# **Psychological Warfare for the West:**

# Interdoc, the West European Intelligence Services, and the

# **International Student Movements of the 1960s**

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## Chapter in

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*Introduction: The Ideological Struggle between East and West* 

With the onset of the Cold War in the late 1940s Western governments and intelligence services recognized the need to establish and support civilian organizations to engage in the 'battle of ideas' with the Soviet bloc. Communist front organizations and infiltration in the realms of international labour, student and youth movements, women's groups, and journalism were threatening to dictate the ideological discourse and political affiliation across these fields of activity.<sup>2</sup> Responding to this situation in 1948, George Kennan, then head of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, had promoted the initiation of 'political warfare,' both overt and covert, across a whole range of activities from economic policy and strategic political alliances to 'black' propaganda and underground resistance movements.<sup>3</sup> Later the same year, sanctioned by NSC directives 4, 4A, and 10/2, the Office of Policy Coordination (OPC) was created to coordinate all manner of covert activities aimed at undermining support for communism abroad.<sup>4</sup> These foundations soon produced results. In May 1949, the National Committee for a Free Europe (NCFE) was set up by US business elites to mobilize support for undermining Soviet control in the East, mainly by means of broadcasts via Radio Free Europe.<sup>5</sup> In June 1950, this was followed by the arrival of the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), a body designed to organize, in the name of freedom of thought, support for anticommunism (and anti-neutralism) amongst the (predominantly) European intelligentsia. 6 The British Foreign Office and MI6 also contributed to these developments, most notably through the formation of the World Assembly of Youth in 1948 and support for the high-brow CCF journal *Encounter*. <sup>7</sup> By 1953, a whole

series of international fronts and counter-fronts were operating, competing for the allegiance of influential professional communities around the world.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the success of these efforts, during the early 1950s the overall outlook of Western political or psychological warfare was one of 'negative anti-communism.' Taking Western ideals and values for granted, the aim was to highlight the brutal realities of life under communist rule and the concomitant threats posed by communist parties and their allies in the West. Due to the Soviet determination to cause division in the West and split NATO, attempts were made to coordinate these activities transnationally. The most important effort within Western Europe was *Paix et Liberté*, a French-led international network under the leadership of parliamentary deputy Jean-Paul David which sought to guide an anti-communist propaganda campaign via affiliated groups across Western Europe. During 1952-53, David, with the backing of French Foreign Minister Georges Bidault, attempted (unsuccessfully) to develop Paix et Liberté into the propaganda arm of NATO itself.<sup>9</sup>

However, Paix et Liberté's methods were somewhat simplistic, concentrating on the use of pamflets, posters and radio broadcasts to discredit the communist peace campaign. The limitations to this approach became increasingly evident following the death of Stalin in March 1953, and David's ambitions were never fully realised. The organisation's message remained one-dimensional: Communism was a violently repressive ideology, and the Soviet Union, through its proxy organisations in politics, the trade unions, and across society at large, propagated lies to cover this up by presenting itself as promoting peace and freedom. Whereas this had a function in the tense days of 1950-51 when the Korean war broke out, by the mid-1950s the complexities of peaceful coexistence had undermined Paix et Liberté's usefulness and the French government ceased its support in 1956. However, the organisation was

renamed, the French bureau continuing as the Office National pour la Démocratie

Française and the international committee as the Comité International d'Action

Sociale (CIAS). The remnants of this network would provide one of the foundations

for the development of Interdoc in a few years time. Paix et Liberté's national

committees functioned as "a sort of role of vigilance, of conscience" in the war of

ideas, but the changing East-West environment demanded a new approach. This

would ultimately involve not only a network separate from NATO and – significantly

– US direction, but also an outlook more profound than the negative propaganda of

David and his associates, which offered no alternative beyond the need for Western

anti-communist solidarity.

The Soviet strategy of 'peaceful coexistence' that emerged under Stalin's successors as Soviet head of state (Georgy Malenkov, then Nikolai Bulganin and Nikita Khrushchev) raised many questions about the anti-communist strategy of the West. The Kremlin's portrayal of the Soviet Union as a reformist state searching for a stable accommodation with the West brought pressure to bear on Western governments to justify why they would not accept these overtures. <sup>12</sup> 'Rollback' and 'Liberation', the catch-words of the early 1950s which referred to the determination to undermine and overthrow the Soviet control of Eastern Europe, were effectively null and void well before the Red Army crushed the Hungarian revolution in November 1956. <sup>13</sup> Despite Eisenhower's attempt to capitalize on the change of Soviet leadership, it remained difficult for the West to seize the initiative. In these circumstances "the excesses of American anti-communism (represented most obviously in McCarthyism, 'liberation,' and massive retaliation) appeared at times to be the greater threat to international peace and stability." <sup>14</sup> Soviet strategy also broadened the East-West

contest into an explicitly global ideological struggle. In October 1959, Khrushchev outlined his position in no less than *Foreign Affairs*:

