

Original Plan for the Freedom Train

RG 200 198 AHF (NAR: National Archives in College Park, Maryland)

"On May 22, 1947, leaders of some 66 industries, civic associations fraternities, religious organizations, youth movements, war veterans, racial units, and national councils met at the White House. There they organized the American Heritage Foundation.... The meeting was called by Attorney General Tom Clark and was sponsored by the Department of Justice.

One of the chief objectives was ... the inauguration of the Freedom Train. The Freedom Train was designed to bring to the people the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of our system of government.

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"Prospectus for a public tour of a train containing original documents pertaining to American Government **as contrasted to original Nazi documents** (emphasis my own)

"This is a proposal for an educational campaign on a national and local level which dramatizes the American way of life through the traveling exhibition of an impressive collection of original, American historic documents and the contrasting documents of Nazi totalitarianism. It is proposed that this exhibition tour the nation in a special train of railroad cars reconstructed and designed for this purpose, making scheduled stops in all of the 48 states.

The American collection should include sufficient basic documents to highlight the development of American Democracy as the fullest expression of individual freedom, human rights, and the dignity of man. Such monumental landmarks in our history as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Emancipation Proclamation, and other treasured originals, will make a dramatic presentation of the American heritage it will be brought to the 'home towns' of Americans who may never have any other opportunity to view this priceless lore. At the same time, the edicts and pronouncements of Hitler's German Reich, which violate human rights and liberties, can be placed in juxtaposition as a significant reminder that 'eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.'"

A mere springboard to the national and local educational campaign..." in any given community a thousand people view the exhibition, then hundreds of thousands will be reached with the message through newspapers, publications, radio, motion pictures, and all other media for dissemination information. In addition it is /p2 proposed to activate all kinds of fraternal, civic and veterans' organizations as participants in this program. In other words, the success of the campaign in any given community will not be measured by the number of individuals who visit the train. It will be determined by the intensity of the coverage of the media suggested above and the activity of the organizations. "

The national campaign:

I. Governors should be involved

II. Attorney General should call conference of leaders of media to form advisory committees, in particular: Press (President of American Newspaper Publishers , etc), Motion pictures (President of Motion Picture Association of America, etc), Radio, (President of National Association of Broadcasters, of Mutual, of ABC, of CBS, of NBC), Advertising agencies (Ad Council), TV (President of National TV Association), Magazines, Billboards, Publishers of large circulation magazines.

III. Initial publicity and exploitation campaign should use all media.

1. Motion pictures
2. Radio
3. Press and Magazines
4. Advertising

IV. Fraternal, veteran, service, civic, labor organizations and industry must be mobilized.

Local Campaign:

"The fullest possible exploitation of the visit by the train to a community should be contained in a comprehensive brochure here-after called the press book. This book will contain the purposes of the project and will detail the various techniques as to how these can be achieved on a local level and will contain all possible background material which can be useful to a local committee. It will be a handbook in which the material will be presented simply and graphically so that any local committee can understand the details and be guided by the suggestions. It should seek to answer all questions which may arise. Of course, it should be an impressive document consistent with the dignity and character of the project.

"Press book" actually used for Freedom Train--available as supplementary text--from RG 200, Box 200