

An intellectual offensive: The Ford Foundation and the destalinization of the Polish social sciences

Igor Czernecki

Department of Sociology, University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland

This essay analyses the Ford Foundation's intellectual exchange programme in Poland between 1957 and 1961. Emerging in the novel context of Washington's emphasis on cultural diplomacy and Warsaw's exceptional position in the East Bloc following October 1956, the Foundation's programme was the earliest complex scholarly initiative by a US organization aimed at Europeans under Communist rule. Consequently, for a brief window of time, the Foundation was able to operate an unprecedentedly open exchange under uniquely liberal terms. The programme's genesis and operations will be explained, as well as the reasons for its abrupt suspension and its long-term implications. In particular, I will argue that through the programme, the Foundation played a significant role in rebuilding and shaping the social sciences in post-Stalinist Poland.

Introduction

When, to the dismay of many and the relief of his Presidium, Joseph Stalin gasped his last breath on 5 March 1953, it became clear to policy makers on both sides of the Iron Curtain that they had arrived at a watershed in the Cold War. Washington understood that new forms of cultural diplomacy would be needed, and the globally oriented Ford Foundation took note. The Eisenhower administration began to sketch a plan for an Eastern European intellectual exchange programme, a plan greatly boosted by Nikita Khrushchev's 'Secret Speech' in 1956 and events in Poland and Hungary in the autumn of that year. Although Hungarian hopes for the reestablishment of relations with the West were crushed by Soviet tanks in Budapest, the power shift in Warsaw succeeded, precariously balancing Polish national sentiment against Soviet international policy.

Correspondence to: Igor Czernecki, History of Social Thought Institute, Department of Sociology, University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland. Email: igorczernecki@gmail.com

The westward gate on the Danube was again slammed shut, but an open window overlooking the Vistula allowed the Ford Foundation to reach into Poland with an offer that could not be refused.

The Ford Foundation's West European endeavour has received astute attention from Volker Berghahn in *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe*.¹ The present article adds to his work by following the foundation across the Iron Curtain. It focuses on one scholarship programme in one country, analysing its creation, implementation and reverberations. The non-governmental status of the New York-based organisation and the singular political circumstances in Poland at the moment of the foundation's initiative allowed Americans to retain unique control over the selection of candidates. I will argue that this amplified the impact of the programme, setting it apart from comparable American private and public initiatives in the Soviet sphere of influence.

Setting the stage for cultural diplomacy

The 1950s did not initially present a favourable climate for cultural diplomacy. The shift to 'hot' war in Korea in 1950 propelled the alarmist National Council Report known as NSC-68 through the US Congress. Its rhetoric of 'calculated coercion' along with the anticipated 'year of maximum danger' suggested an imminent military showdown between the two superpowers. But in his 1952 campaign, presidential candidate General Dwight D. Eisenhower explicitly rejected 'rollback', and advocated a peaceful diffusion of ideas behind the Iron Curtain.² Yet it was the Soviets who, following the death of Stalin, officially signalled the potential for a thaw.

Although President Eisenhower's 1953 'Chance for Peace' speech responded to the new Soviet leadership's overtures, it remained essentially bipolar, juxtaposing peace and freedom with subversion and tyranny. The administration continued to perceive the Kremlin's conciliatory rhetoric as dangerous demagoguery aimed at splitting 'the free world'. In other words, Eisenhower did not foresee a quick easing of tensions, but was instead interested in shifting the field of contention from military to ideological rivalry.³ An energetic debate was taking place behind closed doors about the future of Washington's Cold War policy, with the State Department facing off against the Defence Department supported by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The ascendancy of Secretary of State John F. Dulles's position meant the rejection of 'rollback' in NSC-162/2. 'The New Look' allowed Washington to drop the idea that sustained dissatisfaction with foreign-imposed Communism would lead to violent uprisings

¹ Volker Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

² Robert R. Bowie and Richard H. Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 109–22.

³ Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle* (Lawrence, KS: Kansas UP, 2006), 46–75.

against the USSR in the Eastern bloc. Instead, it predicted the gradual disintegration of the Soviet sphere, promoting patience and perseverance in US foreign policy over the long haul. Hence the President's 'Great Equation', according to which 'spiritual force, multiplied by economic force, multiplied by military force, [was] roughly equal to security.' The first element of that formula heralded a new role for cultural diplomacy in Cold War politics.⁴

Official proposals for 'bridging the great chasm that separates [Americans] from the peoples under Communist rule' should be understood predominantly as part of what Henry Kissinger called a 'new diplomacy', formulated to project a certain image of the United States in the ongoing contest for the hearts and minds of a global audience.⁵ Washington was nevertheless coming to recognise the potential of non-governmental organisations to act as the avant-garde in cultural offensives. US NGOs began to receive off-the-record suggestions from the federal government directing them on how, and with whom, to build bridges across the Iron Curtain.

The Ford Foundation received a 'strictly confidential' note from the State Department dated 22 October 1955, proposing 'that direct bilateral negotiations with the satellite regimes on [the subject of exchange] be started without waiting for the consent of the government of the Soviet Union.' In the opinion of the State Department, 'some relaxation of prohibition of outside entry into the Satellite states is already observable and will certainly continue.' The liberalisation of exchanges between the US and the satellite regimes promised greater benefits to the US than the liberalisation of American-Soviet exchanges. The note concluded with a seven-point list of preferred 'categories of Satellite visitors'. The general rule was 'to allow into [the US] those persons who, by reason of their trade or profession, will be most deeply impressed by what they see and hear in the United States.'⁶ That is, visitors should be selected with regards to their presumed susceptibility to American values.

In response, the Ford Foundation proposed an 'intellectual Marshall Plan' for the Eastern bloc.⁷ The foundation envisioned replacing ideologically bound social sciences with those based on empirical and practical methodologies, representative of American neo-positivist thought. Western sociologists of the era were proclaiming 'the end of ideology' arguing that intellectuals were turning away from the 'infallibility of old-line Marxist theology,' and were increasingly interested in 'realistic and practical approaches to political and social problems.' Highly industrialised societies, capitalist

⁴ Bowie and Immerman, *Waging Peace*, 109–22.

⁵ Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 181–213.

⁶ 'The Satellite peoples feel themselves to be living under a foreign occupation,' the note stated, 'at least, under a hostile regime. Whereas the people of the Soviet Union see in free exchange a promise of the removal of the threat of war . . . the peoples of the Satellite states would see in freer exchange a promise of the alteration of the fundamental conditions under which they live.' 'East-West Exchanges between the USA and the Satellite States,' 'Strictly Confidential' memorandum, 22 October 1955, Ford Foundation Archives (FFA), New York, Reel (R) 1062, Grant (G) 57-477.

⁷ Michael Pollak, 'Paul F. Lazarsfeld: A Sociointellectual Biography', in *Knowledge: Creation, Diffusion, Innovation* 2 (1980).

and communist alike, would eventually converge on a path towards specialised, technocratic rule.⁸ By introducing Europeans—including Marxists—to American empiricism, the hope was that this process could be aided.