In its simplest expression it signifies the repudiation of war as a means of solving controversial issues....We say to the leaders of the capitalist states: Let us try out in practice whose system is better, let us compete without war....The main thing is to keep to the positions of ideological struggle, without resorting to arms in order to prove that one is right....We believe that ultimately that system will be victorious on the globe which will offer the nations greater opportunities for improving their material and spiritual life. <sup>15</sup>

The Eisenhower administration soon recognized the implications of this 'new type of Cold War,' where the powers of persuasion and international public opinion could be decisive. Communist peace overtures were aimed at splitting the Western alliance and garnering support among youth, intellectuals, and other influential groups.

Eisenhower himself, a convinced advocate of psychological warfare, used his 1958

State of the Union address to denounce the USSR's "total cold war," which incorporated "trade, economic development, military power, arts, science, education, the whole world of ideas." Responding to the challenge, he declared the United States would "wage total peace" by "bringing to bear every asset of our personal and national lives." Yet although the psychological dimension was elevated to a higher level of importance by the Eisenhower administration, the driving impulse remained the same as before: increased efforts on all fronts to declare the truth and display the reality of Western freedoms and good intentions in contrast to Soviet tyranny,

duplicity, and lies. Soviet communism itself was still largely regarded as at best a political and psychological aberration and at worst as a veritable evil. <sup>16</sup>

### The Formation of Interdoc

The origins of Interdoc lie in the dissatisfaction with this outlook felt by certain sections of the West European intelligence communities. Above all it was recognized that the potential effects of Soviet strategy on Western morale required some form of integrated response which took the appeal of communism seriously. To this end, in 1957, a series of discussions or 'colloques' was begun by French intelligence officer Antoine Bonnemaison, then head of the Guerre/Action Psychologique section of the Service de Documentation Exterieure et de Contre-Espionage (SDECE). Bonnemaison's role in SDECE was coordinator of a network of psychological warfare organizations - the Cinquième Bureaux - via a public front, the Centre de Recherche du Bien Politique. The colloques were initially an important form of rapprochement around common security concerns between the French and West German intelligence communities, in the wake of the Federal Republic joining NATO and the Anglo-French debacle of Suez. Alongside members of the intelligence community, the meetings were attended by invited representatives from the military, politics, business, academia, and the media, and were held once or twice a year. From 1958 onwards, the French and Germans were joined by participants from Britain, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. The Dutch were represented by Louis Einthoven, then head of the *Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst* (BVD – the domestic security service), who soon brought in as support the head of the BVD's training division, Cees van den Heuvel. 17 The broad concern of these meetings was the effect that peaceful coexistence initiatives would have on the outlook and political loyalties of Western populations, and "to discuss the question of Communist infiltration into industry, scholastic and public life and to determine what steps should be taken to deal with the problem." <sup>18</sup>

Communist strategy focused on speeding the disintegration of the capitalist West by focusing on three dividing lines: between workers and capitalists, between the West and the Third World, and between the United States and Europe. In these circumstances the military origins of psychological warfare had to be abandoned in order to emphasize that this was now a matter of everyday concern within every sector of civilian life. Western values, once taken for granted, now needed to be clarified, amplified, and literally ingrained into those sectors of the population who were most 'vulnerable': businessmen, trade unionists, religious officials, the military, and students. As van den Heuvel wrote at the time: "Psychological warfare has two sides: The build-up of moral strength within one's own side and the undermining of the morale of the opposing side."

The Dutch took the initiative to develop an institutional arrangement that could back up the twice-yearly colloques with a permanent base, and on 7 February 1963, the official statutes of the International Information and Documentation Center (Interdoc) were signed in a Hague solicitor's office. The two parties involved were fronts for their respective intelligence services: The German *Verein zur Erforschung sozialpolitischer Verhältnisse im Ausland*, based in Munich, and the Dutch *Stichting voor Onderzoek van Ecologische Vraagstukken* (SOEV). Cees van den Heuvel, having left the BVD, was named Director. Although the French had played a crucial role in the formation period, de Gaulle's insistence on an independent foreign policy forced Bonnemaison, much his chagrin, to withdraw as a partner. The

Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND), the German intelligence service, took responsibility for the largest share of the budget.

Interdoc was formed to fulfill three main tasks: study, advice, and coordination. Concerning study, Interdoc would effectively operate as the central exchange point for a network of national institutes, its regular conferences providing ideal meeting-places for communication. The second task, advice, involved firstly making contact with new partners in Europe and then increasingly in the Third World, and secondly, extending the discussions of the colloques and becoming a training center for anti-communist 'cadres' in strategic sectors of democratic society. The third task, coordination, was meant to overcome the lack of integration of Western efforts to combat communist influence.

