

IV. D. BERLIN PROGRAM

Berlin offers a singular opportunity for an aggressive Public Affairs program and calls for imaginative adaptation of the America House resources. Not only are the same community interests present as appear in other America House communities, but, in addition, the chance to reach visitors from the Russian Sector and the isolated character of West Berlin present unparalleled conditions for presenting the Public Affairs messages.

The Berlin America House has an impressive record in the large number of visitors reached by its programs. However, it is presenting the same type of activities as found in the other America Houses which are serving normal communities. It also tends to operate as an independent arm of the Public Affairs program with only nominal integration with the other Public Affairs programs in Berlin.

Need for Pooling Resources

There is need to pool all the Public Affairs resources in Berlin -- the America House, RIAS, Die Neue Zeitung, the regional Public Affairs office direct programs, and the Foreign Operations Administration. With all of these excellent resources weighed against the select and mass audience potentials, the responsibilities could be assigned to the media in accordance to what each is best equipped to do. This desired approach is not within the organizational capacity of the America House to initiate. Rather, it requires the leadership and direction of headquarters and the Berlin regional office. Because such has not been the approach in Berlin, it is understandable that the America House operates little differently from Houses in Western Germany.

Distribution of Responsibility

Apparent misplaced emphasis results from the effort of the America House to reach mass audiences when it does not have the physical capabilities for doing so. An example of this is the film program. Other Public Affairs outlets in Berlin are equipped to reach mass audiences through RIAS broadcasts, Die Neue Zeitung, cultural festivals, industrial fairs, and through the use of the facilities of Titania Palast, the large public auditorium in Berlin.

On the other hand, the America House is equipped, using its excellent library collection as a base, to develop an intensive "package" program for reaching selective groups through its library, lectures, discussions, films, and exhibits. It is not concluded that the sole effort be directed to selective groups. The library should continue its present broad coverage. Likewise, exhibits and, to a lesser extent than is now the case, films should continue to reach mixed audiences.

The five reading rooms are well located to reach key neighborhoods of the city. While certain programs of the America House are channeled through them, the reading rooms are primarily what the name implies. If the America House concentrated on reaching selective groups through other media as well as through books and periodicals, these outlets provide enviable opportunities for increased activities.