

27 December 1948

STAFF-COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM #4SUBJECT: Meetings of December 15, 16 and 17, 1948

Introduction This memorandum contains notes from the minutes of the December 15-17 meetings of the Committee for the Study for The Ford Foundation. These were the first meetings of the committee and were attended by Dean Thomas H. Carroll, Dr. Pendleton Herring, Dr. T. Duckett Jones, Dr. Charles C. Lauritsen, Dr. Donald G. Marquis, and by H. Rowan Gaither, Jr., William W. McPeak, and F. Dyke Brown. Absent were Dr. Peter H. Odegard and Dr. Francis T. Spaulding.

These notes are not intended to be a full transcript of the proceedings, but rather a digest which will serve to remind the members of some of the more significant observations and agreements which occurred. They are arranged in three sections. Section I contains points in the "mission" to the committee as defined by Mr. Gaither upon the basis of the Trustees' desires or upon the basis of administrative requirements. Section II contains significant observations made at the meetings upon aspects of the problems to be studied by the committee. These are not reconstructed in full. Section III contains agreements concerning study objectives and procedures which were arrived at by the committee or suggested by one of its members. Virtually all agreements are subject to review at the meeting on January 12, 1949.

## SECTION I

MISSION TO STUDY COMMITTEE

Gaither - Foundation trustees now number six. More are allowed legally. More are also desired by present Trustees, who look to the committee for any helpful advice concerning their selection. Specific names not requested but might be transmitted informally. Same help from committee is requested re. top operating executive.

Trustees have given full authority to this group to conduct the study and will not interfere in any way. If committee decides after initial period that it is on wrong course it has full freedom to "make 180 degree turn" and start off in another direction regardless of the money spent or commitments made up to that point.

There is no obligation to report results of study before its completion next summer. It is nevertheless probably desirable to make one or two brief progress reports in the interim. This will create mutual acquaintance and confidence with Trustees. Nothing would be presented for decision on part of Trustees before end of study except possible recommendations concerning additional trustees and permanent staff.



Responsibility for study, both in its conduct and result, rests with committee and not with Mr. Gaither and staff, who are to be regarded as administrators, coordinators and committee "assistants". Committee thus has three roles:

- (a) Since mission is described by Trustees only as "human welfare" the committee has responsibility to define aims and objectives of Foundation and to decide what types of advice the Trustees most need. In this role, the committee is a "Deputy Board".
- (b) In determining what information is needed to provide such advice, and in the collation of such information, the group acts in the role of advisory committee.
- (c) In the collection of the information which has been determined to be relevant and necessary, the members of the group act as division chairmen.

Gaither - General press relations of the Foundation remain  
(continued) a function of the Foundation and do not devolve upon the committee. No continuing flow of publicity concerning the study is contemplated. People asking questions about the financial position of the Foundation, or about assurances that it will operate at or above certain levels, may be told that such questions are not of concern to the study group. Application of formal nature may be forwarded to central study office. Informal applications or queries re assistance may be answered with statement that study group is a study group and that alone, that it does not have now or in the future any operational responsibility, and that the Foundation will not actually be open for business for another year. Where queries place responsibility of an individual nature upon any committee member, such member will of course have to draft a reply. If no such individual responsibility is involved, queries may be forwarded to the central office.

## SECTION II

### OBSERVATIONS OF MEMBERS

Herring - Study objective requires outlining significant problems about which something can be done by expenditure of funds. Many important problems cannot respond at a given time to such expenditure and their inclusion in our consideration is impractical.

General - Many committee discussions related to the tendency of foundations to become bureaucratic, isolated from significant research and educational movements, passive and patronizing. Jones pointed out their tendency to regard recipients of financial assistance as "beneficiaries" or "objects of charity", as if they were conferring a favor upon the research or other worker. He saw no reason why both parties to a grant could not be considered to have equal stature and dignity. He reported the additional feeling in foundations that grant recipients were "personally" favored, as if the substance of the grant were items of personal income to them.



Herring - Small foundations may act passively, depending upon screening applications which fall in their fields of interest. Ford Foundation is so large that in order to achieve maximum results it will have to adopt active role, involving careful and continuous survey of problem and activity areas. It might even find it necessary to create institutions and facilities through which it can support activity: - screening councils like the Social Science Research Council or operating facilities like schools or laboratories.

Marquis - Three criteria which should be useful in selecting supportable activities are:

- (a) The importance or significance of proposed program - significance of problem against which it is eventually aimed; and the relevance of the particular technical job proposed to the eventual social alleviation or welfare objective;
- (b) Technical resources: the person applying for assistance or being encouraged to do the work, should be competent to do what he proposes, facilities and other personnel should be available.
- (c) Pertinence of the particular project or program to the objectives of the Foundation.