#### The Training Function: The Ostkolleg in Cologne

Even before the official foundation of Interdoc, Van den Heuvel laid the basis for the transnational network he wanted to build. For the formation of anti-communist 'cadres' he sought quality locations for courses in communism and anti-communism for participants from the media, the military, and the universities. In 1961-62, the focus for this fell on the *Ost-Kolleg* of the West German Federal Agency for Civic Education (*Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung*, originally *Heimatdienst*) in Cologne, an institute that fell under the responsibility of the German interior ministry. The Ost-Kolleg had been established in 1957 for the purpose of facilitating and promoting the study and understanding of Soviet communism and East-West relations, and its participants included members of the BND and the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (*Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz*).<sup>21</sup> Initially, van den Heuvel aimed to establish a similar seminar/training center in the

Netherlands, but at the end of January 1962, he secured an arrangement for 16 seminar places for Dutch participants (two places for each eight-week seminar) over the following year as a trial run. Should these visits go well, the intention was to choose participants from information service personnel, political parties, and the BVD itself.<sup>22</sup>

The early seminar visits were undertaken by four SOEV associates in May 1962, and they returned with a very positive report. The quality of the speakers was high, the focus was broader and more useful than just on the 'German question,' and it provided a perfect stimulus for clarifying SOEV thinking on communism.<sup>23</sup> The trial period having been successfully concluded, in January 1963, 3 weeks before the official opening of Interdoc, van den Heuvel arranged for up to 20 Dutch participants per year, with British and French participants also welcome if he could arrange it.<sup>24</sup> Broadening the approach, from early 1964 onwards small student groups from Leiden and Utrecht, particularly from the law faculties (a prime site for the Dutch elites), were regularly attending Ost-Kolleg seminars in Cologne. The registration was carried out via the relevant student organizations, in Leiden this being the Leidse Studentenbeweging voor Internationale Betrekkingen (SIB), so that no relation with Interdoc or its affiliates was apparent to the participants. Hans Beuker (October 1962), Pieter Koerts (March 1963), and several other members of the Dutch student circle around van den Heuvel made the trip to Cologne to assess the value of the courses there.<sup>25</sup> These student training trips continued through to 1972, when the withdrawal of German funding from Interdoc caused a drastic reduction in its activities.

Youth Festivals as an East-West Ideological Battleground

The relevance of youth for international politics during the Cold War, and particularly the impact of an increasing transnational radicalism during the 1960s, has attracted increasing attention in recent years. Foremost amongst this has been the thesis of Jeremy Suri that a growing "international language of dissent" and popular dissatisfaction with the static reality of the East-West divide pushed world leaders into the accommodations of Détente. The approach to student radicalism sketched here will be slightly different. Interdoc represented an attempt firstly to manage Cold War differences and secondly to direct social change down certain paths that would ultimately benefit the West. While Suri claims that Détente was deeply conservative in outlook, for the Interdoc circle any rapprochement with the East *necessarily* offered new opportunities for cross-border engagement and the possibility for fomenting social change. In this sense the need of the West Germans to adapt to recognizing a permanent German Democratic Republic combined with the Dutch wish to unpack and dismantle communist ideology. Youth was a prime element within this strategy.

From the beginning Interdoc's activities also included planning 'counteractions', referring to an active engagement with and sabotage of communist-sponsored events, in particular in the youth and student field. The catalyst for this was the gradual development of the large-scale Soviet-sponsored international youth festivals being run by front organizations such as the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) and the International Union of Students (IUS). Following the first such festival in Prague in 1947, similar events held every two years had attracted an increasing participation from around the world. The sense of momentum gathered by the success of the 1957 Moscow festival led to the decision to go on the offensive and hold the following events outside of the communist bloc: Vienna in 1959, and Helsinki in 1962.<sup>28</sup>

For Vienna a study group consisting of "about 60 young people from Germany and other European countries" was assembled under German direction for the purpose of participating in and observing the festival.<sup>29</sup> This was deemed a useful exercise, so that when the Eighth World Youth Festival in Helsinki was announced for August 1962, a similar operation was planned. This time van den Heuvel acted as team leader for a European group consisting of about 30 Dutch, British, French, German, and Belgian students. At the core of this group he assembled a three-man Dutch team, two of whom he already knew through either family ties or close friends, to take part in a training program in The Hague some seven or eight months before the Helsinki event opened. 30 This involved meetings on a Saturday, once a fortnight, where the students were instructed in the workings of communist ideology, the organization and propaganda methods used by communist front organizations, and the realities of life behind the Iron Curtain. For this purpose van den Heuvel and his colleagues used the same training materials that they had developed for their training courses at the BVD. The aim of this preparation was to ensure that the students would be able to understand, withstand, and literally dismantle the arguments they would encounter from pro-Soviet delegates at the festival. The students had been well chosen since they already held strong anti-communist views, but this program took them several steps further along the line of Western-style "indoctrination." Helsinki was to be "a case study" for the embryonic Interdoc on how this kind of communistcontrolled event functioned (methods of manipulation, use of different media, ways of organizing meetings, and so on) and how it could best be combated.<sup>31</sup>

