

THIRD NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EXCHANGE OF PERSONS

January 28-31, 1959, Washington, D. C.

Report of Workshop #9: MASS COMMUNICATIONS

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Problem 1. What should be the objectives of exchange in the mass media field:
Development of favorable political attitudes? Area orientation?
Professional skill?

Summary

The group was in agreement that area orientation should be a primary objective. This is especially true where so many persons are already competent professionally--as journalists or radio and television workers most frequently are when selected for exchange. Development of professional skill can be an important objective in some instances, but this is secondary to area orientation.

It is highly undesirable to use the exchange program to "sell" favorable political attitudes. Let exchange persons see conditions for themselves, both good and bad. This should be true even when some persons are looking for faults to magnify.

The same philosophy was expressed with regard to other media exchange activities, such as the program of U.S.I.A. Let the Voice of American provide calm, accurate information reporting. At present it is regarded abroad as less objective than the BBC. This detracts from its effectiveness.

It is of the greatest importance to remove barriers to free flow of information among the peoples of the world.

Problem 2. Should exchanges be concentrated at the managerial or at the "working" level?

Summary

A major emphasis should be placed on the exchange of persons who will have maximum influence in their own nations. Such persons are usually at the managerial level. They are also found among persons in creative occupations in mass media areas.

In making selections of persons it is not desirable to discriminate against persons who are critical of the United States.

Problem 3. In view of the restrictions of time and money in exchange programs, should the short term exchange visits be limited to one or two places or offices, or should the visits seek to be as all-encompassing geographically and professionally as possible?

Summary

The interests and needs of exchange persons should be the guide in determining the answer to this problem in any specific instance. Give such persons all the freedom they want to explore places and situations of greatest concern to them.

The lack of more adequate financial support for the exchange program is unnecessary and unwise. The cost of the program is small in comparison with other governmental activities of less importance to the political and economic welfare of the nation. Russia is using exchange on a massive scale. We should use mass media in America to gain greater understanding of and support for the exchange program.

Problem 4. In exchanges designed to improve technical knowledge, is it better to bring students to the experts, or should the instructors be taken abroad?

Summary

For this limited objective it is less costly to send experts abroad. They can teach many more persons than could be brought to America for the same expense. Our top level people have been successful in giving young people of other nations a good impression of what Americans are like. We need to involve more of our best people in work of this type.

Problem 5. In view of the prime role of mass communications in foreign policy, in which geographic areas and in which media should exchanges be concentrated? How can these exchanges best be programmed to achieve political goals?

Summary

The second part of this problem was regarded as an undesirable objective or reasons already given.

One persons suggested that exchanges be concentrated most heavily in areas of the world where understanding of the U.S. is not good and where there is not a definite governmental policy of slanting news of the U.S. in an unfavorable light. This would include many countries in the Far East outside of Red China. Countries like England and France already have good channels of communication with us. The need for exchange is not as urgent in such situations.

Of a total of 320 leaders in mass media who came to the U.S. in 1957, 243 were journalists and 58 were in radio and television. Workers in other mass media fields should be more adequately represented. Need for this is especially urgent in:

1. Motion pictures--both theatrical and non-theatrical.
2. Audio-Visual Education. This includes administrators and specialists in preparing and using audio-visual education materials used in schools, colleges, universities and training programs in industry and government. These people reach the youth of their respective nations at a time when many are getting their first organized impressions of countries besides their own.

Summary of chief suggestions made during the meeting

1. Work to gain reciprocal freedom of expression for persons in all countries working in mass media so that barriers to free flow of information will be lifted. It was proposed by Lauren Soth that Soviet newsmen be given an opportunity to write articles about Russia or Red China for U.S. newspapers provided U.S. newsmen are given equivalent opportunities to write uncensored articles for Russian papers.
2. In an organized manner acquaint colleges and universities with the importance of employing foreign students. Establish a channel through which foreign students can be informed of available opportunities and can be given assistance in applying for work which will enable them to study in America.
3. Find a means of giving greater visibility to criticisms that exchange students are able to give us. (This is a serious domestic problem, also. Too few mass media agencies, such as newspapers, provide a balanced look at the full spectrum of our national life.)
4. Provide more opportunities for exchange persons to get close to our own people by living in their homes while here.
5. Enable exchange persons to revisit America again after three or four years.
6. Broaden representation in mass media areas not now emphasized.
 - a. Motion pictures, entertainment and educational.
 - b. Audio-visual education programs in schools, colleges, universities and industry.
7. Throughout entire exchange program emphasize importance of letting people find out things for themselves. Let visitors see our problems as well as our progress.
8. Broaden and strengthen entire exchange program with support of domestic mass media.