Shepard Stone was among the Ford Foundation officers who believed that the organisation had an important role to play in the Cold War. An internationalist who had worked for the US High Commission in West Germany, Stone persistently encouraged the Ford Foundation leadership to focus more attention on Europe. In 1954, Stone was appointed Director of the 'International Affairs (US and Europe) Programme' (IA), a newly created office at the foundation responsible for policy behind the Iron Curtain. But the eastward expansion of the foundation's activities was not immediate. Uncertain of the nature and extent of the post-Stalinist thaw and anxious that the foundation might be branded 'soft on Communism' by anti-communists at home, the IA initially concentrated on neutral projects such as the financing of the Free University of Berlin, where East and West German students could exchange ideas.⁹

However, the 1956 events in Poland and Hungary jump-started the programme behind the Iron Curtain. The Soviet suppression of the Hungarian uprising in November led to a refugee crisis. Stone was in Vienna at the time, and immediately pushed for an emergency fund to aid the homeless and penniless Hungarian exiles. The Board of Trustees agreed, and over the next year the foundation appropriated more than one million US dollars to aid Hungarian refugee scholars, students, artists, and other intellectuals.¹⁰ From the Austrian capital, Stone could bear witness to the implications of the Polish October; indeed, the Hungarians had originally adopted the slogans of their northern neighbours. In contrast to the events in Budapest, the thaw that had begun in Poland in 1954 resulted in a reorganisation of power that marginalised the Stalinists while offering the promise of democratisation, with a broad easing of censorship to show for it. This liberalisation created an opportunity for the foundation to enter Eastern Europe.¹¹

In February 1957, the IA Director made a nine-day trip to Poland to explore the feasibility of a potential exchange programme. Stone had planned to keep a low profile, conscious of the volatile situation in the country. However, as he reported immediately upon his return to New York, the Poles made this impossible, with the press announcing the arrival of a Ford Foundation representative. The significance of this was by no means lost on the American, who noted that 'the Polish Government had evidently made up its mind that, Russia notwithstanding, they wanted the Polish people to know that the American foundations were welcome in Poland.' Stone was

⁸ Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (New York: Free Press, 2001), 393–407.

⁹ Berghahn, *America*, 178–213.

¹⁰ Henry T. Heald, President, 'Review of the Year,' in *The Ford Foundation Annual Report (FFAR) 1951*. (British Library of Political and Economic Science).

¹¹ Paweł Machcewicz, *Rebellious Satellite, Poland 1956* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009).

invited to meet with top government officials, including Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz. Some of them, including the Minister of Education Władysław Bienkowski, spoke directly for the First Secretary Władysław Gomułka when they expressed their enthusiasm for the foundation's initiative. Stone was also unexpectedly granted a meeting with the influential Catholic Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, who insisted that help 'is essential and urgent and that [the Ford Foundation] should act immediately.'¹²

In addition to dozens of government officials, Stone spoke with numerous university professors, students, writers, and artists, and particularly with young Polish intellectuals who spearheaded the drive for change. Many of them were Communist party members; however, he reported that 'almost all' claimed to be 'bitterly opposed to Moscow, to Stalinism, to the Communists' ideology [and thought of] themselves as Social Democrats, Western style.' The plea was always along the same lines: 'there is no time to waste, help us quickly with economic aid and with intellectual contacts with the West', lest the Stalinists make a successful bid to regain power. Stone recalled a meeting with students in Cracow, who made speeches 'until two AM' about 'the hope that the Ford Foundation would help them to go to the West, to study and to find out what freedom really meant.' On three occasions, Polish youth tossed the American into the air in acclaim—'a rough affair' for the older man. 'This type of demonstration by six hundred students in a city in which, at the same time, eight Russian generals were making a military inspection, reveals,' Stone concluded, 'the hopes of the young people of Poland.'¹³

Stone's recommendation to the Board of Trustees upon his return to New York was clear: 'the Foundation should take immediate action in Poland, fully aware of the possibility that overnight Soviet Russia could destroy the new movement toward freedom.'¹⁴ A new chapter in the Ford Foundation's activities was about to begin.

Engineering an exchange

Reflecting later upon the foundation's decision to move into Poland, Stone acknowledged that this was the most adventurous and bold decision made by the trustees. As late as May 1956, the official line was that 'the Foundation, of course, does not work in any of the Soviet or satellite countries.'¹⁵ Throughout the early months of 1957, Stone's office eagerly followed congressional deliberations concerning the provision of economic aid to Poland.¹⁶ The initiation of official negotiations between the two countries regarding US credit for the Gomułka regime was important for IA, since it mollified the anxieties of the Board of Trustees.¹⁷ On 26 April 1957, Henry

¹² Stone to Price, 23 February 1957. FFA, R2519, G57-322.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Statement of H. Gaither at Dunwoody Institute in May 1956. Inter-office memorandum, 20 March 1957. FFA, R1062, G57-477.

¹⁶ Stone to Central Files, confidential memorandum (CM), 15 March 1957. FFA, R1062, G57-477.

¹⁷ 'Opportunity in Poland,' *The New York Herald Tribune*, 17 April 1957.

T. Heald, the president of the Ford Foundation, addressed the subject of 'Private Philanthropy in American Life', in which he announced a grant of \$500,000 for a yearly 'programme in Eastern Europe, specifically for projects related to Poland':

To enable outstanding Polish professors and scholars in the social sciences, economics, architecture, and other fields to establish or renew contacts with Western colleagues and to gain knowledge of Western developments, primarily by study in the United States and in Western Europe; to make available a limited number of American and European professors for study and work in Poland; to provide a two-way exchange of students between Poland and the United States, and Poland and Europe; to enable leading Polish writers, architects, and others to make short visits to the United States and Western Europe and to send their European and American counterparts to Poland; to provide some books and periodicals published during recent years in the United States and Europe for leading Polish libraries, institutes, academies, and individuals.¹⁸

This was an almost verbatim list of the needs voiced by the Poles with whom Stone had spoken in February of that year.

The programme garnered praise from influential figures, notably Senator John F. Kennedy, who congratulated the foundation 'for what will be the beginning of important developments between the USA and Eastern Europe.'¹⁹ But the decision to send US dollars to aid intellectuals behind the Iron Curtain was not unanimously heralded. In an interoffice memorandum addressed to former foundation president H. Rowan Gaither, his subordinate worried that the foundation would 'get murdered public relations-wise by being accused of supporting Communism.'²⁰ This was despite the recognition that 'high officials of the US Government and the officials responsible for East-West relations in the State-Department and other agencies are strongly in favor of a Foundation program such as outlined in this paper.'²¹

The Ford Foundation's status as an apolitical non-governmental organisation, independent from Washington, was crucial to its effectiveness. A statement from 1954 noted that 'in working abroad, ... a foundation cannot become a mere tool of government policy, or it will certainly end by compromising both the government and itself.'²² However, when it came to establishing a programme behind the Iron Curtain, the Foreign Office had the last word. Key members of the State Department received a detailed account of Stone's first trip to Poland immediately upon his return.²³ Acting

¹⁸ *News From The Ford Foundation*, 26 April 1957. FFA, R1062, G57-477.

¹⁹ Berghahn, *America*, 178–213.

²⁰ Inter-office memorandum, 20 March 1957. FFA, R1062, G57-477.

²¹ 'Program for Poland,' 1957. FFA, R2517, G57-322.

²² Quoted in inter-office memorandum, 20 March 1957. FFA, R1062, G57-477. US foundations were not always independent from federal agencies. See Peter Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy* (New York: The Free Press, 1989).

