As far as the “key strategic elites were concerned,” they were not only to defy the economic, scientific, and social developments of the Soviet Union, helping to recreate “open, democratic societ[ies]” that would successfully repel Communism in Western and Eastern Europe alike, but they were also helping “combat the cultural anti-Americanism of Western Europe.” They were to be utilized to “strengthen the ties of the European-Atlantic community, strengthen the free institutions in Europe” and “[widen] the perspectives.”⁴⁴ In the meantime, intellectuals and academics were visibly “lagging behind” in this respect, becoming quite costly yet totally unhelpful in the campaign of “changing foreigners’ perceptions of [the U.S.] as a civilization.”⁴⁵

Having invested millions of US dollars into educational and research programs in Western Europe, targeting faculty members and students who were the apple of the Ford Foundation’s eye, putting more resources into its integration efforts, and supporting international understanding programs to help reduce tensions through East-West exchanges, the FF was keen on seeing the returns.⁴⁶ Although “the returns” on the US government’s and American foundations’ investment into American cultural programs in Europe were noticeable, they were inadequate.⁴⁷

Respectively, the Ford Foundation followed the footsteps of the RF, deciding to undertake direct exchange programs with the countries behind the Iron Curtain. The “high regard” people held toward the Foundations inclined many to accept grants from them while rejecting support from the US government. The exchange programs were to be extended beyond the already working programs with Yugoslavia, Poland, and Hungary to other countries as well, possibly to bring more positive results in East-West relations than the same programs

⁴² Ibidem, p. 27, 47–48; RAC, Ford Foundation Records [hereafter: FFR], Unpublished Reports, Report No. 001567, Melvin J. Fox, *Report on exchange of persons activities of the Ford Foundation*, January 1953, folder 1 of 2. On the new revised program, funding of East European Fund, and many other pilot exchange and direct relief projects, see: R. Nowaczewska, 2015.

⁴³ RAC, FFR, Unpublished Reports, Report No. 010640, Shepard Stone, European Program, Sept. 17, 1954, s. 1–5.

⁴⁴ Ibidem, Report No. 010641, S. Stone, Report on European Trip, June–July, 1955, p. 1–7; FF, *The Annual Report*, 1958, p. 79.

⁴⁵ V.R. Berghahn, 2002, p. xi, 287–8.

⁴⁶ FF, *The Annual Report*, 1958, 79–82; FF, *Annual Report*, 1963, p. 48–51, 135–140; RAC, FFR, Unpublished Reports, Report No. 010642, S. Stone to Price and Geither, August 16, 1955; Report No. 010643, S. Stone, Notes on the European Trip, June 15–July 28, 1954.

⁴⁷ V.R. Berghahn, 2002, p. xi.

brought with the recipients in Western Europe.⁴⁸ The correlation did not go unnoticed by the Department of State, which began encouraging the Foundations to immediately launch such "mutually beneficial" programs directed at Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary. It was advised to select candidates that could be easily "impressed" with the United States culture, "getting infected" with the democratic ideals, building up a vision of a possibility to "alter the fundamental conditions under which they lived."⁴⁹

Poland was considered to occupy a pivotal role in East-West relations, becoming a "Window to the West." Its people were said to belong to and be oriented toward the "western circle of culture" while keeping close relations with the satellite countries. As such, they were seen as keen transmitters of Western ideas to the people in the Soviet Union and other Communist countries.⁵⁰ For this reason, the first representatives of both American foundations were sent in 1957 at the invitation, or rather a solicitation, of the Polish government, a move that "required courage" from both sides.⁵¹ Being "fully aware of the problems involved," the foundations were looking forward to the "positive response," "the recent developments" in the region, that, after the death of Stalin and relative easing of the Communist grip, such an invitation could bring.⁵²

Both Foundations held much hope for the outcomes of scientific cooperation that would result from the exchanges, but also as an opportunity created for the people of the satellite countries. The Ford Foundation was more likely to stress the significance of private foundations, institutions such as universities, and finally, individual participants in "the development of international understanding" and "the security and well-being of the United States."⁵³ In contrast, Rockefeller envisaged Poland taking small steps towards first "liberalization and democratization of life" and later to full political independence.⁵⁴

For these reasons, both Foundations generously funded exchange programs, seeking long-term results that came much sooner than expected. Just two years after the first scholars had traveled under the fellowship program in 1958, the Polish government expressed harsh criticism of the unintended outcomes. Suffering from the much-felt, chronic shortage of highly qualified specialists in science and technology, the Polish government was dissatisfied with a substantial number of fellows being selected by the Foundations in the humanities and

⁴⁸ RAC, FFR, Unpublished Reports, Report No. 010643, S. Stone, Notes on the European Trip, June 15–July 28, 1954, p. 3.

