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# *The War Work of The Rockefeller Foundation*

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**MAKING THE PRESENT  
SERVE THE FUTURE**

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*By*  
**RAYMOND B. FOSDICK**

**THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION  
NEW YORK  
1943**

THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION is interested primarily in the extension and application of knowledge. This means that its main concern is not with immediate things or with the emergencies of the moment, but with results in terms of human welfare which are gained from patience, tenacity, research and adequate and continuing support.

But in an attempt to maintain long-term objectives no institution can isolate itself from the times in which it operates. Particularly in such a cataclysm as we now face there is no cloistered retreat, no ivory tower, to which any group or individual can escape. We are all of us in the war and it is idle to pretend that business can proceed as usual. It is inevitable, therefore, that a substantial proportion of the appropriations of The Rockefeller Foundation should have some relationship to the present emergency.

Nevertheless, this emergency assistance is invariably related to the far target. In trying to be of service in the calamity that engulfs us all the Foundation has endeavored to make certain, in so far as it could, that its work had some constructive reference to the world after the war. The development of brain surgery or of techniques for the control of specific diseases has significance for the future as well as for the present; the natural sciences, whether in physics or biology or chemistry, can and will be used to serve a world at peace as well as a world at war; the social sciences and the humanities in helping the emergency effort are at the same time adding to the sum total of knowledge and appreciation which will keep the streams of learning and culture flowing in the long arid period after the war. In all the reordering of human life and habits which this cataclysm necessitates it is still possible to make the present serve the future.

It is in terms of this standard that the Foundation is carrying on its present activities.

Within the framework of the extension and application of knowledge it is making its contribution to the war effort; and the paragraphs which follow provide some illustrations of how this principle works in relation to the various fields of Foundation activity.

### Public Health

Shortly after the beginning of the war, in 1940, The Rockefeller Foundation Health Commission was established, and since then the public health work of the Foundation in relation to the war has been carried on through this subdivision.

*Yellow Fever.* In 1936 the laboratories of the Foundation developed a vaccine which provides active immunity to yellow fever after a single injection. Through December 31, 1942, 14,570,000 doses of this vaccine had been shipped to the armed forces and other government agencies of the United States and Allied Nations. The vaccine is, of course, furnished without charge.

*Typhus Fever.* Inasmuch as the vector of typhus is the body louse, a louse laboratory was established by the Foundation in New York for the intensive study of various types of insecticides. The preparations have been given trials in a conscientious objectors' camp and in villages of Mexico, and they will shortly be tested in various typhus endemic centers around the world. Typhus "teams," consisting of a clinician, a laboratory man and an entomologist, are being organized by the Foundation for the control of typhus as the circumstances of war permit. One team is now in the field with the United States Typhus Commission; another has been organized for work in North Africa.

*Nutrition.* At the invitation of the Ministry of Health of Great Britain two medical nutri-

tionists were sent to that country more than a year ago. "Teams" for the assessment of nutrition in England were organized, and a permanent group for the study of nutrition has been created at Oxford with the support of The Rockefeller Foundation Health Commission and the Nuffield Trust.

In addition, the Foundation is assisting in the recruitment and training of a number of medical nutritionists who will be available for service abroad with private or public organizations.

*Scarlet Fever.* Under the auspices of the Board for the Investigation and Control of Epidemic Diseases in the Army, The Rockefeller Foundation Health Commission made a study of hemolytic streptococci in certain Army camps. The information accumulated during this study will make it possible to predict the prevalence of scarlet fever in a particular camp and will also provide a scientific basis for deciding whether a given set of circumstances makes it advisable to quarantine large numbers of troops.

*Respiratory Diseases.* The acute respiratory diseases comprise the most serious group of infections in the Army. The Board for the Investigation and Control of Epidemic Diseases recommended to the Surgeon General that a permanent civilian team be organized to study the problem, including the common cold, influenza and all types of pneumonia. As no government funds were immediately available, The Rockefeller Foundation appropriated the necessary funds to support the work. The team is permanently housed at Fort Bragg.

*Infectious Diseases.* The National Research Council recommended that the United States Navy establish at one of its training stations a research group qualified to study the epidemiology and control of infectious diseases. At the request of the Navy The Rockefeller Foundation

Health Commission made a contribution toward the expenses of this station. One of the doctors on the staff of the Foundation, Lieutenant Commander F. F. Schwentker, who is now in the Navy, is the senior officer of the station.

