

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

ITHACA, NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT

OCT 14 1942

BOARDMAN HALL

July 30, 1942

Dr. Joseph H. Willits
Director for Social Sciences
Rockefeller Foundation
49 East 49th Street
New York, New York

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Dear Dr. Willits:

At the suggestion of President Edmund E. Day I am writing you about a project which I recently discussed with him, and in which a small group of university men are keenly interested. We are seeking financial support for it. The project concerns civil liberties in time of war.

It is the opinion of this group of men that we are in danger of duplicating the situation which prevailed during the First World War, when no adequate record was accumulated of what went on in this field. Scholars attempting later to study that body of experience found that fugitive material had not been captured and much vital reliable data was wholly unavailable. The problem is a double-headed one. Not only does the obliteration of civil liberty in the rest of the world accentuate the importance and value of civil liberty in the great democracies, but in addition the war is creating in this country new problems and situations in which civil liberties are involved. There are literally dozens of agencies and organizations, inside the government and out, which are engaged in activities which impinge on civil liberties and which tend either to restrict or to protect them. Some of these agencies are accumulating records of what is going on, and some are not. Many are wholly unaware of the existence and work of the others; and there are substantial areas in which important policies and developments in the civil liberty field are not being observed, reported upon, or studied by anyone.

My proposal is to set up an organization which might be called a RESEARCH CENTER IN CIVIL LIBERTIES. What is needed is a small but energetic unit which will go ahead and build up a network of competent observers, reporters, and scholars throughout the country who will be working in the civil liberty field and who, through the agency of such a RESEARCH CENTER, will be kept aware of the work being done by others,

and of new problems in the field as they emerge. The usefulness of the many existing agencies would be increased if such a central clearing house made their work generally available. I wish to emphasize that such a RESEARCH CENTER would be wholly objective on the controversial issues which arise in the field of civil liberties. It would not, in other words, have a point of view or a program, after the fashion of the American Civil Liberties Union. Its purpose would be to see that problems and situations in this field were competently observed and studied. To get as complete a record as possible while it is available seems to me to be of primary importance.

Some foundation for the work of such a RESEARCH CENTER is already being laid. I have recently become chairman of a special Committee on Civil Liberties set up under the auspices of the Social Science Research Council. The immediate assignment of this committee is the preparation of a rather elaborate OUTLINE OF RESEARCH IN CIVIL LIBERTIES, patterned in some measure after the several outlines of research prepared under the auspices of the Committee on Public Administration of the Social Science Research Council. The general purpose is to stimulate research by showing where in this field work needs to be done, and to aid scholars by putting on record what is already going on. Funds for the preparation and publication of this outline are being provided by the Social Science Research Council. I am now working on the outline and hope to have it completed in the fall.

There are a number of considerations which make the proposal of a RESEARCH CENTER IN CIVIL LIBERTIES seem feasible. First, a small group of us are very keenly interested in the problem and are willing to devote time and energy to it. (None of us is likely to be drawn into war work in Washington. This certainly is true in my own case.) Without such a group of active and willing persons it would, of course, be futile to consider such an enterprise. Second, the work calls for the use of no materials which are tied up by priorities, and the job can be staffed by competent women. I have consulted with Dean Sarah G. Blanding of our College of Home Economics who, as you are probably aware, was a professor of political science before she came to Cornell, and she is confident that we could readily find trained women to carry on the work of such an organization.

I have discussed this project with a considerable number of able and responsible people in different situations and with different points of view. These have included officials in the Depart-

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ment of Justice and other branches of the Government, officers of various non-governmental agencies interested in problems of civil liberty, and friends and colleagues in the University field. There has been complete agreement amongst these people that an important and valuable piece of work can be done by such an organization as I am proposing, and that it will not be done unless such an agency is set up. President Day was exceedingly enthusiastic about the scheme when I discussed it with him, and he authorized me to tell you that when he is next in New York he will talk to you about it. The plan has the hearty endorsement of Dr. Robert T. Crane of the Social Science Research Council, whom I should be glad to have you consult.

If this project proves to be one in which you feel the Rockefeller Foundation might be interested I should appreciate the opportunity of talking to you about it personally and would be glad to come to New York for that purpose. I have prepared an outline showing concretely how such a RESEARCH CENTER could be organized and what it might do. At this stage any such outline is highly tentative and I should prefer, in case you are interested, to discuss it with you orally rather than send you what might bear the appearance of a definitive proposal. I should also prefer to talk with you about the budgetary side of the matter, since the amount of money needed would, of course, depend on the scale upon which the work is planned. If the enterprise is set up at all it should be for not less than five years. My judgment is that we could use effectively from \$15,000 to \$20,000 per year.

I feel like saying that my interest and belief in this enterprise come from my very deep concern with the problems of civil liberty, and my conviction that a national public service of first-rate importance can be rendered in this way. I am hoping that you may feel the same way about it.

Very sincerely,

Robert E. Cushman

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