Herring - Similar criteria: social need, relevance, and feasibility.

A foundation staff must have a staff which in itself or by use of its advisers can judge technical points concerned with proposed programs.

General - From beginning of meeting there was general agreement that most important problems require an interdisciplinary approach for solution, ie. that the students and technicians of one discipline are usually equipped to handle only one facet of a given problem. Marquis pointed out that the definition of a problem and the subsequent determination and coordination of the knowledge and skills required in its solution implies an approach opposite to that commonly employed by foundations, which most frequently look for "good men" and tend to back them in whatever they are doing. Committee, sharing this view, recognized necessity for the study to adopt a problem approach to whatever extent is possible if the provincialism and limitations of specialized fields and disciplines is not to obscure our view of the important things.

At the same time it was recognized that important work could be detected by viewing the disciplines, especially if they were looked at in a comparative rather than in a single-focussing or particularizing manner. In this way (said Marquis) one may find three things: The frontiers of basic theory in certain fields where empirical knowledge has forged ahead (anthropology); the frontiers of empirical knowledge where



theory exists in untested form (psychiatry and analysis); and gaps. Gaps were defined as low points in the frontier profiles, as for example, in biology, in which (says LeCorbusier) further theoretical development can be logically predicted from the pattern of advances made previously in this and in the other natural sciences.

The committee was aware of the different nature of the studies in the different divisions, springing partly from the varying degrees of scientific development in the fields they represent and partly from the differing requirements of the study itself. For example, in terms of the parallelism of theoretical and empirical knowledge and in terms of successions of previous advances, the natural science fields could be held to be most highly developed, followed perhaps by certain parts of the health fields, by the social science fields and finally by business. It was remarked that in terms of the present level of science in the natural sciences, the business and service industry studies were retarded by perhaps hundreds of years. On the second point of difference, by virtue of their nature also, the fields differ in terms of our search for important problem areas: the natural science fields in some respects being confined, and the business "sciences" scarcely confined at all, being proliferated over the length and breadth of society. Although the necessity was recognized of the different division chairmen following an approach common at some level to all, the inevitability was pointed out that Carroll (Business Division) would have to employ many techniques different from those employed by Lauritsen (Natural Sciences). These differences were ascribed largely to development of measurements in the Natural Sciences which are still lacking in the others, and these differences between the disciplines create a time lag in their applications to problems, the more highly developed being applied first. The atom bomb is an illustration. Developed by the natural scientists, it was used before the social scientists could study its implications for society.

Brown suggested that it would contribute to our preliminary thinking if each man on the committee would outline independently (a) the most important five problems facing the world, and (b) the most important five problems which could be isolated by viewing their particular fields. They were as follows:

Professor Lauritsen:

(a) General:-

1. Human Relations - Avoiding dictatorship.
2. International Relations - Avoiding war.
3. Security - by which he meant due process, equal justice, administration of the courts, etc.
4. Education and training.
5. Information - factual, the press.



Lauritsen (Continued) -

(b) Natural Sciences:-

1. Nuclear Physics
2. The Solid State - Physics and Chemistry
3. Large Molecules - Physics, Chemistry and Biology,  
under which he also listed viruses, genes,  
enzymes, etc.
4. Photosynthesis - Energy from the Sun.
5. Constitution of Stars, Cosmologies, Cosmogenies.

Dr. Marquis:

(a) General:-

1. Avoid war.
2. Eliminate economic depressions.
3. Reduce minority tensions
4. Maintain high productivity - reduce strikes, increase  
worker morale.
5. Increase personal adjustment - reduce divorce,  
occupational maladjustment, delinquency, etc.
6. Cheaper, convenient power.
7. Better transportation.
8. Better communication.

(b) Social Sciences:-

1. Further development of and exploration according to  
the learning theory, which is at the bottom of all  
social science problems.
2. Social needs: the alleviation of distress and  
satisfaction of wants.
  - a. Interpersonal interaction problems, including  
language and communication.
  - b. Group behavior. Extension of application of  
learning theory (which deals with the  
individual) to family, community, etc.
  - c. Improved taxonomy of significant personal  
attributes. (Analogous to the Periodic Table  
in Chemistry).
  - d. Mechanisms of social control and management.  
Mass influencing.

Dr. Herring:

(a) General:-

1. War - Better international understanding.
2. Want - Better use of technology and national  
resources.
3. Fundamentals - Preservations of freedom and removal  
of tensions, etc.
4. Values - Increasing the ethical output.
5. Knowledge - Advancement of knowledge, science, etc.



