"PROSPECT FOR AMERICA"

Guide for Discussion Leaders

Special Studies Project
Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Inc.
A Word to Discussion Leaders

The art of leading a discussion requires some idea of where to begin, where to go, and how to get there. There is just one way of obtaining such ideas: reading -- and even re-reading -- the work you are going to discuss; in this case, the six reports by panels of leading citizens contained in Prospect for America. Your own reading and thinking will determine your success as a discussion leader.

This study guide contains some of the key passages in the reports, the sort of issues which could be used to get a discussion going, together with questions intended to keep the discussion lively and to the point. The material in the book which bears on these questions is in the pages following the quotations unless otherwise indicated. All these quotations and questions are suggestions; they are in no sense authoritative, but discussion leaders may find them useful examples of the democratic method of thought, outlined on pages 461-462: "The democratic method...relieves no one...from the responsibility of facing as many facts and respecting as many human values as possible."

The Rockefeller Panel Reports can be easily adapted for use in a series of discussion meetings. In the following outline, it is suggested that most of the reports could be considered in two meetings. Such a plan would call for moderate and roughly equal preparation for each session, but the amount of time spent on the whole and the parts of Prospect for America can, of course, be varied in accordance with the interests of the group.
**Suggested Plan for Discussing PROSPECT FOR AMERICA**

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### Ninth Meeting:
**The Challenge to America: Its Economic & Social Aspects - 2**

- Economic Growth and Human Welfare
- The Key Importance of Growth to Achieve National Goals

### Tenth Meeting:
**The Pursuit of Excellence: Education & the Future of America**

- The Nature of the Challenge
- The Educational System
- The Use and Misuse of Human Abilities

(Many groups will choose to spend two or more meetings on this report, which in this outline is allocated one session solely on account of its brevity.)

### Eleventh Meeting:
**The Power of the Democratic Idea - 1**

- The Ideals of Democracy
- The Nature and Conditions of Democracy

### Twelfth Meeting:
**The Power of the Democratic Idea - 2**

- The Consent of the Governed
- The Power of the Democratic Idea
Preparing to Discuss an Issue -- An Example

Suppose you decide to introduce your meetings by discussing some key issue from the Introduction to the First Report. In the course of reading this Introduction, you would have marked several key passages and now -- reviewing these marked passages -- perhaps you decide that the following goes most directly to the heart of the argument:

"We shall do well -- indeed, we shall survive -- in proportion as we can understand what is going on in our civilization, can in some measure adjust ourselves to it, and can in some measure shape it." (5)

Bear in mind that the entire Introduction contains many important ideas which cannot possibly be concentrated into any single quotation. Nevertheless, you have to begin somewhere, and the selected passage is one convenient place to initiate exploration of the arguments set forth in the surrounding pages.

Beginning is relatively simple; it's more important (and more difficult) to work out some leading question to guide the discussion. Many times, of course, your group will respond to an issue so eagerly that you -- the leader -- need only listen and learn. But at other times your leadership will be needed to encourage or to restore direction to discussion.

The best leaders are those who have already explored the path and the difficulties of a journey. Exploring a political or social issue means thinking out implications, facing up to difficulties, and perceiving the limits of useful thought. When you put the main parts of your thinking into the form
of questions, you will have erected signposts useful to those who follow. There is no one certain route, however, and one of the greatest pleasures of leading a discussion occurs when the common efforts of several people uncover ideas and implications beyond the understanding of one unaided mind.

To return to our selected issue. The main thing to do is, of course, to ask: Why? One of the main duties of a leader is to doubt everything! In our example, you might work out a few questions, somewhat as follows:

"In the Introduction it's argued that our chances of survival depend on the degree to which we understand what's going on in our civilization. Doesn't this just apply to our government and other leaders of society? Even if ordinary Americans don't understand world events too clearly, how can this threaten our survival? What are the facts? How much general understanding of the challenge of our times exists?"

The Introduction goes beyond understanding; it calls for us in some measure to adjust ourselves to world changes, and in some measure to shape these forces. A major difficulty in leading a discussion is knowing when to suggest that issues be postponed for later treatment, and it helps, for example, if the leader can point out that the question: how far can the United States shape the great changes taking place in our civilization? -- is considered at length throughout the book, especially in the first three reports. While it's important to clarify questions as they come up, we don't have to try for major conclusions before we've properly begun.
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The leader's final task is to allot a reasonable amount of the group's time to each of the issues under consideration. Every single issue considered could easily occupy an evening's discussion and, at times, it is wise to allow the group to concentrate on some issue which catches their imagination. As a general rule, however, the purposes of discussion will best be served by trying, at least, to bring out the complex issues stated in the reports and, at most, to do justice to the full range of Prospect for America.
"PROSPECT FOR AMERICA"

Guide for Discussion Leaders

Report I -- THE MID-CENTURY CHALLENGE TO U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

I. The Nature of Foreign Policy

1) "It is (hard) to come to terms with reality: to create a foreign policy (based on) a right relationship between national aims and the power the state can ultimately muster." (11)

What is the "right" relationship between national aims and national power? Should our aims be restricted to matters within our present power? Should we try and shape our power in accordance with our aims?