²³ Between 12 and 14 March 1957, Stone met the following officials in Washington: Acting Secretary of State Christian Herter, Assistant Secretary of State Robert Bowie, Deputy Undersecretary of State Robert Murphy, Special Assistant to the Secretary of State on East-West Relations William Lacy, Director of the East-West Staff Frederick Merrill, Henry Leverich of the East European Desk at the State Department,

Secretary of State Christian Herter informed Stone that he ‘strongly favored a Foundation exchange program with Poland.’ The US ambassador to the USSR, Charles Bohlen, was ‘somewhat surprised at the extent of the Polish request.’ Mindful of the fact that ‘the Kremlin was aware of the anti-USSR attitudes in Poland and was watching carefully all Polish attempts to make contacts with and obtain support from the West’, he urged the foundation to ‘keep in close touch with the East European Desk at the State Department.’²⁴ In a telephone call to Stone, the director of the East-West Contacts staff, F.T. Merrill, bluntly stated that as the State Department saw it, the foundation’s priorities in developing East European programmes should be, in order of importance, ‘Poland; Yugoslavia; Soviet Union; Rumania; Czechoslovakia.’²⁵

Stone’s contact with the State Department had practical consequences. Under the Immigration and Nationality Act, members of Communist parties were not issued visas to the United States. However, the Ford Foundation was committed to selecting its candidates based on intellectual merit. Omitting Communist intellectuals would invite the accusation that the process was politicised. In March 1957, Merrill assured Stone that the ‘Attorney General will automatically grant the waiver in all cases where the State Department . . . declares that a visit to this country of a member of a foreign Communist Party is in the “national interest” of the United States.’ The Director of the East-West Contacts staff also underlined that ‘the Secretary of State is prepared to request an increased number of waivers.’ In return, the IA office would provide information about Communists for whom the foundation was seeking waivers.²⁶ Although officially, only intellectual merit was to be taken into account when reviewing Communist candidates, practically speaking, political decisions such as support for the Polish October were noted as positive, suggesting that the applicant was not dogmatic and might be susceptible to American influence.²⁷

The Ford Foundation cooperated with the Institute of International Education (IIE), which served as official liaison between the participants, the Immigration and Naturalisation Service, and the State Department, and was also responsible for arranging for US scholars to visit Poland.²⁸ Unofficially, the IIE was also in charge of all

Footnote 23 continued

Deputy Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs C. Douglas Dillon, Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Thorsten V. Kalijarvi, US ambassador to the USSR Charles E. Bohlen, Senator John F. Kennedy, and head of the CIA Allen Dulles. All expressed support for the Ford Foundation programme with Poland. Stone to Central Files, CM, 15 March 1957. FFA, R1062, G57-477.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Stone to Central Files, Memorandum, 14 August 1957. FAA, R1062, G57-477.

²⁶ The East European Desk was interested in obtaining psychological profiles of important Polish Communists. Stone to Central Files, CM, 8 March 1957. FAA, R1062, G57-477.

²⁷ Stone to O’Neill, Jr., 9 July 1957. FAA, R1062, G57-477.

²⁸ For candidates sent to Western Europe, national institutions took the role of the IIE. For the UK this was The British Council in London, which received \$25,000 in the fiscal year 1957-1958; for France, the National Office of French Universities and Schools in Paris, receiving \$16,000; and for West Germany, the German Academic Exchange Service in Bonn. In Switzerland and Scandinavia, arrangements were made directly with universities (FFAR 1959).

surveillance matters regarding the grantees coming to the United States.²⁹ The foundation allocated a portion of the programme's budget to the institute to cover the costs of organising the visits of Poles to the US.³⁰ Grantees were grouped as 'visiting professors', 'specialists', or 'research scholars'. Research scholars were placed at the US university of their choice from anywhere between three months to two years.³¹ For visiting professors and specialists, the IIE created individual itineraries that balanced the interests of the grantees with opportunities to present the American way of life. However, the Americans took care not to compromise the scholarly and objective mission of the exchange.³²

Operations in Poland

An intricate component of the Polish exchange was the selection of candidates. Traditionally, the Foundation did not directly participate in the selection process for its various scholarship programmes; it specified qualifications, but did not designate recipients. But the historic nature of the first programme behind the Iron Curtain convinced Stone to take a more active role in choosing individual participants. The foundation wanted to ensure that beneficiaries would be receptive to everything the scholarships were meant to offer.³³ It is telling of the climate in Poland in the months Gomułka was consolidating his grip on power that the authorities agreed to leave the selection process to the Americans.

Throughout the programme's duration, Stone and his aides made several trips each year to Poland to manage the review and selection of candidates. They compiled a tentative annual list of recipients based on petitions sent by aspiring candidates, as well as from tips from various sources. A list issued by the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE) was diligently reviewed but was not binding. Stone and his associates also tapped a growing network of contacts in Poland and abroad for recommendations, such as Jerzy Giedroyc, the editor of the Paris-based Polish émigré monthly *Kultura*. The foundation could not reveal the source of these 'many valuable suggestions' to the Polish authorities, yet at this early stage, the American's list often overlapped with that

²⁹ IIE, 'Survey of the Polish Exchange Program of the Ford Foundation', 1957-1959. FFA, R2521, G57-322.

³⁰ The IIE received \$200,000 in fiscal year 1957-1958; as the programme expanded, this increased to over \$400,000 yearly.

³¹ In 1957-1958, the universities participating in the placement programme were Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, New York University, University of Virginia, University of Chicago, University of Michigan, and the University of California at Berkeley.

³² IIE, 'Polish Exchange Program of the Ford Foundation', July 1958. FFA, R2519, G57-322. Mieczysław Rakowski's experience illustrates that early suspicions regarding the 'guardian angel' assigned to the Communist in the US proved groundless, as the American turned out to be a liberal with whom the Pole 'shared a common tongue.' The future First Secretary's rich itinerary included visits to the Southern states, where numerous meetings addressed the problem of racial segregation. Mieczysław Rakowski, *Dzienniki polityczne 1958-1962*. (Warsaw: Iskry, 1998), 414-90.

³³ Stone to Central Files, 9 June 1957. FFA, R1062, G57-477.

of the ministry, which Stone saw as a sign of ‘the overall good intentions of the Polish officials.’³⁴

Face-to-face interviews with candidates or their promoters were an important component of the selection process. Stone and his men spent weeks at a time traveling ‘over bad roads, in unfortunate cars that showed up hours late, over 2,000 kilometers of Poland to various cities.’³⁵ But not all questioners were as informed or probing as one might have expected. The Polish sociologist, Włodzimierz Wesółowski, remembered his meeting with the Ford committee as follows:

- Are you a member of the Communist Party?
- Yes.
- Are you related to Bronisław Wesółowski?³⁶
- No.
- What are you dealing with?
- Social structure.
- And why do you want to go to America?
- I have already started studying American sociology; I would like to continue this, and then to study the class-and-strata structure in Poland.

‘That and the titles of the books read probably convinced them,’ Wesółowski recalled.³⁷ He was granted a fellowship.

While the evaluation of potential grant recipients from academia was generally straightforward and based on publications and interviews, advice and letters of support were essential when it came to artists. Stone was in close contact with the head of the Polish Writers’ Union Antoni Słonimski. Among members recommended by the union were the Polish poet Alexander Wat, who was also backed by letters from author Ignazio Silone and Konstanty Jeleński, of the Congress for Cultural Freedom.³⁸ Jan Józef Lipski, the literary critic and Warsaw Uprising hero who became a key opposition figure in post-Stalinist Poland, was another important contact for Stone.³⁹

For a Pole awarded a grant, numerous tedious formalities lay ahead. Travel west involved the MHE, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Internal

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Bronisław Wesółowski (1870–1919) was a member of the Social Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania, a forerunner of the Communist party in Poland.

³⁷ Antoni Sułek, “To America!” Polish Sociologists in the United States after 1956 and the Development of Empirical Sociology in Poland, *East European Politics and Societies* 24, no. 3.

