

April 19, 1949

Memorandum of Conversation with Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 10:00 am, Monday, 4 April 1949 [Approved for Release, March 2009]

Citation:

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Summary:

Frank Wisner and Free Europe Committee (FEC) president DeWitt C. Poole brief FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover on the FEC project to secure his concurrence and assure him of coordination with the FBI on émigré contacts.

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19 April 1949

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

SUBJECT: Memorandum of Conversation with Mr. J. Edgar Hoover,
Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 10:00 am,
Monday, 4 April 1949

Present: Mr. F. G. Wisner
Mr. Dewitt C. Poole
Mr. J. Edgar Hoover
Mr. D. M. Ladd
Mr. Richard W. Lawrence

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1. Mr. Wisner outlined the background and general purposes of Project [redacted]. Mr. Poole then sketched the set-up proposed in New York. Mr. Poole said that what had been conveyed was offered not merely for Mr. Hoover's information, but in order also to obtain his observations and advice.
2. Mr. Hoover answered that Committee III in the New York organization (Committee on American Contacts) seemed to him to possess special importance. He had long contended that Communism could be effectively withstood only by education.
3. As for the whole operation, Mr. Hoover observed, success would depend upon the character and activity of the small group at the center which would really direct the operation. Mr. Hoover was informed of progress so far in the recruitment of the Executive Committee.
4. Mr. Wisner had emphasized in his opening remarks that the operation obviously impinged on the domain of FBI, but was still appropriate to OPC because the effects sought to be produced would ensue outside the U. S. Mr. Hoover returned to this as his second point.
5. The New York Committee, Mr. Hoover said, would be dealing with many characters on the American scene with whom FBI was already in touch and on whom FBI possessed information. It would be well that before working contacts were established with any new characters a check be made with FBI.
6. Mr. Poole answered that the Committee would be not only ready, but anxious to have cooperation from FBI in this regard. FBI's information would be very helpful. Mr. Poole asked if contact could not be in New York, since it was desirable for this Committee to keep out of

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Washington as much as possible. Mr. Hoover answered yes; of course FBI's reservoir of information was in Washington, but the New York Bureau could tap Washington and this would be arranged.

7. Mr. Poole then described in full detail the proposed organization and operation of the Foundation in New York, with reference particularly to the projected Liaison Officer. He explained that no one was yet in view for this post, and asked FBI's help in obtaining a good man, and asserted that if Mr. Hoover cared to place one of his own men in this position that would be welcome. Obviously, no Liaison Officer could be of real use unless he commanded the entire confidence of FBI, Mr. Poole added.

8. Mr. Hoover agreed with this statement, but said there was no one of his own agents who could be spared for this purpose; FBI would give what help it could.

9. The meeting lasted nearly an hour. The atmosphere was cordial throughout.

10. During a brief subsequent chat in Mr. Ladd's office, Mr. Poole again urged the importance of finding the right man for Liaison Officer and asked Mr. Ladd to propose someone already known to him. Mr. Ladd said he would endeavor to do so.

11. It was arranged that soon after April 11 Mr. Poole would call on Mr. Schmidt, now at the head of FBI's New York Bureau.

MKR/dr

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