*American Red Cross.* The services of Dr. G. K. Strode, a member of the staff of the Foundation, have been placed at the disposal of the American Red Cross on various occasions, and he has made health surveys for this organization in Russia, Iceland and North Africa.

### Medical Sciences

*Training British Medical Students.* The air raids in London and elsewhere in Great Britain imposed excessive demands on all medical schools and training hospitals. In 1940, at the request of the British Ambassador to the United States, The Rockefeller Foundation undertook to bring a number of medical students to America to complete their training here. Fifty English, Scotch, Welsh and Ulster students selected by a British committee are now in North America attending medical schools on scholarships provided by the Foundation.

*Brain Surgery.* The peculiar character of wounds in this war is providing a sharp impetus to the development of brain surgery. Assistance has been given by the Foundation to the research on this subject at the University of Edinburgh, an institution which has taken a leading part in the work. In this same general connection, the Foundation also made a grant to the University of Oxford in support of research in the field of peripheral nerve injuries.

*Study of Fear and Courage.* The Foundation has financed the study of the psychological aspects of fear and courage now being carried on at the Institute of Human Relations at Yale. This study is being closely followed by the War Department.

*Chinese Medical Colleges.* Support has been given for equipment and salaries in five Chinese medical colleges which were driven from their original sites in occupied China and are now located in free China.

*The Dislocation of Medical Service.* The Medical Administration Service, under the leadership of Dr. Kingsley Roberts, is an organization of doctors and laymen, interested in the problem of group medical care and in giving counsel and information to medical societies, federal government departments, industries, labor unions and other organizations. The need for this type of study and advice during this period of urgent and rapid social and economic readjustment is obvious. The Foundation is contributing toward the support of this organization.

*Psychiatric Social Workers.* The Foundation made a grant to the American Association of Psychiatric Social Workers to establish a clearing house which would meet the demands for personnel information coming from the Army and Navy, the Red Cross, the Federal Security Agency and other organizations and groups.

*Mental Hygiene.* The National Committee on Mental Hygiene has placed its expert assistance at the disposal of the Selective Service Boards to help "screen out" men unqualified psychologically for the armed forces. The Foundation made a grant to the National Committee toward the development of this work.

### Natural Sciences

During the last year or two The Rockefeller Foundation has extended aid, and in some instances aid of substantial magnitude, to certain scientific projects which are related to the war effort in so confidential a way that it is not feasible to discuss them at the present time. Their de-



scription, therefore, will necessarily have to be postponed until later. At the moment, however, the following projects can be briefly outlined as illustrative of the activities of the Foundation in the field of the natural sciences.

*"Tagged Atoms."* Because of the diversion of personnel and resources to other purposes, several of the cyclotrons of this country have either been shut down or have had their programs greatly curtailed. It has thus become difficult to obtain a sufficient supply of radioactive isotopes, or "tagged atoms," for use in medical and biological research. In important instances this type of research is related to the war. The Foundation made a supplemental grant to Washington University in St. Louis, to enable its cyclotron to run an additional eight hours a day in order to produce more of these radioactive isotopes.

*Blood Plasma.* The Foundation is continuing its support of the research of Dr. Edwin J. Cohn of the Harvard Medical School in the separation of blood plasma into its component parts. This work has proved of great value in our war effort and some of the materials are already at the battle fronts. Dr. Cohn's laboratory has received support from the Foundation since 1930, and through its studies under these grants had developed the personnel, the equipment and the techniques which caused the American Red Cross and the National Research Council to call on it in the war emergency for its present significant contribution.

*British Scientific Journals.* Contributions have been made to the Royal Society in London to maintain the publication of British scientific journals, whose continued existence was threatened by war conditions.

*Applied Mathematics.* Fairly substantial sums have been given to Brown University for

fellowships in applied mathematics to help meet war demands for trained personnel in this essential field.

*Concentrated Food.* Support has been given to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for research in producing an inexpensive precooked, dehydrated, nutritionally complete and palatable concentrated food for use by the armed forces.

*Canadian Scientists.* The Foundation made a grant to the National Research Council of Canada to enable Canadian scientists to attend scientific meetings in the United States, and for other travel in connection with their war research.

