



Ford Foundation records, Overseas Development, International Training and Research, Office Files of Cleon O. Swayzee

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Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical / Historical	3
Scope and Contents	6
Arrangement	6
Administrative Information	6
Collection Inventory	7
Subject Files	7

Summary Information

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[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

Segment One: International Activities of the Ford Foundation: An Overview

The Foundation's aspiration to become a national and international philanthropy for the advancement of human welfare was first formally expressed in the seminal 1949 report of the Gaither Study Committee, *Report of the Study for the Ford Foundation on Policy and Program* (RAC Library, call letters 361.7 GAI), which was commissioned by the Board of Trustees to chart the Foundation's future. Foundation Trustees launched Ford's international grantmaking activities in 1950 when they approved the committee's report and its embrace of peace, democracy, and freedom. Since then, the Foundation has tackled these goals using a variety of strategies and responding to changing contexts, from the Cold War to the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall and beyond.

Toward the Foundation's aspiration#al goal, "the establishment of peace", its international activities have comprised a wide range of conceptual approaches and focus areas. These include international affairs, international studies, international understanding, arms control and disarmament, international law, international economic concerns, and overseas development in nearly every region of the world. Three distinct periods emerge for the international grantmaking defined by external contextual changes and

internal changes in Foundation leadership and structures: the expansion era of 1950-1965; the transition and restructuring years of 1966-1988; and the post-1989 shift away from Cold War dichotomies. During each of the distinct historical periods the consistent objectives were: 1) to ensure freedom and democracy in developed countries; 2) to foster education and international understanding in all countries; and 3) to contribute to the social, economic, and political development of less developed countries.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

Segment 2. Period Sketch - The Expansion Era 1950-1965

The Ford Foundation's expansion era (1950-1965) began when the Gaither Study Committee Report placed "peace" as the area of top priority for the Foundation and set the Ford Foundation on a global course. Board Chair Henry Ford II writing in the 1951 Annual Report of the Foundation, identified "the danger of war" as the "the prime threat to human welfare today." Under the leadership of the three Ford Foundation presidents in this period-- Paul Hoffman, H. Rowan Gaither and Henry Heald--and several key trustees, notably the two seriatim chairs, John J. McCloy and Julius A. Stratton, the Foundation programs were largely informed by the post-World War II desire to avoid nuclear war and promote greater understanding among the world's peoples, strengthening of the United Nations, and enhancing both private and public American participation in world affairs. The strong board presence of university presidents and former leaders of postwar reconstruction efforts in Europe also helped to inform Ford's approach to building the field of peace and international security in the United States and encouraged extensive overseas activities.

For example, the first three presidents of the expanded Foundation ranged from government and business leadership experience to academic and nonprofit: Paul Hoffman (at Ford, 1950-1953) ran the Marshall Plan in Europe; H. Rowan Gaither Staffer (1948-1953), President (1953-1956) and Trustee (1956-1958) had MIT and Rand experience; Henry Heald, former president, Illinois Institute of Technology and New York University, President (1956-1966). The trustees also ran the leadership gamut from government and nonprofits to academic: Trustee John J. McCloy (from 1953; chair, 1959-1965) was assistant Secretary of War during World War II and chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations; and Trustee Julius A. Stratton (Trustee from 1955; chair, 1966-1970) was president of MIT.

When Ford became an international foundation in 1950, it had a small staff and operated through separate funds. The expansive period in the 1950s and 1960s resulted in a large number of field offices, which increased Ford's global footprint. Support focused on a mix of US university-based programs for research and training; think-tanks for policy-oriented meetings and policy research; and action projects specifically in less developed countries. The Foundation's focus on peace, freedom, and democracy played out against the Cold War backdrop for scientific and military competition between the United States, the Soviet Union and China.

Under President Hoffman, the Foundation's work was organized by the areas identified in the Gaither Committee Report: Area One, the Establishment of Peace; Area Two, The Strengthening of Democracy;

Area Three, The Strengthening of the Economy; Area Four, Education in a Democratic Society; and Area Five, Individual Behavior and Human Relations.

Program differentiation began in the Gaither era. When he began in 1953, he introduced the following programs, with international work under nearly all of them: International Programs, Public Affairs Programs, Program in Economic Development and Administration (mainly U.S. based), Education Program, The TV-Radio Workshop, and Behavioral Sciences Program. In 1954, the Foundation gave prominence to the international work explicitly through changing the program names and separating international affairs and overseas development. The 1954 program names were: The Advancement of Education, Education for Democracy, Increasing Knowledge of Foreign Areas, Economic Development and Administration, the Behavioral Sciences, and Overseas Development. In 1955, Increasing Knowledge of Foreign Areas became Increasing International Understanding. In 1956, the last year of the Gaither presidency, the program roster read: Education in the United States, The Behavioral Sciences, Public Affairs, Hospital Aid (only in the U.S.), Economic Development and Administration, International Understanding, and Overseas Development. Names changed but the program focus often remained the same.