The group of three signed up for the conference in the early summer of 1962. Since they were not members of the left-leaning student organizations running the trip to Helsinki, they had to be careful not to arouse suspicion that they were working

together.<sup>32</sup> The trip by train to Finland included stops in East Berlin (as guests of the Freie Deutsche Jugend), a visit to the former Sachsenhausen concentration camp, and Brest-Litovsk. Van den Heuvel and his former BVD colleague Herman Mennes traveled separately to Helsinki, where they communicated with the group via other personnel (acting as 'cut-outs') to avoid suspicion. At some point the decision was taken "to make a point" and not to just observe, causing one of the three Dutch students, Hans Beuker to register to speak during a festival colloquium on the role of students in solving problems related to the Third World. It seems that the speech he gave was prepared by van den Heuvel and Mennes and passed secretly to Beuker before the session.<sup>33</sup> When his time came he proceeded to denounce the one-sided focus of the meeting on Western imperialism and instead criticized the Soviet domination of Central Asia, the Baltic States, and Eastern Europe, claiming that in contrast to the decolonization of the Western empires, the continuing forms of Soviet oppression deserved more attention.<sup>34</sup> As was to be expected, such a statement caused uproar and a series of speakers from the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc came forward to denounce Beuker. Suddenly this orchestrated event, designed to present a united anti-Western anti-capitalist offensive, had been thrown onto the defensive. To avoid appearing as an agent provocateur, Beuker, after some discussion with his colleagues, decided to return to the Netherlands by train as planned instead of making a swift exit by plane. Surrounded by suspicious and hostile students, Beuker nervously made the three-day trip back to Amsterdam, trusting that the publicity surrounding his statement would protect him.

Once back in the Netherlands, Beuker and the others took part in an evaluation of the Helsinki operation, which was regarded by all as highly successful. The subsequent report made clear that the delicacy of Finnish-Russian relations had

originally ruled out any "counter-activities," but that "during the festival it seemed possible to do something in that field." Alongside van den Heuvel's group other associations had attended to offer alternative views and engage in discussion, particularly with Third World students, the most impressive of these "counter-influence" groups being the Swiss *Aktionskomitee Wahret die Freiheit*. The report ended by remarking that the attempts to disrupt the smooth operation of the festival had met with some limited success, and thus optimistically claimed that "the ninth [youth festival] in a country outside the Communist sphere of influence might well mean the end of Communist world youth festivals old style." 35

However, this side to Interdoc's work did not expand much further. Van den Heuvel continued his coordinator role from Helsinki for the West European anticommunist student network. Referred to initially as the Strasbourg group, then the Luxembourg group, it is not clear for whom van den Heuvel fulfilled this role. <sup>36</sup> A smaller International Union of Students meeting in Florence in February 1964, entitled 'Freedom and Disarmament,' was the site of a second 'counter-action' under the direction of van den Heuvel's deputy Herman Mennes. Pieter Koerts delivered a prepared statement similar to Beuker in Helsinki, but with far less impact and less press coverage.<sup>37</sup> But Florence did serve an important purpose for continuing the connections built up around the Vienna and Helsinki festivals, and useful cooperation was established with, among others, the Liga für Freiheit in Zurich, the Swiss wing of the ongoing French-based anti-communist Paix et Liberté network. Meanwhile, the hope was that a large-scale follow-up to Helsinki would be organized so that the success there could be repeated. However, the attempt to set up major Sovietsponsored youth festivals in the Third World, namely in Algiers (1965) and Accra (1966), ended in failure due to political instability in both Algeria and Ghana. At van

den Heuvel's instigation an approach was made by the Dutch National Student Council to the organizers in Algiers to see if some form of participation could be arranged (thereby expanding access to the event), but the negotiations, like the event itself, did not get very far. For Accra, the Luxembourg group (this time consisting of student representatives from Britain, the Netherlands, and West Germany) was already busy with planning 'counter-measures' when the fall of Nkrumah cancelled the event.