### Social Sciences

*The World After the War.* The Foundation has made substantial grants to the research work of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Foreign Policy Association, the Institute of Pacific Relations, the New School for Social Research, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the University of Oxford, Yale University, the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, the Swedish Institute of International Affairs and other groups and organizations that are studying the problems of peace and postwar reconstruction.

*Japanese Migration.* The Foundation is supporting a study at the University of California of the forced migration of Japanese residents from the Pacific Coast.

*Social Science Research Council.* Apart from its regular support of this organization, the Foundation made a grant to establish a Washington office for the Social Science Research Council to aid both university and government agencies in furthering the effective utilization of social science personnel.

*Wartime Controls.* The University of Chicago was given a grant for a study of wartime price

control. Similarly an appropriation was made to Iowa State College toward the expenses of a study of government policies affecting the production and distribution of food.

*Ethnogeography.* The National Research Council was given assistance in establishing the Ethnogeographic Board which is concerned with war and postwar problems that relate to the human and natural resources of cultural areas outside the continental United States. This new board is sponsored by the National Research Council, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Social Science Research Council and the Smithsonian Institution.

### Humanities

*The Use of Languages.* The Foundation has made substantial appropriations to the American Council of Learned Societies for intensive courses in various universities to enable students to read and speak Japanese, Chinese and Russian. Further sums have been given to provide instruction in Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Hindustani, Malayan, Tibetan and Siamese, and in supplying governmental agencies with translations and bibliographies. Virtually all the personnel thus trained is actively engaged in the war effort, and the work is now being carried on in some eighteen universities in the United States.

*College of Chinese Studies.* With a grant from the Foundation the College of Chinese Studies in Peking, where for many years Americans were trained in Chinese, was re-established on the campus of the University of California for the benefit of government personnel, including members of the armed forces.

*Japanese Dictionary.* The Foundation made a grant to the United Engineering Trustees to develop a dictionary of Japanese technical terms. No adequate dictionary of this type now exists,

and engineers familiar with the Far East, as well as officers of the armed forces, were unanimously agreed as to the need for it.

*Further Language Work.* Three further appropriations were made for the preparation of materials urgently needed in foreign language teaching. Two of these grants were given to the Harvard-Yenching Institute to enable it to reproduce Japanese dictionaries and other reference works at a time when the supply of such books in this country had been almost entirely depleted. The third grant, to Yale, provided for the continued use of its Chinese and Japanese type in the production of teaching materials.

*Saving the Past for the Future.* Large grants have been made to the American Council of Learned Societies for the microfilming of irreplaceable books and documents in the British Museum, the libraries of Oxford and Cambridge, the Public Record Office and other locations in England where material of great historical importance is housed.

Other emergency grants of the Foundation have enabled a national committee in Great Britain to complete the graphic documentation of English architecture, threatened by destruction. This project involves photography, drawings, measurements and other methods by which the exact form and structure of the buildings are permanently recorded. English architecture, whether in cathedral, church, college, manor house or village street, is a vital element in the cultural background of Anglo-American civilization.

*American Scholarly Journals.* Grants in fairly substantial amounts were given to the American Library Association to make possible the purchasing or microfilming of American scholarly and scientific journals for distribution among institutions abroad. The purpose of these

grants was to forestall serious gaps in the files of some of the valuable American journals in the libraries of those countries especially affected by the war — chiefly in Europe and Asia, and possibly in South Africa and Australia. The journals cover not only the field of the humanities, but the fields of the medical sciences, the natural sciences and the social sciences as well.

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We speak of making the present serve the future because it is the future that is important. The present is a makeshift, an interlude to be lived through as constructively as we can. Valuable as the activities listed above may be, it must nevertheless be admitted that it is not in war but in peace that the advance of knowledge, as distinguished from the application of knowledge, finds its most favorable environment. A nation at war has little time for pure research — the clean, clear urge to gain new knowledge, the sympathetic appreciation of imaginative scholarship even when it seems remote and unrelated. There is a sense in which the practical applications of knowledge are the dividends which pure science from time to time declares. When pure science is even temporarily interrupted, then it is necessary to pay these dividends out of surplus; and obviously this process cannot long continue.

But when peace comes, work can recommence on building up the capital—enlarging the reservoirs of knowledge upon which men have drawn during relatively unproductive years. This will be an opportunity for constructive service which will challenge the imagination and resources of universities, laboratories, museums, foundations and all the institutions concerned with the quest for a rational life among men. It is at that future that the resources of the present are aimed.