³⁸ Silone to Stone, 18 August 1958. FFA, R531, G57-370; Jeleński to Stone, 3 August 1958. FFA, R531, G57-370.

³⁹ Giedroyc to Stone, 5 March 1958. FFA, R532, G58-20.

Affairs' (MIA) Passports Bureau. Each application was also approved by the MIA's First Department, which handled intelligence.⁴⁰ In the process, the MIA combined its administrative function with its role as the safeguard of state ideology, pressuring candidates to supply information. In response, Stone asked the MHE and Central Committee (CC) member Adam Schaff to 'inform the police that one subscription to the *New York Times* would provide them with more information than all visiting Poles to the USA.'⁴¹ This squib missed the point, however, as the authoritarian regime was much more interested on spying on its *own* citizens abroad.

It is difficult to evaluate precisely how effectively the requirement that passport recipients sign a 'loyalty slip', obliging them to report to the First Department, was enforced. A recent study of procedures for traveling abroad on scholarships suggests that the MIA issued passports to acquiescent individuals.⁴² Scholars recall that the Security Agency's presence was unofficial but ubiquitous.⁴³ However, Andrzej Friszke, an expert in Polish MIA sources, argues that the agency's activities became more intensive around 1961, which suggests less pressure was brought to bear on the original Ford grant recipients.⁴⁴ There were two reasons for this exceptional relaxation of enforcement: the de-Stalinisation of the previous years meant that the old repressive apparatus had been purged and its prerogatives limited, and the liberalisation culminating in October 1956 left the newly advanced cadres uncertain of the future political climate, and therefore relatively restrained.⁴⁵ Overall figures regarding temporary travel to capitalist countries support this theory. In 1955, around 4700 passports were issued; in 1957, the number exceeded 77000. The next decade marked another dip in numbers, suggesting that a 'window of opportunity' was brief but real.⁴⁶

Descriptions by former Ford scholars, such as Andrzej Walicki, 'strongly negate the common theory which states that in order to travel abroad one had to cooperate with the Intelligence Agency.'⁴⁷ Although some subjectivity should be factored in to these statements, overall evidence indicates that the First Department's advances were insubstantial and did not hamper the programme.

⁴⁰ Patryk Pleskot, 'Jak wyjechać na zachód?' in *Naukowcy Władzy, Władza Naukowcom. Studia*, ed. Piotr Franaszek (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej [IPN], 2010).

⁴¹ Stone, 'Visit to Poland, Part I'

⁴² Pleskot, 'Jak wyjechać na zachód?'

⁴³ Interview with Professor Marcin Kula, in "Władcy paszportów". Biuro Współpracy Naukowej z Zagranicą PAN. *Szkic analizy*, in *Słamszona nauka?* ed. Piotr Franaszek (Warsaw: IPN, 2010).

⁴⁴ Email exchange with Andrzej Friszke (Warsaw, 19/01/2012).

⁴⁵ Interview with Jerzy Wiatr (Warsaw, 28/10/2010). Also see: Anthony Kemp-Welch, *Poland Under Communism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁴⁶ Dariusz Stoła, *Kraj bez wyjścia? Migracja z Polski 1949-1989*. (Warsaw: IPN, 2010).

⁴⁷ Andrzej Walicki, *Ludzi i Idee* (Warsaw: Państwowa Akademia Nauk [PAN], 2010), 84. Jerzy Wiatr confirms Walicki's view. Interview with Wiatr.

Reshaping the landscape of sociology

In accordance with a US Senate foreign policy study authored by a Columbia-Harvard research group, the Ford Foundation took advantage of a combination of the 'peaceful coexistence' line of Washington and the absence of 'many diplomatically negotiable issues in East Europe' to privately establish a programme 'for one of the most active fields of engagement and contact'—intellectual exchanges.⁴⁸ In its first fiscal year of operation, 1957-1958, the IA's Polish exchange programme sent 50 leading Polish intellectuals to the West. Of these, 23 travelled to the US, 15 to the UK, and the remainder to France (seven), West Germany (one), Switzerland (three), and Sweden (one). In 1959, the programme's brief was expanded to include Yugoslavia, by which time its total expenditure reached \$1.5 million.⁴⁹

The Ford Foundation's impact in Poland remained unparalleled. The budget for the Yugoslav programme, which brought 25 'scholars and leaders' from Yugoslavia to the US in 1959, did not exceed five % of the annual budget for East-West exchange.⁵⁰ By that time, Poland was also participating in exchange programmes administered by the privately funded Rockefeller Foundation and the publicly financed British Council, as well as in an initiative supervised by the US Cultural Attaché in Warsaw under the auspices of the Fulbright Programme. These programmes had notably smaller budgets than the Ford Foundation. Furthermore, as Polish authorities were responsible for the selection of candidates, most grant recipients were scholars and researchers in the natural sciences. As Stone pointed out, these programmes did not have 'the political and psychological implications of our programme—doctors and biologists seem to the Poles to be harmless chaps.'⁵¹

The calibre of the Polish intellectuals traveling west was unanimously praised by their counterparts in the United States. The evaluation of participants was generally 'highly favourable'. 'Brilliant young scholar', and 'gracious, learned and charming' were typical descriptions.⁵² Another characteristic report applauded a Polish visiting professor who had 'not only contributed a great deal in his activities at Columbia, but [became] ... an important "friend at court" back in Poland in helping ... to develop further cultural exchanges.'⁵³ Reactions were equally encouraging in Western European academic circles. Working with the young sociologist Zygmunt Bauman at the London School of Economics had been 'one of the most rewarding academic experiences ... despite his rigid Marxist background', one professor recalled.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ 'Columbia Harvard Study entitled *USSR and Eastern Europe*.' Quoted in Myer to Stone, 29 June 1960. FFA, Report 007874, G57-322.

⁴⁹ 'Reconstruction of the list sent to Dr. Ludwik Leszczyński,' 26 July 1957. FFA, R1062, G57-477.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Shepard Stone, 'Visit to Poland, Part 1, 23 October 23–1November 1957,' memorandum. FFA, R1062, G57-477.

⁵² IIE, 'Polish Exchange Program of the Ford Foundation: Year End Program Report, July, 1958.' FFA, R2519, G57-322.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ McKenzie to The British Council, 'Report on Ford Foundation Scholars.' FFA, R530, G57-321.

Sociologists were frequent recipients of Ford grants, providing a much-needed boost to a discipline that had suffered in Poland. Banned as a bourgeois science under Stalinism, it was only recently being reestablished in universities. As things stood, sending sociologists west was exceptionally beneficial both for the Poles, eager to learn contemporary methods, and the Americans, who were keen to share these methods. A partial list of sociologists who travelled to the US includes Stanisław and Maria Ossowski, Aleksander Matejko, Jerzy Kosiński, Józef Chałasiński, Aleksander Gella, Zygmunt Gostkowski, Julian Hochfeld, Jan Lutyński, Andrzej Malewski, Stefan Nowak, Irena Nowakowa, Adam Podgórecki, Adam Sarapata, Jan Strzelecki, Włodzimierz Wesolowski, Jerzy Wiatr. Zygmunt Bauman and Maria Hirszowicz both chose England; Antonina Kłosowska and Anna Pawelczyńska went to France. In the US, Polish sociologists most frequently headed to Columbia University, where Paul Lazarsfeld Robert Merton's Bureau of Applied Social Research made it the centre of empirical social research. Other sociologists went to the University of Chicago, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Michigan.⁵⁵