When the next World Youth Festival did eventually take place in Sofia in 1968, the political circumstances had changed. Divisions within the Eastern bloc and the arrival of the New Left in the West caused the Sofia festival to be disrupted by divisions within the socialist ranks themselves. Czechoslovaks, Romanians, and Yugoslavs organized a counter-festival of their own, and the attendance (for the first time) by non-communist and New Left groups from West Germany caused a running confrontation with their counterparts from the East. 40 Van den Heuvel did arrange for two students from Leiden to attend as observers. Again as with Helsinki, a full training program was prepared beforehand to send them "fully briefed," but once in Bulgaria, it appears that their cover was too thin for them to attempt anything approaching Beuker's declaration. <sup>41</sup> The final counter-action seems to have been at the 10<sup>th</sup> Festival in East Berlin in 1973. Van den Heuvel's son Christiaan, then a politics student at the Vrij Universiteit in Amsterdam, attended the festival independent of the Dutch delegation and delivered a 10-minute call for free movement of people and ideas at a session in Humboldt University. The audience this time remained "dead silent" and he did not receive the same hostile response from the festival hosts as Beuker had in Helsinki elevven years before. 42

But Interdoc's view on East-West relations had already been disrupted by then by developments within the West itself. The rise of youth radicalism, fuelled by the US civil rights movement and opposition to the Vietnam war, complicated the whole approach to utilising student contacts to open up the East. The arrival of the New Left posed new challenges and demanded new analyses.

#### The New Left and the Formation of Interdoc Youth

Although there were contacts with the Leiden-based COSEC (Coordinating Secretariat), the central office of the (CIA-sponsored) International Student Conference (ISC), it is clear that the Interdoc network aimed to establish its own particular presence in the international student field. This was perhaps a control / sphere of influence issue, considering the CIA role in the ISC and the strong West European orientation of Interdoc, or it could have been a deliberate tactic to avoid blending the roles of two institutions with close links to the intelligence communities of different nations (which could have raised some unnecessary suspicions). In the late 1960s it is clear that van den Heuvel and his associates sought to make use of ISC's network for building their own response to the New Left: Interdoc Youth. 43

Youth politics began to figure prominently at Interdoc conferences. In May 1964, in Lunteren, near Utrecht (Netherlands), a seminar was held on the relationship between youth and communism in the West, followed by another in Eschwege (Germany) entitled 'Considerations for an Active Peace Policy.' 1965 saw two further seminars, this time in Locarno (Switzerland) and Zandvoort (Netherlands), covering the possibilities for making use of increasing social, cultural, educational, and business contacts across the Iron Curtain. The report on the Zandvoort event, which involved representatives from Britain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Switzerland,

makes clear where the intentions of Interdoc lay within the broader context of East-West relations. Increasing contacts were an opportunity not just for ensuring peace but for *transforming attitudes*:

[I]t might be useful to emphasize that our work complements the official policy of coexistence on the political, economic, scientific and cultural level. It can form a parallel current and must occasionally even run counter to it since we want to influence the situation in the East indirectly yet actively. While the main task of official policy in the contacts with the governments of the Eastern bloc is a gradual relaxation of tension between East and West through small steps in limited areas, our main wish is to modify the basis of the communist, totalitarian and therefore undemocratic system.<sup>44</sup>

A list of activities outlining how Interdoc could play this role was laid out, stretching from informing prospective participants at scientific conferences in the East about what they were likely to experience, to offering training programs at the Ost-Kolleg and the University of Erlangen for travelers and guides.

The radical turn in youth politics in the West began to turn the attentions of Interdoc towards the meaning and importance of the New Left. This complicated the original Interdoc thesis from the early 1960s that Western youth were susceptible to communist influence, sine there was now emerging a vocal, active and radical leftism that considered Eastern and Western regimes as equally oppressive. The disruptiveness of New Left activists at the Sofia festival in 1968 demonstrated their determination to be independent from both sides of the ideological Cold War.

Looking to gather together expert opinion on these developments, a conference was held in September 1968, in Zandvoort, which brought together a series of papers offering theoretical and country-based studies on youth, radical politics, and violence. Significantly, in his presentation van den Heuvel himself rejected the notion that there was "an international communist conspiracy" behind the New Left movements. In stark contrast to the position, say, of the FBI and COINTELPRO, van den Heuvel instead highlighted the subtle shifting alliances and contradictions between orthodox communism and its radical youthful variants. Because of the uncertain effects these developments could have on East-West relations, he concluded:

It is essential that there be a constant and careful watch on the relations between the two movements [New Left and Communism]. However, merely to keep watch on this phenomenon would be an inadequate response to the challenge of student radicalism. Much more is needed, and above all to reduce student radicalism to more normal democratic proportions.<sup>45</sup>

In other words, the New Left represented a potential disruption of the kind of managed East-West environment that Interdoc had been striving for since the early 1960s. Carefully laid plans on how to turn Détente to the West's advantage were now being challenged by a wave of diverse and sometimes incoherent protests that rejected the neat East-West divide and those who maintained it.