President Heald maintained the areas of international interest of Hoffman and Gaither. The International Affairs program housed the programs based in the United States, Europe and Japan, with a few activities linking American and developing countries institutions. The Overseas Training and Research Program took over the efforts to increase American understanding of international issues. From 1957-1959, an International Legal Studies program, run from New York, helped build law programs in developing countries. Starting in 1959, the Overseas Development program comprised all the regional and country offices. In fiscal year 1964, Heald convinced the trustees to add a new focus on population, with grants both in the United States and overseas.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

Segment 2. Period Summary - The Expansion Era 1950-1965

With the ever-increasing budget and trustee willingness to invade capital, presidents Hoffman, Gaither and Heald oversaw vast growth in the Foundation's international activities in the United States, other developed countries and developing countries. Activities crossed disciplines, institutions, and national boundaries, although few crossed intra-foundation boundaries. Under the three presidents, Foundation staff in various domestic and international offices from New York interacted with the regional and country offices headed by representatives. Usually in this period, however, these offices in fact worked more closely with local governments than with New York staff, reinforcing the commitment to locally led social and economic development in less-developed countries.

The shared values of this early period reflected as much the continuing competition between the Communist and capitalist worlds as the concerns about maintaining peace. The Cold War provided the contextual continuity for grantmaking on the core themes of increasing American understanding of the

rest of the world, building and strengthening connections not only with European and Asian democracies but also with Eastern European countries, the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents

Contains subject files

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

Alphabetical

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Ford Foundation archive was deposited at RAC in 2011. Ford Foundation records, correspondence, reports, program files and officers papers were transferred to, and accessioned by, RAC beginning in 2011. Accessions continue as necessary.

Conditions Governing Access

Records more than 10 years old are open for research with select materials restricted as noted. Brittle or damaged items are available at the discretion of RAC.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Collection Inventory

Subject Files, 1952-1966	
Title/Description	Instances
American Centers in Near East, 1961	box 1
American Association of Middle East Studies, 1964	box 1
American Strategy, Study of (L65-493) -- Robert Lovett, 1965-1966	box 1
Area Studies -- Notes by Cleon Swayzee, Jan 1963	box 1
Atlantic Institute -- Re: Encouraging Atlantic Studies in the United States (Jas. R. Huntley) (L64-233), 1964-1965	box 1
Board of Foreign Scholarships, 1961-1962	box 1
Bucknell University -- Re: Expanding Non-Western Studies Program (L64-376), 1964-1965	box 1
Byrnes, Robert F. -- Results of Consultantship Study -- Teaching of Russian to American Students (L8-835), 1958	box 1
Butterfield, Victor -- Report Re: Support of General and Liberal Education in the Arab Countries of the Near East, 1953	box 1
C -- General Files, 1959-1966	box 1
California State Colleges -- Dr. Thomas P. Lantos (L64-506), 1964-1965	box 1
Canada -- Foundation Attention to Canada Memorandum, 1963	box 1
Canadian Universities -- General, 1962-1965	box 1

Colorado, University of -- Memorandum from George M. Beckman Re: Colorado Situation and ITR, 1962	box 1
Committee on the University and World Affairs (folder 1), 1959-1960	box 1
Committee on the University and World Affairs (folder 2) -- Incl. Education Reports, 1960-1961	box 1
Doctoral Dissertations (1955), Dissertations (1940-1950), Graduate Courses Offered in Institutions in Non-Western Areas, 1950s	box 1
Dodge, Bayard -- Statement Re: Islamic Research and Cultural Exchange, Apr 1954	box 1
ERBs, Distribution of Doctorates by Institution and Subject, etc., 1961-1962	box 1
Educational Television -- Recommended Grant Action, 1961	box 1
European Visit -- Cleon O. Swayzee Notes/Report, May 25-Jul 10, 1964	box 1
European Visit -- Belgium, 1964	box 1
European Visit -- England, 1964	box 1
European Visit -- France, 1964	box 1
European Visit -- Germany, 1964	box 1
European Visit -- Holland, 1964	box 1
European Visit -- Italy, 1964	box 1
European Visit -- Switzerland, 1964	box 1
Evaluations of Long Term Grants, Jan 1963	box 1
Federal Government Activities -- Foreign Area Research, Government Sponsored Research, 1963-1965	box 1
Foreign Area Training Fellowship Program Black Book for 1962-1963 Program, 1961	box 1
Foreign Area Centers, 1957-1962	box 1
G -- General Files, 1961	box 1
Harvard University, 1965-1966	box 1
Harvard University -- Professor Dunlop Research on East European Economics (L64-841), 1965	box 1
I -- General Files, 1956-1965	box 1
Indiana University, 1964-1965	box 1
Indiana University -- Re: Strengthening International Studies (L65-320), 1963-1965	box 1