In early 1958, Lazarsfeld took a 10-day trip to Poland organised by the Ford exchange. Hearing the news of his arrival, Maria Ossowska remarked that he was 'sent by Stone, as an expert responsible for checking up on the progress of Sociology in Poland.' Although this was a tongue-in-cheek remark, it nevertheless reflects how strongly the scholarship programme influenced the social sciences.⁵⁶ During his stay, Lazarsfeld was 'in intense contact with the work and the discussions of nearly all the Polish sociologists, their staffs, and some of their students.' In addition, meetings were held with some of the economists, philosophers, and political scientists.⁵⁷ Lazarsfeld also delivered a lecture entitled 'The American School of Sociology.'⁵⁸ Summing up the results of his stay to Polish colleagues, Lazarsfeld assured them that 'both sides will benefit from your relations with the United States. You will get to know our methods and we shall gain the opportunity to see what results may be obtained when our methods are applied to large-scale problems. Many of us, 'disappointed politicians' so to say, will envy you because we lack such opportunities in America.'⁵⁹ Lazarsfeld was confident that empirical social research—what he called 'concrete sociology'—would leave its mark in Poland. Colleagues in the US shared the sociologist's enthusiasm for the rapid developments in Polish sociology.⁶⁰ Twenty-four other American scholars

⁵⁵ Sulek. 'To America!' 5.

⁵⁶ Maria Ossowska and Stanisław Ossowski, *Intymny portret uczonych. Korespondencja Marii i Stanisława Ossowskich*, ed. E. Neyman. (Warsaw: Sic!, 2002).

⁵⁷ Lazarsfeld, 'Social Research in Poland,' February 1958. FFA, R2521, G57-322.

⁵⁸ Nina Kraško. *Instytucjonalizacja socjologii w Polsce. 1920–1970* (Warsaw: wydawnictwo UW, 2010), 175.

⁵⁹ Sulek. 'To America!'

⁶⁰ Paul Lazarsfeld, *Main Trends in Sociology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970). Other American sociologists traveling to Poland on Ford grants included Edward Shils, Charles Wright Mills, and Seymour Lipset.

made similar visits to Poland on Ford grants during the years of the programme's operation.⁶¹

Closing the door on the Ford Foundation

The Ford Foundation's initiative was correctly perceived by the Polish authorities to be the realisation of US State Department policy. However, the new leadership was positively inclined towards the United States, with which it had just initiated trade and loan negotiations. Although Polish authorities deplored the 'national Communism' rhetoric adopted by Dulles, American policy was understood as a sign of support for the events of October 1956.⁶²

At the outset of 1957, the Central Committee's main interest in the US was obtaining assistance to restart the nation's faltering economy. That year, however, marked a steady drift away from the spirit of liberalism that had accompanied Gomułka's rise to power. Elections to the Polish *Sejm* in January disappointed hopes of serious democratisation within a socialist system. Censorship was being reinstated; the closing of *Po Prostu*, a revisionist biweekly that had emerged during the transition period and had originally supported the First Secretary, was one of numerous bad omens reaching the Ford Foundation office in New York.⁶³ At the Tenth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP) in October 1957, an important academic opined that 'academic freedom... is not equivalent with the Party letting its grip on culture abate.'⁶⁴

The fear in New York was that Gomułka would either fall victim to a Soviet-backed coup or use Stalinist methods to secure his grip on power. Both scenarios would mean the end of the embryonic exchange programme.⁶⁵ Back from his first trip to Poland in February 1957, Stone met the Chief of the Polish Mission to the UN, Jan Michałowski, to discuss the future of the nascent initiative. The ambassador underscored that Poland was in an 'extremely difficult position' vis-à-vis Moscow, and had to 'try to avoid antagonizing the Kremlin unduly.'⁶⁶ As tensions surfaced in relations between New York and Warsaw, the Polish government would typically cite 'immense pressure' from Moscow and Peking.⁶⁷

Warsaw's dependence on the grace of the Kremlin aside, the sheer popularity of the programme meant that the Polish authorities soon appreciated the importance of exerting maximum influence on the selection process. The foundation's money was to be invested in individuals with the 'appropriate moral and political outlook,' who would use their newly acquired knowledge to advance the progress of the People's

⁶¹ 'Exchange and Scientific Activity with Eastern Europe', December 1963. FFA, R2517, G57-322.

⁶² Piotr Wandycz, *The United States and Poland* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980).

⁶³ *Po Prostu* had supported the First Secretary with publications from leading Polish intellectuals of the Left. Machcewicz, *Rebellious Satellite*.

⁶⁴ 'Towarzysz Schaff. 25 X 1957.' Archiwum Akt Nowych (AAN) (Warsaw) Akta PZPR, sygnatura III / 22.

⁶⁵ Stone, 'Visit to Poland Part I.'

⁶⁶ Stone, CM, 10 April 1957. FFA, R1062, G57-477.

⁶⁷ Stone, 'Visit to Poland, September, 1958.'

Poland.⁶⁸ The MHE was of the opinion that the 10% or so of party members who were selected by the Ford Foundation were a smokescreen for the numerous 'revisionists' receiving grants who would work against Polish state interests.⁶⁹ Further, some Marxist intellectuals, most notably Bauman, voiced the opinion that by uncritically 'giving in' to American sociology, intellectuals were making it more difficult in Poland to construct a Marxist one.⁷⁰ Although this criticism was directed towards his fellow sociologists rather than the intellectual exchange programme, it resonated within the corridors of the MHE.

On the other hand, the ministry noted that the positive reception greeting the Polish scholars abroad was a propaganda success for the country. Furthermore, the MHE noted that defection by grant recipients was extremely rare.⁷¹ The only grantee to take this step was Jerzy Kosiński, whose later account of the entire experience was coloured by his aspirations in America.⁷² There was a well-established understanding among the Ford Foundation officers, the State Department, and the grant recipients in general that such actions might jeopardise the programme.

After his visit to Poland in September 1958, Stone recognised that five selections on the 1958-1959 list might be denied passports. Nonetheless, he was still relatively optimistic, since 'the Poles, even those who are Party members, believe that this programme is of immense importance.'⁷³ The fact that many of the Polish officials responsible for the programme could count on a sponsored trip to the US was probably also an important factor. However, by 1960, the number of recipients who were refused passports doubled.⁷⁴

Alongside rising discontent in Polish intellectual circles around the unfulfilled promises of liberalisation, the authorities increased their obstruction of the Ford programme by refusing passports to candidates perceived as disloyal. Some of Poland's most prominent writers returned their party identification cards in 1957, inadvertently adding a political edge to the grants that they were due to receive. The Writer's Union had to weigh in on behalf of Jerzy Andrzejewski, the 'Alpha' character in Czesław Miłosz's *The Captive Mind*, to eventually convince the powers that be to issue a passport.⁷⁵ Leszek Kołakowski, the leading Polish revisionist, was repeatedly denied the documents needed to travel on a Ford grant to the US.⁷⁶

⁶⁸ 'Zasady regulujące tryb rozpatrywania i akceptacji wyjazdów pracowników nauki za granicę. 22 IV 1960.' AAN. Akta MSzW, sygnatura 317/525.

⁶⁹ Burkhardt, 'Addenda to Polish Report.' FFA, R1062, G57-477.

⁷⁰ Zygmunt Bauman, *Z zagadnień współczesnej socjologii amerykańskiej* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1961).

⁷¹ '1957 memorandum.' AAN. Akta MSzW, sygnatura 479.

⁷² From radio interview with Janusz Głowacki in Jedyńka Polskie Radio. (26/04/2011).

⁷³ Stone, 'Visit to Poland, September, 1958.'

⁷⁴ Stone to Krassowska, 24 July 1959. FFA, R1062, G57-477.