Some of the papers from the Zandvoort conference were published, and this was followed by a second short volume in early 1969 that concentrated on the New Left phenomenon in Britain, West Germany, and the United States. 46 During the same

period, van den Heuvel brought in a young journalist, Karel van Wolferen, to write a full-length study of student radicalism in the West, which resulted in 1970 in the well-researched publication *Student Revolutionaries of the 1960s.*<sup>47</sup> Van Wolferen, who had spent some time in Berkeley over the previous year, had given a presentation at Zandvoort that argued there was no worldwide radical conspiracy, only localized disturbances with wide-ranging but similar characteristics. His study identified that "those who organized the struggle had not the slightest intention of arriving at tangible goals. Reaching one's goal would have meant an end to the all-important struggle." He recalled that there were clearly two camps at Zandvoort, those like himself with a more sanguine attitude and those, especially among the German representatives, who insisted on the need to be constantly alert against the potential all-encompassing threat. For van Wolferen there was a "push to make things more threatening than was justified." The BND and their associates were "chasing ghosts."

Nevertheless, from these meetings plans were set in motion for a more substantial response to the New Left. Following a preliminary meeting at Erlangen in January, a more formal gathering took place in The Hague during 29-30 March 1969, which saw the arrival of Interdoc Youth (IY). Eighteen participants from eight countries in Western Europe attended. The broad aims stated that the new organization "shall act as a basis for information and not indoctrination," and that it aimed "to inform and cooperate, with those people of the younger generation who share the view that Western democratic values need protection against dangers from outside as well as from within." An ambitious roster of activities was planned, including regular seminars, a periodical (*Youth Forum*), the formation of national working groups in the eight countries involved, and exchange trips to the Eastern

bloc.<sup>51</sup> IY's secretariat was established on the top floor of Interdoc's offices at 10 van Stolkweg in The Hague, under the leadership of secretary-general Uwe Holl, and it began its operations on 1 April 1969. The official link with Interdoc was through the IY chairman, Herman Mennes. Holl's task was not only to act as a clearing-house for information and to initiate and coordinate activities, but also to expand IY's reach among the youth of the Third World.

For the next 18 months Holl attempted to establish and run Interdoc Youth from his secretariat's office in The Hague, but it was an uphill struggle. For a start its goals were not entirely clear. At a meeting of IY representatives in Richmond, West London, in October 1969 "the Board of Interdoc Youth found itself in the situation to explain, discuss and even to defend the aims and the purpose" of the new organisation. The appearance there of two Dutch journalists also necessitated a clear public statement. Following Richmond, Holl clarified the network's principal aim to be "approaching members of the younger generation of all political shades if they accept that radical violent solutions are not the answer to our problems in society and in the East-West confrontation."

Close relations were built up with Interdoc's recently established West Berlin office, an ideal location for organizing week-long multinational group seminars for students, trainee diplomats, and businessmen on the realities of the Cold War confrontation. In May 1970, an IY conference was held in West Berlin, involving a series of lectures on the political situation in the city, the motivations for recent student violence, and a "visit to East Berlin for those who want to go there." Increasing student exchanges with the East presented more opportunities, such as the Leiden group that traveled for two weeks to the Soviet union "with the help of IY" in early 1970. Mennes also arranged a lecture series on East-West relations for

students at the prestigious international business school Nijenrode, near Utrecht, further extending IY's contact base.

Yet from the beginning Interdoc Youth faced a difficult task. The divisions that came out in Richmond had highlighted the different opinions on what the organization should or could achieve. While interest in its purpose and activities did begin to spread thanks to the tireless promotional work of Holl, the constantly shifting location and involvement of his members, due to the variable demands of student and working life, meant that it was almost impossible to create a consistent, coherent organization with a stable base. <sup>56</sup> And just when there was optimism that something worthwhile was being created, the whole set-up came apart.

Plans for a large conference in the autumn of 1970 began to unravel during the summer. Hopes for a location in Norway or the castle at Burg Gutenfels along the Rhine went unrealized, and in the end the event had to be postponed to make way for the main Interdoc conference in Rimini, Italy, at the end of October 1970. It was in Rimini that everything changed. Up to that point the largest share of the Interdoc budget had been provided by the BND, but the arrival of Brandt's SPD government in 1969, and the consequent pursuit of *Ostpolitik* signaled a policy shift that did not tolerate BND-funded operations that might collide with official government policy towards the East. The BND still had to sort out what to do with its relation with Interdoc, but cost-cutting had to begin immediately and Interdoc Youth was considered one of the expendable activities. Holl recalled reeling in shock at this reversal, since the formation of IY had originally come about due to BND concerns. Holl and other IY board members proposed changing the group's name to 'The Hague Group' and switching its focus to "all impacts which a Europe on its way to unity will have on world-affairs." But the writing was already on the wall. In December 1970

the BND declared that the link with Interdoc would have to be broken, and financial constraints forced a complete stoppage of IY activities.<sup>58</sup> Interdoc itself continued in a reduced form, van den Heuvel shifting the energies of his small staff towards both solidifying transatlantic relations and pursuing links with Eastern Europe through to the mid-1980s.

