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R E P O R T

by

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C O N T E N T S

- I. Description of consultant's activities in Germany.
- II. Appraisal of German organizations conducting public opinion and attitude studies.
- III. Recommendations for expansion of German research in the fields of measuring and influencing attitudes.
- IV. Discussion of German attitudes toward democracy and rearmament.

I. BRIEF RESUME OF MY TRIP TO GERMANY

I arrived in Germany on August 10, 1950 and am returning to the United States on October 11. During the two months in Germany, I visited the most important sociological, social-psychological and economic research organizations and acquainted myself both with the results and the methods of their studies. In addition, I spoke to a substantial number of "opinion leaders" - politicians, public servants, teachers, and journalists - to gather information on prevailing political attitudes as well as on the possible use of empirical research in Germany.

Since I have studied and worked in Germany from 1920 to 1933 - for seven years as Assistant Editor of the "Deutscher Volkswirt" in Berlin - I was in a position to meet German people from all walks of life and they, usually, talked to me without considering me a representative of the Occupation Authority or a foreigner. Assistance of officials of the Office of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany also helped me greatly to obtain information. I am especially indebted to colleagues in the Office of Political Affairs and in the Reactions Analysis Branch of the HICOG.

I visited the following cities and towns in Germany where some of the major opinion research agencies are located: Frankfurt, Berlin, Munich, Darmstadt, Bad Nauheim, Stuttgart, Heidelberg, Tuebingen, Allensbach/Bodensee, Koeln, Bonn, Dortmund, Duesseldorf, Bielefeld, and Muenster. Several scholars from these and other towns also visited me in Frankfurt where I had my headquarters. The "Institut fuer Foerderung oeffentlicher Angelegenheiten" sponsored a conference in Frankfurt, in which leading German representatives in the fields of survey research participated and where I gave a paper on the objectives of American social research. (The paper will be published by the Institute). I also spoke to similar smaller groups in Berlin and Darmstadt.

While the later parts of this report will present a full account of the scholars and scientific organizations with whom I have been in contact, I may mention here the names of two leading German personalities who kindly provided me with assistance and information. I paid an extensive visit to Bundespraesident Dr. Theodor Heuss at his residence in Bad Godesberg and profited from his intimate knowledge of German attitudes. Buergermeister Dr. Friedensburg of West Berlin likewise assisted me in getting acquainted with the specific problems of Berlin.

Among newspapermen with whom I had extensive discussions about trends of opinion, I may mention Professor Erich Welter - Mainz, Hans Baumgarten - Frankfurt, Dr. Peter Waller - Duesseldorf, Dr. Werner Friedmann - Muenchen, and Juergen Tern - Stuttgart.

II. APPRAISAL OF GERMAN ORGANIZATIONS CONDUCTING PUBLIC OPINION

AND ATTITUDE STUDIES

1. Basic Problems

Empirical-quantitative investigations into the structure of German political and social attitudes face three great difficulties. First, social science in general and sociology in particular have an old tradition in Germany which is purely theoretical and ideological. Several German scholars have attained fame by writing extensive volumes on the structure of society without burdening their books with objective observations and figures. Such writings have accustomed the German public to comprehensive treatises setting force generally valid laws which can hardly be obtained by the slow process of gathering and analyzing empirical observations.

Yet in contrast to ^{the} anti-empirical tradition of German social science, there exists today widespread interest in mass movements, mass psychology and public opinion. A growing number of German scholars are attracted by new methods of observing and measuring, and several institutes have recently been established in various cities to conduct field studies.

Most of those who conduct social and political field studies operate, however, outside of the old-established universities or do not have teaching appointments at a university. Inadequate financial backing of field studies has compelled the agencies to turn toward commercial research tasks (primarily market research but also audience analysis for periodicals and radio stations). Due to these practices the opposition of university professors was aroused still further. Empirical investigations are therefore confronted with a second basic problem which makes their public acceptance in Germany difficult: Field studies do not have the support of wellknown names either of scholars or of institutions.

On the other hand, however, there is a growing recognition that hardly any country west of the Iron Curtain provides a more fruitful testing ground for sociological theories than Germany (with the exception perhaps of Israel). The mere fact that the West-German population has recently been augmented by the influx of 9,000,000 refugees who face the problem of assimilation in a thickly settled country, may serve as evidence for that statement. Furthermore, stability or change of social institutions and traditions can hardly be studied more adequately anywhere than in Germany where old-established patterns of behavior have been subjected to revolutionary developments during the last few years.

The third basic problem of German empirical social studies consists of a widespread antagonism toward foreign leadership in

matters related to what the Germans call "Kultur". Among the German intelligentia acceptance of economic and military leadership of the United States was made more palatable by the development of a myth of German cultural superiority. Yet regarding surveys, public opinion polls, and field studies in general, as well as regarding quantitative measurement and statistics, American social science has made tremendous progress during the past 20 years with which German scientists must now try to catch up. The opposition against American leadership often results in German scholars attempting to be original, that is, different from the Americans (usually in the sense of being less quantitative). These endeavors are then explained by such rationalizations as "Germany is, of course, different from the United States." The same attitudes make the acceptance of survey results by the general public rather difficult.