⁷⁵ Burkhardt, 'Addenda to Polish Report.' FFA, R1062, G57-477.

⁷⁶ In 1958, Kołakowski received a grant while doing research in Holland. Upon his return to Poland, he was not re-issued a passport under the pretext of engagements at Warsaw University. The calibre of Kołakowski's intellect and his leftist heritage meant that his criticism of doctrinal Marxism was extremely problematic for the party. Zalewska to Gordon, 5 September 1960. FFA, R2520, G57-322.

Ford Foundation representatives, accustomed to an American political model, at first called on contacts at the MHE and sympathetic members of the Polish parliament to resolve disputes. However, in the People's Republic, real power was concentrated in the Central Committee of the ruling party, and the CC evaluated ideologically sensitive applications to decide who would be allowed to travel to the West.⁷⁷ Professor Adam Schaff, the Marxist dialectician and chair of the CC's Education Commission, was increasingly on Stone's radar as networks of power within the Polish system became more apparent.⁷⁸ Schaff had supported Gomułka in 1956, and continued to do so against the revisionists. He played a role in convincing the First Secretary to allow the Ford Foundation into Poland,⁷⁹ and in his memoirs of the period, claimed to have had a free hand in dealing with the Americans.⁸⁰

In private conversations with Stone, Schaff would continue to insist on his support for the programme on the terms agreed upon in 1957.⁸¹ But at the Twelfth Plenum of the CC in October 1958, Schaff spoke of the need for 'correct control of our scientific and cultural exchanges.' His remarks were leaked and conveyed to the IA through the Congress for Cultural Freedom. Schaff's recommendation for an 'effective institution, which could take upon itself the organisation and control of cultural and scientific exchange in the interest of the state' plainly meant that the Ford Foundation was to be stripped of its prerogatives.⁸²

Two months after Schaff's October speech, Dr Ludwik Leszczyński resigned from his post at the Ministry of Higher Education; poor health was the official reason for his withdrawal.⁸³ As the figure responsible for all scholarship programmes between Poland and other countries, Leszczyński had been a firm supporter of the Foundation's initiative. On numerous occasions, he had backed politically tainted figures who would otherwise have faced significant bureaucratic difficulties. He was a reliable counterweight to the more dogmatic representatives of the Polish side in negotiations. But liberal inclinations were falling out of favour in the CC. Officially Stone was assured by all, including Schaff, that 'the Poles want the same and even more.' Yet the atmosphere was not as 'cordial' during meetings with the Polish authorities, and Stone did not much appreciate the civil servant mentality of Vice Minister Eugenia Krassowska, now serving in Leszczyński's former role.⁸⁴

⁷⁷ Pleskot, 'Jak wyjechać na zachód?'

⁷⁸ Schaff retains a mixed legacy: an adherent of the party line during Stalinism, he was responsible for the marginalisation in Polish academia of many leading pre-war humanities professors; yet his policies permitted them to study in private and retain their salaries, which was more than could be said for their colleagues in neighbouring countries.

⁷⁹ Interview with Wiatr.

⁸⁰ Adam Schaff, *Moje spotkanie z nauką polską* (Warsaw: Polska Oficyna Wydawnicza BGW, 1997).

⁸¹ Stone, 'Visit to Poland, September, 1958.'

⁸² 'Stenogram XII posiedzenia KC PZPR, paźd, 1958.' AAN. Akta PZPR, sygnatura III / 24.

⁸³ Leszczyński to Stone, 17 December 1958. FFA. R2520, G57-322.

⁸⁴ Stone, 'Visit to Warsaw, 28-31 January 1959.'

On 15 November 1960, the weekly *Polityka* disclosed official discontent with American philanthropy in an article entitled, 'Come, Child, I Shall Pay for You . . .'. It argued that 'the system of recruitment [of the Ford Foundation] had occasioned many reservations because the representatives of the foundation were motivated by certain political considerations.' It resurrected the old claim that 'too many people have gone abroad to study humanities . . . which was not the most rational way of using money offered to [Poland] by foreign foundations.' The article noted that out of 253 Ford Foundation scholarships, 56% were for scholars in the humanities, as opposed to 32.5% for those involved in economic, technical, and physical sciences combined.⁸⁵ Reporting on the changing atmosphere, the *New York Times* published an article on 19 November announcing that 'the Polish Government has imposed new controls on private United States fellowship programmes.'⁸⁶

By early 1961, the Polish government had made it clear that the MHE's 'support would be given in fullest measure to candidates on their list', with the implication that independent candidates would face difficulties. The Ford Foundation received information that 'word had gone out that there was "no point" to submitting an application without state approval.'⁸⁷ The government's list for that year featured individuals from industry, technology, economic planning, and the natural sciences, despite the foundation's continuing emphasis on the humanities and social sciences.⁸⁸ During the summer of 1961, Stone threatened the MHE that the foundation would discontinue the programme after he learned that 13 of his candidates would be denied passports. Only after 'formal assurance that within a year or two the 13 would be free to accept the Ford Foundation award' did he relent.⁸⁹ But when, in anticipation of ministerial consent, the foundation informed the candidates in question that they would receive Ford grants, Krassowska was enraged by what she saw as an assault on the prestige of her ministry.⁹⁰ In early 1962, the Poles stipulated that the Ford Foundation 'would not communicate in any way with [its] tentative selections until they were approved in a final sense by the Ministry of Higher Education.'⁹¹ This unilateral compromise of the principles of the established agreement, in which the foundation was free to contact whom it wished, sealed the fate of the programme. No selection team was dispatched for 1962-1963, and the programme was suspended indefinitely, although grants already awarded but yet to be redeemed remained valid.

At the final tally in February 1961, 330 Poles had been selected by the Ford Foundation to travel to the West. While the Polish programme ground to a halt, smaller exchanges with Yugoslavia and the USSR were underway. The IA was developing an exchange programme with Hungary, and contemplating expanding its

⁸⁵ 'Come, Child, I Shall Pay for You . . .' *Polityka*, 15 November 1960. FFA, R2517, G57-322.

⁸⁶ 'Poland Puts Curb On US Study Aid,' *New York Times*, 19 November 1960.

⁸⁷ Dickey to Stone, 28 February 1961. FFA, R2517, G57-322.

⁸⁸ US Embassy in Warsaw to the Department of State, 3 March 1961. FFA, R2517, G57-322.

⁸⁹ Stone to Krassowska, 30 August 1961. FFA, R2517, G57-322.

⁹⁰ Krassowska to Stone, 17 October 1961. FFA, R2517, G57-322.

⁹¹ Gordon to Stone, 20 March 1962. FFA, R2517, G57-322.

activities to include Bulgaria, Romania, and Czechoslovakia.⁹² However, all these initiatives were smaller than the Polish programme, and state authorities retained control over the choice of beneficiaries.

