

? Reminder - CMO

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Letter #8

June 26, 1959

Dear Jack:

SEP -2 1959

This is my last day in the office before vacation although I expect to be in Fair Lawn more than half of the time during the next few weeks and so could be reached if there are any urgent problems.

Before leaving I want to raise one general question with you in which I am interested in our discussions in connection with history. As you know, we have put rather heavy, although not exclusive, emphasis on contemporary history for what we have thought to be good reasons. But since this is a somewhat controversial policy, I am anxious to test it by somewhat more systematic consideration of alternatives. One is the idea that we should perhaps attempt to encourage the production of major new general interpretations of some of the great classical civilizations. What role would such work serve? Are the presently existing histories sufficiently adequate so that there is no urgent need for new histories? If new ones are desirable, are the scholars to do them available and do they need Foundation help so that there is a real opportunity for Foundation action?

I have already spoken to RHN and asked him to give this question some attention as far as Egypt, the Mesopotamian Valley and later Arab civilization are concerned and to prepare a thoughtful statement for discussion in staff in August or September. I have similarly asked CG to try to prepare something on India, and JM on Greece and Rome. I shall try my own hand at China and Japan - actually the one example of help along these lines has been our grants for work by Sir George Sanson on a new history of Japan. I am writing now to ask you to think about this as far as Mayan and Inca civilization are concerned. Perhaps these memoranda together can provide the basis for some good staff discussions in early fall.

Regards to you, Barbara and the children,

Cordially,

CHARLES B. FAHS

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cc: for circulation to DR, JM, RHN, CG, RWJ