#### Conclusion

Interdoc's engagement with youth and students through the 1960s illustrates a key transition in how this relationship developed. In the early 1960s, the aim was to forge alliances with individuals and student organizations in the Netherlands and around Western Europe in order to use them as 'channels of influence' within the increasing interchange that was occurring between West and East. Through its cadre-formation approach, within which students formed a key constituency, Interdoc represented a determined attempt to manipulate discourse on the Cold War in both East and West. As van den Heuvel wrote in July 1960, the aim "is a psychological influencing of the opponent party, *one's own party*, friend and neutral, in the interests of the own warfare [sic]." That this position exudes the elitism of the intelligence services goes without saying.

Interdoc Youth was therefore an extension of what was already taking place with the Ost-Kolleg and the Strasbourg group. However, the main difference was in the nature of the challenge. The New Left, as van Wolferen and other observers within Interdoc circles insisted, was not a coherent opponent and was particularly difficult to address from any orthodox Cold War standpoint. Interdoc Youth's effort to build a transnational coalition to highlight the follies of youthful (violent) rebellion was therefore an attempt to strengthen the middle-ground against those who accepted

no middle-ground. This, together with the problem of finding consensus for what IY should set out to achieve, were problems from the start.

It is certainly true that rising youth radicalism caused concern at the higher reaches of global politics. In this sense the value of Suri's work comes from his linkage of different regions, in doing so placing developments in China during the Cultural Revolution in a wholly new light. Others have concentrated on how the social disruption either helped or hindered power politics. American officials under presidents Johnson and Nixon feared that the gradual entry of student activists into positions of responsibility and influence would eventually lead to a neutralist West Germany wanting to opt out of NATO and the European Community, thereby threatening the US-led post-war alliance. <sup>60</sup> In the East, Brezhnev and others initially saw opportunities for utilizing social upheaval in the West for their own purposes before retreating into a more conservative posture based on Détente. <sup>61</sup>

Interdoc, on the other hand, was operating largely outside of the black-white, gain-loss logic of the superpowers. During the 1960s it seemed clear that socio-political change was picking up momentum, and the danger was that this could get out of control in both East and West. The cadre-building process and the establishment of IY were attempts to propagate a greater awareness of the threat posed by 'peaceful coexistence' and, later, by the New Left. But whereas 'peaceful coexistence' could be turned to the West's advantage through increased cross-border contacts, the New Left could not, since it threatened the cohesion of Western societies *and*, due to its erratic disruptiveness, the successful, peaceful transformation of East-West relations. <sup>62</sup> It would be wrong to play up the significance of IY. Nevertheless, it was gathering increasing interest at the time of its enforced cancellation. As a result, this should go

down as a particularly interesting and innovative example of the establishment responding to the unique circumstances of youthful revolt in the late 1960s.

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#### Notes

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On the Soviet position in 1945-46 see D. Nadzhafov, "The Beginning of the Cold War between East and West: The Aggravation of Ideological Confrontation." *Cold War History* 4 (2004): 140-174.

<sup>&</sup>quot;The Inauguration of Organized Political Warfare", 4 May 1948, Policy Planning Staff [George Kennan]. FRUS, 1945-1950: Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment (Washington DC: Department of State): 668-672. Political warfare was a term originated by the British during WW II. A useful definition: "A form of conflict between states in which each protagonist seeks to impose its will on its opponent by methods other than the use of armed force. For practical purposes, the principal weapon of political warfare may be described as the combined operation of diplomacy and propaganda." The Strategy of Political Warfare, n.d., quoted in W.E.D. "Changing Concepts." In W. Daugherty, & M. Janowitz, eds., A Psychological Warfare Casebook (Baltimore: Operations Research Office, 1960): 16.

NSC 4, 4A, and 10/2, FRUS, 1945-1950: Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment, pp. 640-642, 649-651, 713-715.

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- 23 'Rapport over de OSTKOLLEG cursus 13 mei – 20 mei 1962', File: Ost-Kolleg 1961-1963, CC.
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- "That was unbelievable, the best professors on communism...for one week you had most excellent lectures." Interview with Hans Beuker, Houten, 3 September 2003.
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- On the early festivals and the West's response see Joel Kotek, "Youth Organizations as a Battlefield in the Cold War," in Scott-Smith and Krabbendam, 168-191.