Reasons for the suspension

In the wake of the 1962 suspension of the Ford Foundation's activities in Poland, intellectuals and officials assured its representatives in private that they would soon be permitted to operate again under the terms of the original agreement.⁹³ But the official Polish position had shifted. Schaff was convinced that the foundation's 'unfair' rules were at fault. He pointed out that the Yugoslav programme made no provisions for a list of candidates submitted by the foundation. Schaff wanted the Polish programme to be reestablished on a similar pattern, and threatened that the foundation's efforts in other Eastern bloc countries would not get off the ground if the exchange with Poland were not renewed. Reminded of the rules agreed upon in 1957, Schaff countered that the Poles had been under the impression that the foundation would only submit short lists of names.⁹⁴

Changing winds from the East played a role in the suspension. In 1956, the Kremlin had been willing to barter strict control over Polish interior affairs in exchange for stability in what was for the Russians a crucial buffer zone against Western encroachment. As the destabilising events of that year receded into memory, however, Moscow became increasingly dissatisfied with Americans 'running around as if in their own backyard' in Poland. The Russians also drew a contrast with the foundation's operations in Yugoslavia, where Belgrade retained full control of scholarship recipients, and ensured that only loyal party members were selected.⁹⁵

Yet to understand the reasons behind the termination of the programme, it is essential to take account of the internal dynamics of the PUP in the half decade following October 1956. The First Secretary's rise to power was supported by the informal *puławianie* faction in the party, comprising Stalinists gone soft, pushing for reform with an enthusiasm reminiscent of that with which they had voted for Gomułka's arrest back in 1948. Tending towards liberalisation, they enjoyed the support of revisionist intellectuals hoping to reform the state within a socialist framework by enfranchising workers and the easing of censorship. On the other side, Gomułka was facing the *natolińczycy* group, which resisted the thaw while successfully petitioning for the support of Khrushchev. Leaning on the *puławianie* to secure his post in 1956, Gomułka then began to marginalise his benefactors with the aid of the *natolińczycy* he had previously managed to hold in check. By the end of 1961, he had effectively neutralised the liberal wing of the party. At the same time, the *natolińczycy*

⁹² 'Exchange and Scientific Activity with Eastern Europe,' December 1963. FFA, R2517, G57-322.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Burkhardt to Stone, 27 May 1964. FFA, R2517, G57-322.

⁹⁵ Interview with Wiatr.

faction was beginning to galvanise around a new nationalism centred on the figure of Mieczysław Moczar, and slowly but surely shifting the ideological terms of debate within the PUWP away from the rhetoric of internationalism.⁹⁶

Thus, at the outset of the sixties, the party grew increasingly hostile to intellectual fervour within its ranks and beyond. Gomułka, coming from a tradition of Communists who emphasised the power of words, deplored what he called ‘tubercular revisionism’ spreading within literary and academic circles. In the proposed democratising reforms, the First Secretary saw the emergent hazard of Western liberal values. This threatened the rule of a party whose legitimacy had not been ratified in free elections. Falling back on a time-tested trope, Gomułka blamed foreign agents. At a party meeting devoted to ‘ideological struggle’ in July 1963, the party secretary stated that the authorities had uncovered ‘efforts aiming at ideological penetration,’ using scholarships ‘for stimulating bourgeois and revisionist trends in the arts and sciences.’ The leader assured his audience that ‘these activities had been put to an end.’⁹⁷

For Shepard Stone and the IA, the choice to suspend the Polish exchange was a sad necessity. The foundation would not tolerate a change of rules in the midst of the programme’s operation, especially when it concerned an unprecedented initiative behind the Iron Curtain. The tone of the November 1961 *New York Times* article cited above reflected the tenor of US public opinion. An American institution could not be seen to be bullied into submission by a Communist government. Stone understood this, but was reluctant to end the programme. He was well aware of the positive effects of the exchange, and anticipated the great disappointment the suspension would mean for his friends in Poland.⁹⁸

As time passed and tempers cooled, the IA office voiced its readiness to compromise.⁹⁹ By the time the Polish exchange finally restarted in 1967, however, the Ford Foundation was facing financial problems, and budgets for all foreign operations had been significantly reduced.¹⁰⁰ In addition, the new terms shifted the prerogative to the Polish government. Of the 60 grants offered that year, 70% were given to scientists and specialists in management, public administration, and economics. The Ford Foundation’s list was capped at five candidates, and all interviews were to be conducted at the Ministry of Higher Education in Warsaw.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ ‘Śmierć ideologii, rozmowa z Wiesławem Władką,’ in *Lekcje historii PRL*, ed. Andrzej Brzeziecki (Warsaw; W.A.B., 2009).

⁹⁷ ‘Stenogram XIII posiedzenia KC PZPR, czerw. 1963.’ AAN. Akta KC PZPR, sygnatura 1255, 82-83.

⁹⁸ Serious attempts were made at organizing a roundtable conference with high-ranking Polish officials in the US in 1964. The Poles cancelled the meeting, citing Vietnam as the major reason. Stone to Bundy, 9 August 1967. FFA, R2517, G57-322.

⁹⁹ Stone to Leszczyński, 23 December 1965. FFA, R2517, G57-322.

¹⁰⁰ Berghahn, *America*.

¹⁰¹ Stone to central files, 30 March 1967. FFA, R2517, G57-322.

The reverberations

Upon returning home from Poland in 1958, Professor Charles Frankel recalled hearing that the country ‘rests on three pillars: The Catholic Church, Gomułka, and the Ford Foundation.’¹⁰² While inflated, this evaluation of the Ford Foundation’s influence in the Eastern bloc country nonetheless pointed to an undeniable reality. The exchange programme’s impact on the development of the Polish intellectual milieu in the post-Stalinist decade was tangible, if in somewhat unexpected ways.

Polish sociology was the field most significantly affected by the cross-cultural opportunities afforded by the foundation, diversifying and developing sub-disciplines. Stefan Nowak is an emblematic example. A recipient of a 1958 grant, Nowak spent that year studying with Lazarsfeld at Columbia University, and subsequently taught seminars on empirical sociology at Warsaw University. Among the Polish students who flocked to his classes, the sociologist popularised ‘American’ methodological terminology, including a ‘*new language of social research*—the language of theoretical and working hypotheses, concepts and indices.’ In 1964, Nowak published *Method of Sociological Research*, a Polish-language collection of texts by American authors on research methods. Nowak’s questionnaire studying the social ideology of Warsaw’s students achieved international acclaim, with Lazarsfeld commenting on it in his own works.¹⁰³

The US influence was also evident in Łódź, which had supplanted Warsaw as the centre for Polish sociology in the aftermath of World War II. Zygmunt Gostkowski and Jan Lutyński, who had worked as Ford grant recipients in Seattle, Berkeley, New York, and Chicago, laid the foundations for ‘the Łódź School of empirical methodology’. Both were heavily influenced by the work they observed across the Atlantic, and the school they established set the foundations for the development of survey research in Poland.¹⁰⁴

Andrzej Malewski and Jan Szczepański are two other notable examples whose careers testify to the importance of the Ford Foundation. Even before travelling to the West, Malewski’s work was already shaped by the foundation; his 1957 *Empirical Meaning of the Theory of Historical Materialism* was written with the aid of books brought to Warsaw with Ford funds. After spending 13 months training at Columbia and Berkeley between 1959–1960, Malewski returned to Poland and established the field of social psychology. His colleague Szczepański also joined empiricism and Marxism in his work, most notably in *La Sociologie Marxiste Empirique*, published in France. The rise of Marxist empirical sociology opened Marxism up to US methodology.¹⁰⁵ Lazarsfeld confirmed this view: ‘It is the younger generation of Communist scholars which promotes and carries out work in concrete sociology. The

¹⁰² Frankel, ‘Importance of the Foundation’s Program for Poland,’ FFA, R2517, G57-322.

¹⁰³ Sułek, ‘To America!’