⁴⁹ Ibidem; FRUS, 1958–60, F.G. Siscoe, Despatch No. 274 From the Embassy in Poland to the Department of State, Warsaw, Jan. 29, 1959; East-West Exchanges between the USA and the Satellite States, Strictly Confidential memorandum, 22 October 1955 quoted in: I. Czernecki, 2013, p. 291.

⁵⁰ RAC, RF, RG 1.2, series 789, box 1, folder 5, B. Wierzbiański to W.C. Cobb, June 19, 1957; Y. Richmond, 2003, p. 200–201.

⁵¹ H. Schwartz, 1957, p. 14; *Contacts with Poland*, 1957, "New York Times," April 27, p. 14.

⁵² R.J.H. Johnson, 1957, p. 1, 8.

⁵³ R.J.H. Johnson, 1957, p. 1, 8.

⁵⁴ RAC, RF, RG 1.2, series 789, box 1, folder 5, B. Wierzbiański to W.C. Cobb, June 19, 1957; H. Schwartz, 1957, p. 14.

social sciences. Besides, many of the participants had their scholarships prolonged while others “returned with ‘non-socialist’ attitudes.”⁵⁵ In consequence, the Polish side demanded more decision-making authority upon the selection of candidates, which led to a halt in grants sent to the country. Poland had been the biggest benefactor in terms of the number of individuals being brought to the United States and Western Europe under both the Ford and Rockefeller programs. Its claims did not impact other countries of the region, with new ones, such as Romania, signing the agreements.⁵⁶

Altogether, the exchange programs should be evaluated as mutually beneficial, creating favorable conditions for the development of scientific cooperation that had been the cue of the RF program, as well as for the cultural and political impact exerted upon East-West relations, international understanding, and the world security. Thus, the aims were made the focal point of the Ford Foundation international program.

The programs created an intellectual and political “ferment” that lingered on for many years, generating new attitudes towards Communist authorities and the repressive system as such.⁵⁷ With the intellectual elites being exposed to new ideas and values, the American mass culture accomplished the rest, winning the hearts and minds of the remaining social groups and bringing about the collapse of Communism.⁵⁸

Conclusion

While the World Fairs and American National Exhibition fostered awareness of “a more modern, consumer-driven culture,”⁵⁹ raising higher expectations amongst the societies of Eastern Europe and the USSR, the exchange programs helped build bridges of communication and interaction among the academics. Provided with unlimited resources in labs and clinics, enjoying open access to most modern scientific literature, indulging in academic freedom, and being permitted to conduct research in elite, unintrusive academic institutions, the Foundations’ grantees were exposed to the value system, norms, and practices of an open society, becoming part of the “knowledge networks,” who would “radiate intellectual influence” upon their return to native countries.⁶⁰ Thus, in this respect, by providing access to intellectual elites, the Foundations were reaching out to societies behind the Iron Curtain. The study tours, scholarships, fellowships, and various other exchanges that boosted international cooperation sponsored by the private foundations, brought about the initially unintended result of winning the battle for public opinion. These were the visible effects

⁵⁵ A.J. Olsen, 1960, p. 5.

⁵⁶ J. Langguth, 1964, p. 2.

⁵⁷ RAC, FFR, Grant File 0570322, Reel 2517, Evaluation of Foundation Exchange Program with Poland, A. Korboński to Miss Kimble, FF, April 13, 1972.

⁵⁸ Z. Brzeziński, 1970, p. 59.

⁵⁹ W.L. Hixson, 1998, p. 230.

⁶⁰ I. Parmar, 2012, p. 7–8.

of the two-way visits organized and funded by the private foundations that reformulated or reconceptualized US foreign policy strategy rather than the US government implementing its new public diplomacy approach.⁶¹

In his article, Thomas Risse-Kappen argues that the end of the Cold War was induced thanks to transnational relations, knowledge-based transnational networks, transnational promoters of foreign policy change, and specific ideas and concepts that needed to get through to "the top of the decision-making hierarchy." As he points out, "Ideas do not float freely"; there must be the subjects who are "exposed to [various] concepts."⁶² Similarly, there must be the originators of the ideas, transmitters, and open channels. Thus, the exchange programs funded by the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations played a crucial role in the Cold War battle for "hearts and minds," serving as the intermediaries between the originators and the possible addressees, providing the most crucial agora for the free flow of knowledge and the exchange of ideas, building bridges that crossed the divided world.

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⁶¹ W.L. Hixson, 1998, p. 230–3; J. Roeloffs, 2003, p. 175–7, 182.

⁶² Th. Risse-Kappen, 1994, p. 221–222.

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