- <sup>29</sup> 'VIIIth World Youth Festival Helsinki 29<sup>th</sup> July to 6<sup>th</sup> August 1962,' private report written by Cees van den Heuvel, p. 1. It is not stated which German individuals or institutions coordinated the Vienna operation.
- The three Dutch students were Hans Beuker, Pieter Koerts, and George van der Pluim. Koerts was a family relation of Van den Heuvel, and Beuker knew him from childhood.
- Interview with Hans Beuker, Houten, 3 September 2003; interview with Pieter Koerts, Amsterdam, 2 June 2004. Along with George van der Puil, these two made up the three-man student group.
- Both the Netherlands Youth Association and the Netherlands Student Council, the principal student bodies, rejected official participation but did "recognise the value of individual participation by young people and students from the Netherlands, who are prepared to defend their views at the festival" ('VIIIth World Youth Festival' p. 7).
- Interview with Hans Beuker, Houten, 3 September 2003; interview with Pieter Koerts, Amsterdam, 2 June 2004. Since the festival "disciplinary service" (Finnish communists) "kept very strict watch at the debates, discussions and seminars" ('VIIIth World Youth Festival' p. 11). Beuker was right to comment in the interview that had the organizers checked his identity properly he would not have been given the chance to speak.
- The full title of the colloquium where Beuker spoke was 'The Role of Students in the Struggle for National Independence and for Solving the Political, Economic, and Social Problems of the Colonial and Underdeveloped Nations.' For the text of Beuker's statement, see the report of the Bonn-based Büro für Politische Studien, *Frieden und Freundschaft? Weltjugendfestspiele, Funktion und Wirkung* (Bonn: Walter Lütz, 1963), 159.
- <sup>35</sup> 'VIIIth World Youth Festival' pp. 1-2, 27-28, 32.
- The name referred to the locations of the coordination meetings. The change of name from Strasbourg to Luxembourg is a further indication of the withdrawal of French participation in Interdoc during 1963.
- Interview with Pieter Koerts, Amsterdam, 2 June 2004.
- Correspondence with Gert van Maanen, International Secretary (1962-63) and President (1963-64) of the National Student Council, 21 November 2006.
- File: UK No. 32 1966, UK No. 43 General Correspondence, CC.
- Nick Rutter, 'The Better Germans: The German Rivalry at the World Youth Festival 1951-1973,' unpublished paper.
- Interview with Alexander Heldring, The Hague, 30 June 2004. Heldring, a young trainee diplomat then working on a study of the Federation Internationale des Resistants for Interdoc, was van den Heuvel's first choice to go to Sofia, but concerns over how this might affect his diplomatic career caused the Dutch Foreign Ministry to reject this plan.
- Interview with Christiaan van den Heuvel, The Hague, 27 May 2009. Cees van den Heuvel, who wanted to offer some "resistance" to the festival, was at the time in West Berlin and passed the speech to Christiaan by means of a 'runner' to the East. Christiaan later wrote his Masters thesis on the event: 'Nederland en het 11de Wereldjeugdfestival', C. van den Heuvel, February 1979.
- File: AK No. 25, International Student Organisations, CC. This includes material from the ISC that was clearly being used by Interdoc Youth to build its own circle.
- 44 'Preparation for East-West Contacts', Interdoc Conference, Zandvoort, 24-25 September 1965, p. 3 (author's copy).
- Cees van den Heuvel, "International Aspects of the Radical Student Movement and Relations with Communism," *The New Left* (The Hague: Interdoc, 1968), 50.
- The New Left (The Hague: Interdoc, 1968); The New Left in The United States of America, Britain, The Federal Republic of Germany (The Hague: Interdoc, 1969).
- Karel van Wolferen, Student Revolutionaries of the 1960s (The Hague: Interdoc, 1970).
- 48 Ibid., p. 33.
- Interview with Karel van Wolferen, Amsterdam, 12 January 2005.
- <sup>50</sup> 'Interdoc Youth,' 29-30 March 1969, The Hague, File: Interdoc Youth, CC.
- Belgium, Britain, France, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and West Germany.
- Working Paper for IY Board Meeting, Strasbourg, 14 March 1970,' author's copy.
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<sup>57</sup> 'Draft for Interdoc Youth's possible activities after 1<sup>st</sup> January 1971,' Uwe Holl, author's copy.

See Giles Scott-Smith, "Interdoc, Peaceful Coexistence, and Positive Anti-Communism: West European Cooperation in Psychological Warfare 1963-1972," *Cold War History* 7 (Spring 2007): 19-43; Giles Scott-Smith, "Interdoc: Dutch-German Cooperation in Psychological Warfare 1963-72," in *Battleground Western Europe: Intelligence Operations in Germany and the Netherlands in the Twentieth Century*, eds. B. de Graaf, B. de Jong, and W. Platje, (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 2007), 169-192.

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See Martin Klimke, 'A "Serious Concern of US Foreign Policy": The West German Student Movement and the Western Alliance,' in Belinda Davis, Martin Klimke, Carla MacDougall, and Wilfried Mausbach, eds., *Changing the World, Changing the Self: Political Protest and Collective Identities in 1960s-1970s West Germany and the United States* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009).

See Kimmo Rentola, 'The 1968 Movements in the Cold War: A Case Study,' paper given at the conference New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness, Queens University, Ontario, 13-16 June 2007.

In his Zandvoort presentation van den Heuvel recorded how radical students from the West had themselves disrupted the 1968 World Youth Festival in Sofia because of their opposition to "conservative communism."

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