Dr. Jones:

(a) General:-

1. World Peace - Both national and individual factors.
2. Work to end of developing healthy and intellectually sound, integrated individuals.
3. Education - Intellectual security and better utilization of manpower. Improve higher as well as other education.
4. Exploration of economic factors which would give society stability without interfering with individual initiative and freedom of thought and action.
5. Study of process of an aging population.

(b) Health Field:-

1. Explore means of extending frontiers of health knowledge (including present gaps in knowledge).
2. Explore methodology whereby health knowledge can be most effectively applied.
3. Changes in medical education essential to accomplishment of above two areas.

Dr. Carroll:

(a) General:-

1. How is the use of the atomic bomb going to be controlled?
2. How are we to establish and maintain a workable basis for general cooperation between countries which have distinctly and basically opposed political, economic and social philosophies?
3. What steps can be taken to minimize the spread (or amplitude of fluctuation) between periods of economic prosperity and recession, ie. how can we make more successful attempts at control of the business cycle?
4. How can we improve our processes for selection and development of responsible leaders in all areas of human activity, including especially government, business management and labor?
5. How can we remedy the existing lack of balance in emphasis on individual rights and security on the one hand and individual responsibilities, initiative and opportunities on the other?

(b) Business:-

1. What methods can be developed to increase the effectiveness of communication within a firm, both from bottom to top and top to bottom?
2. What steps can be taken to clarify and establish the role of the foreman in an industrial firm?
3. What can be done to improve the human relations in a particular firm? What can be done to make each person feel sincerely that he is a significant factor in the firm operation, ie. how can there be developed a feeling of mutual interest among persons at and inbetween the various levels. How can the desire to accomplish be increased?
4. What the probable effects of the developments in nuclear energy will be on Business (a) in the near future, (b) in the long run?



Carroll (Continued)

5. What program should be developed to meet the problem of diminishing natural resources (a) in general and (b) from the standpoint of an affected individual firm. In other words, how can we attack most productively the problem of conservation of resources.

- - - -

Herring - It is necessary to approach problems at different levels. In some a direct approach may be made, as for example in making a grant for a study. In others it would be necessary to drop back to a lower level of attack, say through the provision of facilities to make such a study. A still lower level would be to train the people needed to use the facilities to make the study. When using the lower level approaches it is necessary to have long range programs. Many social science problems would require such long range programs.

Disparity between the various sciences in terms of their personnel was noted. E.G. persons in the discipline of chemistry alone probably outnumber all persons in all the social sciences.

Some discussion was devoted to the lack of personnel who have both the specialized background and the broad view. Too much overspecialization. Too many persons highly skilled in special techniques who have no judgement as to where they should be used. There is need to set up situations which compel specialists to broaden out in other directions so that they may share in higher level decisions and supervise disciplinary work which contributes to solution of interdisciplinary problems.

Some members considered that there is excessive standardization in our education, especially of professionals. Too much didactic teaching. Instead of "drawing out" the pupil, the schools teach him, instruct him, transmit to him, shovel into him, etc. This forms tendency to abort creativeness and chills any effort to get out of the grooves of the last generation.

Despite world's present obeisance to the research worker, his pursuit is not in many cases dignified nor rationalized. He is expected to beg for the money he needs, to do his work in his spare time or part time, to work without security from one project to the other. Jones was particularly concerned at the loss to medical research of many of the best brains, which must resort to private practice simply for economic security.

Herring pointed out an accelerating need in society caused by the development of government into complex forms. Government has become so vast and so directly important to the individual and, at the same time, so complex, that the chasm of understanding between the electorate on the one hand and the



legislatures and government staffs on the other is almost unbridgeable by ordinary means of communication. He feels this requires possibly one or many independent non-governmental bodies of citizens who can represent the citizens and interpret for them through having the time and special capacity to do so.

Communications, in the broad sense, was regarded by all the committee members as a problem which ran through their fields on one or more levels.

The value of making interdisciplinary attacks upon problems is becoming more apparent as advances are made in the various disciplines. Problems which once were supposed to lie only in one field are often found to fall into two or several fields. Marquis gave an example of this when he said that the problem of the business cycle was once subject to study only by the economists. Now, according to preliminary work, there is indication that understanding of the problems depends heavily upon the psychologists. A depression may possibly be explained more readily by the psychological interactions of persons (trying to outguess the buyer or seller, of the "market") than by "economic" factors. Old assumptions about such subjects are toppling. New empirical evidence is needed, much of which might be expected to be valuable.