What kinds of power can be mustered by the American state? The military power of drafting citizens is obvious; so is the economic power needed to supply weapons. Do these powers mean anything without discipline? Can the power of discipline exist without certain moral convictions?
Some members of the group may have read about the moral defeat suffered by many American prisoners in Korea.

2) "Our own actions are made what they are -- effective or frustrated -- in large part by the degree to which they are in conformance with what we basically believe to be right." (15)

Does this go far in explaining the success of the Marshall Plan and our failure in Cuba?

Does this statement apply to our development and use of nuclear weapons?

(When someone brings up the key question -- "what do we basically believe to be right?" -- the discussion can naturally proceed to sections II and III.)

II. The American Objective

1) "A nation, like an individual, need perhaps give no reason for wanting to survive. A deep instinct and an unreasoning will are, in the last analysis, what count." (18)

Why are we risking the disaster of nuclear war? What are we trying to defend?

(An excellent way of directing discussion of this issue is to ask another question: what would we lose if Communist powers overran our country?)

2) "Peace is...the end product of a wide series of arrangements, institutions, habits, and organizations, all in working order." (19)
Many states and many nationalities have been linked together in America -- for the greater part, peacefully.

How relevant is this American experience for attempts to achieve universal peace?

3) "Any Communist state that is prepared to assume the responsibilities and self-restraints of international life can be an acceptable and constructive member of (a peaceful world community)." (24)

How could a Communist state prove that it was prepared to accept such responsibilities?

4) Is America in need of a brief, clear, and commanding statement of its hopes and objectives for the world?

(The declaration of our principles in final form may wait upon a rare genius; meanwhile, can you imagine a more exacting and exciting task for your group than trying to draw up such a statement?)

III. The Growth of Community

1) "The effectiveness of American policy will be judged in large part by the degree to which it... (keeps) these existing associations -- regional and universal -- in sound health and on the path to progress."(27)

How can the United States develop the non-military aspects of the Atlantic Community?

Can there be a true community among wealthy and poverty-stricken states?
2) The United Nations "should stand as one of the principal vehicles through which our foreign policy is expressed." (34)

What would the United States lose if the United Nations failed?
What would happen to the political identity and stature of the new nations if the United Nations failed?

Is maintaining the United Nations one of America's greatest contributions to the new nations?

3) "The United States should be anxious...to make additional use of the UN in its approach to economic aid." (34)

It is said that the source of true charity is never known. If America quietly transfers a portion of its wealth to needy peoples through the United Nations, might this come close to simple goodness among nations?

IV. The Communist Threat

1) Actual Soviet successes are "quite different from the quasi-religious ardor with which communism once expected to sweep the world." (43)

How far might contemporary communism succeed by grafting its methods of rapid economic growth on to quasi-religious nationalism?

2) "The present relations between Soviet Russia and Red China do not lend themselves to simple analysis." (47)

Which is our main antagonist: Russia or China?
Is Russia becoming a "conservative" power while China retains its revolutionary ardor?

3) If the Soviet Union grants greater liberties and wealth to its peoples, will it become less or more expansionist? Haven't liberal and wealthy states -- Britain, America, France, Holland -- been noted for great and successful expansion?

V. The Asian Rim, the Middle East, and Africa

1) In these areas, "how can we demonstrate a concern for the broader interests of the people without becoming identified with regimes not based on the popular will and likely to be displaced."? (51) Does this predicament call for more action by groups of private American citizens?

2) How does widespread economic aid affect political stability? What if a little aid creates great expectations which cannot be fulfilled?

What if a little aid barely relieves men from the desperate discipline of drudgery, giving them just enough hope and strength to read Karl Marx?

3) What considerations should govern military aid to authoritarian anti-Communist governments?
VI. Elements of a New World

1) "American security is now meaningless apart from the security of the free world." (62)

Does this suggest that America should attempt the political unification of the free world?

How much co-ordination now exists among the various anti-Communist alliances?

2) Before discussing the "deep and perhaps crucial differences between the Soviet approach to disarmament and that of the United States" (67), why not consider the two countries' common interests in controlling nuclear weapons? (For example: avoiding accidental war and cutting expenses. NOTE: Russian and American military expenditures are compared on page 245.)

3) "The amount of effort that has gone into (disarmament studies) has been negligible compared to the effort which has gone into military matters..." (68)

Is this the true measure of our sincerity in disarmament negotiations?

Have we made any attempt to plan for the economic consequences of disarmament?

