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CENTER FOR ADVANCED STUDY IN THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

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Wednesday Evening Seminar: 4 January 1984

Subject: Life Before Us: Reflections on CASBS History

Speaker: Arnold Thackray ↙

Abstract

After all of sixteen weeks on the job, your historian is far from feeling an authority on the microcosm of CASBS. And he is disconcertingly ignorant of large parts of that macrocosm which consists of the social sciences in the twentieth century. Through this seminar he therefore aims to give you his first reflections or, in the language of the behavioral sciences, some hypotheses for testing. He also wishes to tender an invitation to you to enter into conversation, now and throughout the remainder of the year, as to what manner of written history you would like CASBS to have.

The reflections to be offered deal with why CASBS took the form it did. To understand this it will be necessary to touch on the Philadelphia Story (why not Haverford?); to think about Henry Ford ("history is bunk"); to consider the wartime experiences of a San Francisco lawyer; to understand the needs of the US Air Force; to ponder the role of the Harvard Business School; and to meet our own enigmatic Third Man, in the person of Paul Lazarsfeld. The presentation will be illustrated, and will include a movie on the Center which CBS has never yet dared to show.

Audience: PG

Reading: Dwight Macdonald, The Ford Foundation. The Men and the Millions, 1956 (originally a New Yorker series. On reserve in the library).