In this respect again the situation is far from hopeless because of the widespread German desire to learn. Numerous German scholars have recently grasped every opportunity to find out about American developments and others are anxious to do so.

B. On the Feasibility of Field Studies in Germany.

Over and over again the author has encountered the following objection to questionnaire or interview studies in Germany: "These methods may be feasible in the United States; but the German people are full of mistrust; they have learned from the Nazis and the Denazification questionnaires that one must be very cautious in answering; they will not reply to interviewers or, at any rate, they will not express their real opinions." This argument can now be contradicted. Regarding frankness in expressing one's beliefs, the differences between Germany and the United States appear to be small. In both countries a well-devised psychological approach, applied by trained interviewers, is required to induce people to talk openly about their political opinions, family life, or income, but once rapport has been achieved the willingness to communicate is widespread.

Evidence for this point of view has been supplied, of course, by several years of experience on the part of the Reactions Analysis Branch of the HICOG which uses German interviewers to interrogate a representative sample of German people on political, social, and economic questions. Since these surveys usually contain questions that require only brief answers, the author studied a large number of detailed German questionnaires concerned with personal matters and spoke with several interviewers working in this field. *

* Reference is made here primarily to studies by "Allensbach" and the UNESCO; see below.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXPANSION OF GERMAN RESEARCH
IN THE FIELDS OF MEASURING AND INFLUENCING
ATTITUDES

A. Major Purposes of the Studies Recommended

There is an urgent need to obtain accurate and reliable information on the underlying political attitudes of various important groups of the West-German population. The Reactions Analysis Branch of the HICOG determines the distribution of expressed opinions in the entire population. In addition, however, the scope of empirical social science studies needs to be extended in three directions:

a. Attitudes and underlying motives of such important key groups as civil servants, teachers, business leaders, workers, etc., need to be studied separately.

b. Deep-seated psychological factors shaping people's behavior need to be analyzed, instead of registering simply people's overt opinions.

c. The appropriateness of different methods which may be used in changing the attitudes of different groups of people needs to be studied.

In the light of recent American experience in studying group formation and group activities, it appears preferable to conduct these investigations in several carefully selected relatively homogenous groups instead of with samples of the entire population. Possibly, for instance, the investigation may proceed by studying

a) workers in two factories, b) employees in one or two commercial firms, c) civil servants in two agencies (e.g. railroad employees in Town A and employees in a mayor's office in Town B), and d) a group of teachers. Representative samples of such groups, as well as of their superiors, may be personally interviewed and the behavior of the groups and of the group members studied. Through detailed, open-ended questions information may be collected about the respondents' relations to co-workers, superiors and subordinates as well as the psychological and sociological factors shaping those relations (family background, education, family life, friendship patterns, political affiliation and interest, and so forth). One major aim of that part of the study would consist of shedding light on the presence or absence of authoritarian patterns of behavior and their origin, as well as their stability or lability.

After having concluded the "diagnostic" studies, the investigation may well proceed with a second phase modelled according to modern American "action research". Attempts may be made to modify or change the behavior of some of the groups by arranging group discussions and conveying new information to group members and their superiors. Such information may concern the feasibility and usefulness of methods of cooperation different from the traditional order-obedience patterns, or may deal with the tasks and problems of the factory or the job to be done.

As a final phase of the investigation, the groups may be interviewed again at a later date in order to ascertain whether their behavior and attitudes have undergone any changes.

Such studies, even if carried out on a relatively small scale (i.e., with a few groups that are not representative of all German groups) may serve two major purposes:

- a. they may provide scientific data about prevailing social relations and underlying attitudes;
- b. they may demonstrate that changing or modifying attitudes is possible and indicate the methods appropriate for that purpose.

German society is usually greatly influenced by scientific evidence. The publication of the findings of the studies here proposed may serve as a demonstration of possibilities of which most Germans are not aware. It is probable that a successful conclusion of such a demonstration would induce many offices and business firms to make moves along the desired lines.

B. German Character of the Studies

The studies would be of little effect on German leaders and the German people if they were to be carried out by Americans. They must be German studies, the work of German social scientists and their organizations. But these German offices require assistance from the United States, both in form of financial aid and regarding the scientific methods to be used. Close scientific contact between the German organizations and American social science research groups would also guarantee the scientific quality and political reliability of the work.

Trips to various parts of West-Germany and Berlin have convinced the writer that a few German social scientists are available who are greatly interested in such studies, who have the training and knowledge to carry them out, and who are politically reliable. Since the studies should be made simultaneously in