Institute for Mediterannean Affairs, 1958-1959	box 1
Iowa, State University of -- Re: International Studies (Ray L. Heffner) (L64-532), 1962-1966	box 1
Iran -- J.B. Condliffe Report on Iran, 1952	box 1
Iraq -- Mission Report and Memo Re: Baghdad University Library, 1952-1958	box 1
Kansas, University of -- Study of Soviet Agricultural and Peasant Affairs (L65-50), 1965	box 1
L -- General Files, 1960-1964	box 1
Long-Term Support -- Area/Regional Papers, 1959	box 1
Long-Term Support -- Background Material, Working Papers Re: International Training and Foreign Area Studies, 1959-1963	box 1
Miscellaneous Publications, 1957-1961	box 1
M -- General Files, 1964-1965	box 1
McCloy Committee -- General Incl. Distribution of Grant Funding, 1961	box 1
Mosley, Philip -- Columbia University -- Re: University of Pennsylvania Proposal for Study of Elites and International Integration, 1964	box 1
National Agencies and Foreign Area Field, 1959	box 2
Near East -- General Information through 1960 -- Memoranda and Reports, 1955-1957	box 2
North Carolina, University of -- International and Foreign Area Studies at the University (P. Sharp), 1965-1966	box 2
Notre Dame, University of -- Latin American Studies Program and International Studies, 1963-1965	box 2
O -- General Files, 1956-1966	box 2
Pakistan Studies, 1964	box 2
Princeton University -- Re: Modern European Studies, 1966	box 2
R -- General Files, 1960-1961	box 2
Rand Corporation, 1957	box 2
S -- General Files (one letter from Cleon Swayzee from Paris to John et. al), 1964	box 2
"Small Grants", 1956	box 2
Stephens College -- Faculty Summer Study and Development of Inter-Institutional Program in Non-Western Studies, 1964-1965	box 2
Swayzee, Cleon -- Trip Overseas (Spring 1955) -- Training and Research, 1955	box 2

Swayzee, Cleon -- Trip Overseas (Autumn 1957), 1957	box 2
Swayzee, Cleon -- 1961 Trip to Near East and Europe -- Trip Report, 1960-1961	box 2
Undergraduate Education -- Meeting (February 18, 1965), 1965	box 2
W -- General Files, 1964	box 2
West European Studies -- Reports, Correspondence, Trip Itinerary, 1963-1964	box 2
West European Studies -- Cleon Swayzee European Correspondence, 1964	box 2
West European Trip -- Cleon Swayzee Notes Re: Trip to Study Education, 1964	box 2
Wolf-Sufrin Report -- "Capital Formation and Foreign Investment in Underdeveloped Areas", 1954	box 2
"Y" Factor Follow-Up, 1964	box 2
International Training and Research -- General Information, 1956-1964	box 2
International Training and Research -- Budget Materials through 1955-1956, 1954-1955	box 2
International Training and Research -- Budget Materials, 1956-1957, 1956-1957	box 2
International Training and Research -- Budget Materials, 1957-1958, 1957	box 2
International Training and Research -- Budget Materials, 1958-1959, 1958-1959	box 2
International Training and Research -- Budget Materials, 1959-1960, 1959-1960	box 2
International Training and Research -- Budget Materials, 1960-1961, 1960	box 2
International Training and Research -- Budget Materials, 1961-1962, 1961-1962	box 2
International Training and Research -- Budget Materials, 1962-1963, 1962-1963	box 2
International Training and Research -- Grant Renewals 1963-1966, n.d.	box 2
International Training and Research -- Program Planning Meeting, Oct 27, 1961	box 2
International Training and Research -- Project Data, 1960	box 2
International Training and Research -- Project Data, 1962	box 2

International Training and Research -- Staff Memoranda, 1961-1962	box 2
Staff Members and Individuals -- Beckmann, George M. -- Correspondence, 1961-1966	box 2
Staff Members and Individuals -- Edwards, Robert -- Memoranda, 1965	box 2
Staff Members and Individuals -- Everton, John and Doak Barnett Trip to Asia (Autumn 1960), 1960	box 2
Staff Members and Individuals -- Fox, Melvin J. -- Memoranda and Report, 1965-1966	box 2
Staff Members and Individuals -- Harari, Maurice, 1961-1965	box 2
Staff Members and Individuals -- Merillat, H.C.L -- Trip Overseas (Autumn 1957), 1957-1958	box 2
Staff Members and Individuals -- Reed, Howard A., 1955-1959	box 2
Staff Members and Individuals -- Sanders, Irwin T. -- Memoranda, 1965-1966	box 2
Staff Members and Individuals -- Soderlund, Dorothy, 1956-1962	box 2
Staff Members and Individuals -- Stoke, Harold, 1965	box 2
Staff Members and Individuals -- Thurber, Clarence E., 1956-1962	box 2
Staff Members and Individuals -- Thurber, Clarence E. -- Trip to Southeast Asia (1957), 1956-1957	box 2
Staff Members and Individuals -- Tierney, James F., 1959-1961	box 2
Staff Members and Individuals -- Tierney, James F. -- Trip to Asia (1960), 1960-1961	box 2
Staff Members and Individuals -- Weisblat, Abraham, 1954-1958	box 2
Staff Members and Individuals -- Weisblat, Abraham -- Trip Overseas (Autumn 1957), 1957-1958	box 2

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)