Education becomes more and more complex. Unless we are to be reduced entirely to didactic teaching and "the stuffing of students" and unless students are to be required to go all the way through a stretched out curriculum which would demand the better years of their lives, we must begin to subtract from curricula as well as add to them. We must learn how to be discriminatory.

It was felt that in final determinations of the committee and of the Board of Trustees, consideration would have to be given to at least six different dimensions of foundation:

- |                                     |     |                             |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|
| (a) long term operations            | vs. | short                       |
| (b) safety                          | vs. | risk                        |
| (c) big money                       | vs. | small                       |
| (d) grant making                    | vs. | direct operation            |
| (e) geographic breadth              | vs. | localized effort            |
| (f) responsibility in<br>management | vs. | responsibility in<br>staff. |

### SECTION III AGREEMENTS ARRIVED AT BY COMMITTEE

McPeak raised the question of the shape the final report should take. In this and subsequent discussions it was tentatively agreed that it would include at least the following:

1. A statement of the aims and objectives of Ford Foundation;
2. A statement of selected program areas;



3. A description of the criteria used to select program areas which would enable the Trustees to know the process by which program areas, and projects within them, might be selected in subsequent periods;
4. A statement of the manner in which the Foundation should operate, including the various techniques and mechanisms suited to the accomplishment of its aims and objectives and to the particular purposes of various program areas;
5. A description of the organizational structure indicated by sound management practice and by the types of program operations recommended.

It was agreed that members of the committee would in all field work maintain an awareness of the relative effectiveness and suitability of techniques and methods used by the various foundations, as evidenced by opinions and facts in their respective fields. The members themselves would minimize their attention to foundation operations at the foundation headquarters, these to be studied more systematically by personnel selected for the purpose and supervised by the central staff.

Committee - Recurring discussions concerned need for final report to outline specific problem areas which Foundation should consider. The feeling grew that such areas would have to be outlined at least for initial operations. Remarks at luncheon by Compton and David corroborated this necessity. The committee agreed that it is incumbent upon them not only to outline areas of potential activity but to set forth the criteria by which such areas were chosen, so that, if acceptable, such criteria could be used in the future by foundation staff to discriminate among other programs in similar fashion.

Marquis raised question of continuity between study and foundation operation. Final committee understanding after this and other discussions was that as soon as possible, probably within next two or three months, committee should transmit to trustees any advice they are competent to give re characteristics and attributes of additional trustees. Belief was that this advice could be stated only in general terms and that it would be determined as much by considerations of sound management practice as by content and methods of operations to be later recommended. Hope was that several new trustees would be on hand at time the committee's final report is reviewed. Gaither assured group present trustees will move to augment their membership when committee recommends, and that they will seek an executive when committee work is far enough advanced to indicate his qualifications, if special qualifications are called for. Expectation that such executive could actually report to full time work before study is completed was regarded as over-optimistic, but there was hope that he might be selected in time to join into final deliberations re program and policies.



The committee agreed that the definition "human welfare" is one of the objectives of the study and therefore not something which can be postulated at this time. It was felt however that at least one factor must be found in our final determination, namely the conclusion that in certain basic endeavors (eg. such as certain fields of basic natural science research) activity can be justified only on the basis of "knowledge for knowledge's own sake". The problem approach does not permit one to determine how much contribution can be made toward its solution by, say, certain types of activity in nuclear physics or seismology. Yet activity in such disciplines is justifiable and supportable because of other well recognized considerations.

There was agreement that our recommendations to the trustees concerning substance of operations would be in terms of program areas and not projects. Project would be mentioned only to illustrate a point concerning recommended policy or general procedure, if at all. The definition of program area appears in Staff-Committee Memorandum #2. The report would contain however the criteria which we recommend for use in selecting both program areas and projects within such areas.

It was agreed that at the meeting on January 12 we would have to outline a study plan which could be followed by the chairmen despite the inherent differences in their fields. McPeak suggested several test questions which the study might apply to any program area whose significance or relevance had been previously determined or assumed. These questions, which are subject to further development and refinement at the next meeting, were as follows:

1. If relevant, is this relevance of the program area recognized?
2. If its relevance is recognized, what is the current level and kind of effort being made to contribute to the problem solutions.
3. If effort is present, is progress satisfactory (stated in this manner, #3 is very similar to #2 and might be combined with it).
4. What are the limitations on further progress?
5. Why are such limitations not being removed through support from other sources?
6. What are the indications that the Ford Foundation might do that others have not succeeded in doing, or were unwilling to do?
7. What would be the best method by which or the best channel through which the Ford Foundation could help?