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Cornell University  
Civil Liberties

DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT

BOARDMAN HALL

February 15, 1944

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

Dear Dr. Willits:

I appreciated a great deal the opportunity to describe to you the work I have been doing for the last year and a half in the general field of civil liberties, and to discuss with you the possibility of securing some financial support for it.

Some of this work has been of an individual and personal nature, comprising a fairly steady stream of articles and pamphlets. I am sending you separately some of these publications. In addition, I have been directing the activities of a Special Committee on Civil Liberties created in the spring of 1942, at my suggestion, as a sub-committee of the Committee on Government of the Social Science Research Council. As Chairman of this Committee, I have had about \$1000 per year for office expense and travel. Our Committee has been given \$1500 to support a study now in progress of the management of the Conscientious Objector problem during the present war. I think money for one or two other small projects might be secured from the Committee on Government. That Committee, however, has other irons in the fire and cannot, from its limited budget, give us assurances on which to plan anything but pretty limited and ad hoc projects.

Because of unforeseen circumstances, this has all turned out to be pretty much a one-man enterprise. The other members of the Special Committee on Civil Liberties have been absorbed in other things and have been able to do little beyond giving me criticism and counsel. My own interest in the problems of civil liberty has grown increasingly deep. I shall continue to devote as much time and energy to them as I possibly can for the next three or four years at least. Frankly, I have no desire to set up any elaborate establishment or organization which would burden me with substantial administrative responsibilities. I should like to continue to work along somewhat modestly in about the way I have been doing, with time and energy left for a good deal of research and writing of my own. At the same time, what I have been able thus far to accomplish convinces me that with somewhat more generous financial support I can accomplish a good deal more.



If this financial support should be made available, the activities in the field of civil liberties which I have referred to could be centered and strengthened in what I should propose to call the Cornell Research in Civil Liberties. President Day agrees with me that such funds could be more effectively employed if allocated to Cornell University than would be the case if they were assigned to the Special Committee on Civil Liberties of the Social Science Research Council. Dr. Robert T. Crane of the S.S.R.C. has written me to express the same opinion. I find that it would still be possible to keep the Special Committee on Civil Liberties as an advisory body, even though financial support for the work cleared through other channels.

I am sending you herewith a memorandum embodying my ideas about this whole project. This falls into four parts, in which I have indicated what I believe to be the purpose and value of this enterprise; what has been accomplished so far; what I believe can be accomplished; and, finally, a budget indicating how funds would be spent.

If financial support for this plan can be secured from the Rockefeller Foundation, I am convinced that a piece of work can be done which will be of genuine public importance and value. I greatly appreciate the interest you have shown in the matter and I take pleasure in submitting the outline of the plan for the Cornell Research in Civil Liberties for your further consideration.

With best regards,

Very sincerely yours,

*Robert E. Cushman*

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