

ALBERT E. HEMSING

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Entrance into USIA Via Marshall Plan Information Work

1953: The Tragi-Comic Visit of New (and First) USIA Director Ted Streibert to Paris Tore Up the Highly Skilled and Efficient Information Service (the MIS) Inherited from ECA Probably to Detriment of Future USIS Operations in Europe

1955: Hemsing Closes Out MIS Mopix Shop in Paris; Transfer to Agency's Mopix Service

But First: Hemsing's Bio Sketch before the Marshall Plan Experience

1943: Goes to Work in OWI's Overseas Film Division

Department of State: US Information and Education Division (USIE – a USIA Predecessor) Takes Over OWI Film Activities and Hemsing

1946: Hemsing Sent to London to Clean Up OWI Discontinued Film Program in UK

1947: Budget Slash Freezes Film Program; Hemsing Returns to New York on His Own Soon to Find Himself Without a Job

Begins Teaching at CCNY Film Institute

1951: Offered Position with Marshall Plan Film Division in Paris

Now Story Returns to Hemsing's Assignment – 1955- to USIA Mopix Service (IMS)

Hemsing Finds IMS Assignment Trying, Partly because of IMS Director Turner Shelton

1958: Transfer to be Information Officer Berlin; Preceded by Four Months German Language Instruction

November 1958: Khrushchev's Ultimatum to Three Western Allies to Get Out of Berlin Galvanizes World Attention to Berlin; "The Berlin Drama" Begins

Americans Greatly Appreciated as Ultimatum Wore Down to Expiration – May 1959 – with No "Fireworks"

1961: East German Refugee "Hemorrhage" Peaks – And Berlin Wall Goes Up in Mid-August

West Berlin Morale Plummeted; Berliners Assumed Allies, Especially US, Had Known of it in Advance

Edward R. Murrow by Accident Came to Berlin the Night the Wall Went Up, Adding to Suspicion of Advance US Knowledge

Allied Intelligence and Thus, USIS Caught Flat-Footed by Wall

An Allied Meeting Sunday – As Wall was Still Going Up – Finally Agrees to Issuing Protest, but Secretary of State Rusk Kills it, and State Issues Protest from Washington 56 Hours Later; Berliners Dismayed

President Kennedy and Advisors also Apparently Caught by Surprise; until then Kennedy Seems not to Have Understood Significance of Berlin Situation

Ed Murrow Sensed Depth of the Blow to West Germans – Sent Personal Telegram to Kennedy, which may Finally have Galvanized US Government to Action

Kennedy Sends VP Johnson to Berlin: Some Misfires of the Johnson Visit; Bohlen's Briefing and Johnson's own Insensitivity

1962: Attorney General Bobby Kennedy's Trying, Insensitive Visit to Berlin

General Clay's Confrontation with Soviets at Checkpoint Charlie

The Unfortunate Removal of Chuck Blackman from His Post in West Berlin

June 1963: President Kennedy Visits Berlin

Berliners' Reaction Five Months Later to Kennedy's Assassination

August 1964: Hemsing Becomes USIS Director for Germany

Cutback of German Program Led to German Government Assumption of Costs of Retaining Five Amerika Houser USIS had Proposed to Close

USIS Was Deeply Involved in US Policy in Germany on Many Major Issues, but Support of US Policy in Vietnam Became Impossible

President Johnson's Overbearing Visit to Germany on Occasion of Adenauer's Funeral

1967: The Changing Attitude of Germany Toward America was not Understood by US Administration nor by Ambassador; Made for an Unhappy end of both Ambassador's and Hemsing's Tours

1967: Hemsing Goes to Department State's Senior Seminar

1968: Deputy Assistant Director for Europe; Then Assistant Director – 1969

Memories of Frank Shakespeare as Director of USIA

Comments on Political Appointees to Lower Level in USIA

1971: European PAO Meeting which Surfaced USIA Inability to “Sell” Vietnam Abroad Led to Hemsing’s Transfer to Inspection Corps as Chief

Troubles with a Politically Appointed Area Director

1973: How Hemsing Became, Suddenly, PAO, India

India Provided Total Immersion in Third World Ambience – A Refreshing Change from Europe

Some Experiences with Moynihan as Ambassador

1976: Hemsing Resigns from USIA; Appointed Director of Radio Free Europe (RFE) But Trouble Awaited There

Frictions between Hemsing and President RFE/ RL Sitting Back in Washington Finally Caused Hemsing’s Departure from RFE

1978: After Some Time away from Work, Hemsing Accepts Offer to Return to Germany on Contract as Director of America Haus in Freiburg

Retirement Activities

Recapturing Old Marshall Plan Films to Show in US

Ruminations on Future Structure and Operations of USIA as it is Today Compared with the Past