

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

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Population

FROM: WW

DATE: November 28, 1949

TO:

CIB	NOV 29 1949	(CIB)
GKS		(Copy sent to GKS)

COMMENTS:

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POPULATION

SUBJECT:

Population Problems

If someone, or some group, is to go somewhere and do something about the population problem, then it seems to me that this is bound to fall into some one, or some combination, of the following three types of activities:

1. To collect direct basic numerical facts relevant to population (statistical surveys of population density; age, sex, occupational, and other distribution of population; agricultural, health, and nutritional statistics, etc.).
2. To collect information about the indirect and non-numerical factors which affect the population problem (sociological, psychological, anthropological, ethical and other studies of mores, value structure of the society in question, religious beliefs, etc., etc.).
3. To institute measures aimed at "improving" the situation (public health activities, intensification of agriculture, birth control, redistribution of people on land, etc., etc.).

Of these three general types of activity the first and second come under what I would naturally call a "study"; the third is what I would naturally call "an operating program."

My present reservations and concerns about the RF and the population problem can be very briefly and roughly indicated by saying that:

A. "Studies" of Types 1 and 2 above seem to me clearly to relate to the interests of the RF as a whole.

B. I do not think that any one division has uniquely relevant resources of personnel or experience for planning or carrying out such studies.

C. I think that there is a very strong tendency for our "operating program" to turn out to be a Type 3 activity.

D. I think that the magnificent record of the IHD resulted in very considerable part from the fact that, relative to public health problems, they knew what they wanted to do, and they knew how to do it.

E. But, in contrast, I do not think that we are in any sense ready to undertake a Type 3 activity relative to the population problem.

F. Therefore I am seriously sceptical about the desirability of setting up, at this time or in the near future, a population project of the operating variety. I fear "the danger of crystallization of immature dogma."

I guess that the theme of this memo is the classical remark that "it is easier to cry 'Onward' than to say whither."

WW:cd

cc - JHW  
AG  
DHS