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 14. Julian Hochfeld, the Marxist sociologist and PUWP member, in his review of Paul Lazarsfeld’s *The Language of Social Research*, was polemical but sympathetic.

so-called de-Stalinization accounts for much of this development, although increasing contact with Western sociologists plays a role. At the moment a number of Communist governments give relatively more support to empirical social research than do some Western countries.¹⁰⁶

The older generation of Polish sociologists, trained in the pre-war logical-empiricist Lvov school, were more critical of modern American sociological methodology. Stanisław Ossowski, the distinguished Polish academic who travelled to the United States in 1958 on a Ford scholarship, is a good example of the resistance to US sociology among this generation of Polish scholars. The left-leaning Ossowski was never a PUWP member or a Communist, but he deplored empirical sociologists' fascination with the natural sciences, and believed that its increasing presence in Polish sociology was detrimental.¹⁰⁷

Jan Szczepański, Ossowski's younger colleague, eventually came to agree. In the decade after 1956, Polish social scientists pursued diverse research methods to analyse problems including changing social structures. But focusing on current issues meant that little attention was given to the development of general theory. Empirical studies were critiqued for their narrow range; little 'exploratory value was seen, and the potential for broader implications of the findings was questioned.' At the same time, applications of empirical methods bore meagre relevance for the 'social engineering' that it was hoped sociology would achieve.¹⁰⁸ It is a telling detail of this chapter in cultural diplomacy that resistance to the Americanisation of the social sciences was most audible not from the Marxists, but rather from the Polish pre-war positivist circle.

Beyond its local implications, the Americanisation of Polish sociology facilitated the dissemination of modern Western thought in the other countries of the Eastern bloc. With harsher censorship and no programmes comparable in scale to the Ford initiative in Poland, the other people's democracies had little direct access to the West. Yet many of the Polish books influenced by the contemporary American social science of the 1960s were translated into Czech and Russian and circulated in those countries.¹⁰⁹

The academic opportunities made possible by the thaw in Poland were not exclusively due to American contact. The field of historical studies was deeply influenced by the *Annales* journal in France, a network outside US influence.¹¹⁰ The Warsaw School of Intellectual History, which brought together some of the best minds in Poland resisting the cheap optimism of Stalinist ideology, was at ease in the salons of Western thought without any assistance from across the Atlantic.

¹⁰⁶ Paul Lazarsfeld, *Main Trends in Sociology* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers 1970).

¹⁰⁷ Sulek, 'To America!'

¹⁰⁸ Jan Szczepański in Kraško. *Instytucjonalizacja socjologii w Polsce. 1920–1970*.

¹⁰⁹ Sulek, 'To America!' 21. Also see Edward Urbanek, 'Wzloty i upadki socjologii czeskiej' in *Socjologia Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej. 1956–1990* (Warsaw: PAN, 1995).

¹¹⁰ See: Patryk Pleskot, *Intelektualni Sąsiedzi* (Warsaw: IPN 2010).

However, the Ford Foundation initiative was the most significant single factor influencing the social sciences, and its effects resonated throughout the humanities. Ford Foundation scholars returned to Poland with new friends in important academic centres. Contacts allowed for a fruitful exchange of ideas in the years to come, the rich correspondence between historian Andrzej Walicki and Isaiah Berlin of the University of Oxford being one example. In later decades, talented students of former Ford Foundation scholars found that recommendations from their professors opened doors at US universities.¹¹¹ Erudite works such as Jan Kott's *Shakespeare, Our Contemporary*, or Zbigniew Herbert's *A Barbarian in the Garden*, would simply not have been written without grants affording the authors the opportunity to travel and the time and liberty to compose.

Parallel to its impact on the humanities, the exchange programme increased understanding of American life, its politics, and its popular attitudes. In 1962 alone, seven books by Ford grantees about the US appeared in Poland. Later publications, such as Józef Chałasiński's *American Culture* and Jan Strzelecki's *American Anxieties*, enjoyed broad interest from Polish readers.¹¹² Influential public figures also benefited from a better understanding of their counterparts across the Atlantic. Mieczysław Rakowski, editor in chief of the Polish Weekly *Polityka* who came to the US in 1962 on a Ford grant, recalled being impressed by the foundation's thoughtful selection process. The eventual First Secretary of the PUPP credited far-sighted political strategists at the State Department.¹¹³ His own stay in the United States introduced him to the theory of the convergence of highly industrialised societies. He also learned that the average US citizen was not particularly preoccupied with the race to the moon, enjoyed a working luncheon with the editors of the *New York Times*, and discussed the Cuban Missile Crisis with Walter Rostov. An informal meeting with President John F. Kennedy was an exceptional privilege bestowed on the young journalist, which underscored the great interest and attention that was shown visitors from behind the Iron Curtain at this early stage in postwar relations.¹¹⁴

Conclusion

The Ford Foundation's initiative in Poland was premised on the conviction that peaceful, incremental reform was superior to violent revolution in transforming the Soviet sphere of influence. The theory of convergence, elaborated by Western sociologists in the 1950s, was a key point of reference for policy. It was assumed that in the future, Communist societies would face similar challenges as liberal democracies,

¹¹¹ Andrzej Walicki. *Isaiah Berlin as I Knew Him in Russia, Poland, and Marxism. Isaiah Berlin to Andrzej Walicki 1962–1996* (Dialogue and Universalism, 2005, vol. XV, nr. 9–10).

¹¹² Sułek, 'To America!'

¹¹³ Jan Ordyński i Henryk Szlajfer, *Nie bądźcie moimi sędziami. Rozmowy z Mieczysławem F. Rakowskim*. (Warsaw: Rosner & współpracownicy, 2009), 96.

¹¹⁴ Rakowski. *Dzienniki*, 414–90.

and would have to find solutions or enact reforms in order to overcome them. Accordingly, the most fertile ground in the Marxist camp for the germination of the positivist kernels that might accelerate this process was located in the reemerging Polish social sciences. The influence of the foundation's programme on sociology was unparalleled, although the transplantation of a method from across the Atlantic in the absence of a general theory proved to limit its full impact. But the numerous publications from Ford Foundation recipients in the humanities are a testament to the programme's wider influence.

The emotional implications of the endeavour are undeniable, but difficult to measure. By the mid-twentieth century, East-Central European intellectuals were resigned to the insurmountability of state borders and accepted that these arbitrary demarcations carried the most grievous of consequences; little was expected from the West. The opportunity to travel across the Iron Curtain was as unanticipated as it was profound. Those who ventured abroad often initially felt intense alienation. The American believed his home to be a part of the landscape, as enduring as his constitution or worldview; the visitor was painfully aware of how easily each of these pillars could crumble.

But for the scholars and artists emerging from the era of Stalinist dogma, the subsequent stimulus had lasting effects on both mind and spirit. Once back in Poland, many Ford Foundation grantees joined the swelling ranks of disillusioned intellectuals forming an opposition to the government.¹¹⁵ In the context of a system in which every accolade was granted by the state, the distinction bestowed by the American foundation and the interest shown to the grant recipients by influential figures in the West helped them to endure official ostracism. On the other hand, those who continued to adhere to the party line were inclined to treat the social order as nothing more than a geopolitical necessity.

In conclusion, the Ford Foundation played an important role in helping the Polish intelligentsia wrest itself from the ideological straightjacket of Stalinism, laying down the groundwork for a process of intellectual integration of Western thought that would effectively continue up to the systemic transformation in Poland.

¹¹⁵ In 1964, 34 prominent intellectuals signed a petition written by Lipski against censorship, in what was the first important act of dissent since 1956. Nine signatories on the *List of 34* were Ford grant recipients: Jerzy Andrzejewski, Stanisław Dygat, Tadeusz Kotarbinski, Julian Krzyżanowski, Jan Kott, Edward Lipiński, Maria Ossowska, Jan Szczepański, and Władysław Tatarkiewicz.