VII. The Democratic Process As a Vital Force

1) "Democracy begins to be fulfilled only when the country's leaders present...problems...in all their dimensions and at the same
time make recommendations for action. Then the problem becomes comprehensible. It can be faced, it can be debated, and a tolerable solution can be reached." (79)

What should be known and what should be debated about the Central Intelligence Agency?

Limited wars (fought with non-nuclear weapons) are a very important part of our defense strategy. Have our leaders spelled out the limited war lessons we should be learning from the Korean war?

2) "...the public can gain confidence and scope so as to intervene decisively where its judgment and moral perceptions are required." (81)

When, if ever, can "the public" act as one?

How does the "public" appear to our Congressmen and our President?

3) What can you and I, considering ourselves as rather isolated individuals, do about our nation's foreign policy?
Report II -- INTERNATIONAL SECURITY: THE MILITARY ASPECT

I. Framework of the Study

(To introduce discussion, it might be appropriate to remind your group that a positive foreign policy, called for in the first report, is only possible if we maintain a military shield against aggression.)

"...perhaps the most difficult thing for us is to accept the reality of our peril." (96)

Aren't we constantly warned of the world crisis and the horrors of nuclear war in clear and well-reasoned language? (E.g. page 97 of this report.) Are facts and figures enough? Is the basic difficulty a matter of imagination? Or a matter of political leadership?

II. The Nature of Our Strategic Problem

1) "We require a growing industrial, technological, and scientific base in order to achieve a state of continual readiness for the long haul." (100)

How can we determine how fast and how far these military preparations should develop? Should we try to match or even to keep ahead of the Russians? Or should we simply concentrate on steady, balanced economic growth?

2) "The basic problem of American strategy then is the ability to make effective choices." (102)

Is our system of government able to make clear, rapid, and effective choices? Is there too much division of responsibility between Congress and the President? Are we too wedded to the ways of peace?
III. Developing Power Trends

"Unless present trends are reversed, the world balance of power will shift in favor of the Soviet bloc. If that should happen, we are not likely to be given another chance to remedy our failings." (108)

Since this report was written in 1958, has the world balance of military power shifted to the Soviets? If not, is it likely to shift in the near future? If so, can we restore the balance?

IV. Missions

1) "...the purpose of our capability for all-out war is above all to prevent war from breaking out..." (109)

Our nuclear deterrent appears to have prevented general war. What are the long-range implications of trying to keep the peace by a "balance of terror"?

2) "The distinctive feature of limited war is that its outcome does not involve or seem to involve national survival." (112)

Korea showed that limited war can be very costly to the American people. How can the people be brought to understand the importance of a sustained national will to fight, where necessary, such limited wars? (When told that America could never afford to fight another Korean war, General Ridgway replied that Korean wars are the only kind we can afford to fight.)
V. The Problem of Nuclear Weapons

"It is argued by some that the use of nuclear weapons marks the dividing line between all-out and limited war." (115-116)

What are the major arguments for and against this position? How important is the general opinion of the world? If these weapons are not the dividing line, what is?

VI. Defense Organization

"The Secretary of Defense is so burdened with the negative tasks of trying to arbitrate and control interservice disputes that he cannot play his full part in...high military policy." (118-119)

What are the main causes of interservice disputes? If the Secretary of Defense is confined to negative tasks of arbitration, who does exercise authentic control over our military forces in the name of civilian supremacy? And who can impose efficient unity on our military services?

VII. Alliances and the Role of Force and

VIII. The Special Case of NATO (might well be discussed together)

1) How can we "devise a military strategy equally meaningful both to us and to our allies...none (of which) has ever given up the strong desire to see its own homelands protected from invasion or devastation."? (130)

Where do we wish to fight our battles? Where possible, a safe distance from our homeland. How can our allies accept the prospect of
our battles being fought on their homeland? How are England, France, and West Germany reacting to this predicament?

2) This question leads into the next section, where it is stated: "Under these circumstances (of nuclear war), many Europeans may well regard aggression as posing solely a choice between occupation and destruction." (134)

Under these circumstances, why is there still relatively little neutralism in European party politics?

IX. Civil Defense

"The American people need to be told more clearly the dimensions of the damage that would be inflicted on us by a sudden (nuclear) attack and about the measures to reduce its effects." (139)

Most American people live in metropolitan areas. Is there any hope for them in thermonuclear war? Are any measures being taken to protect them? Why are city dwellers so passive about this danger? Do they need to be told more clearly the dimensions of the danger?

X. Reduction of Armaments

1) "A reduction of armaments is not meaningful unless it contains safeguards against violations of the agreement." (143)

If a disarmament agreement is to be seriously considered, what kind of safeguards would the West need?
2) "If an end of weapons testing weakened the deterrent and made a war more likely, ...we would have brought on what we most wished to avoid." (147)

What are the main arguments for and against the resumption of nuclear testing? Does the West have a special need to perfect small or tactical nuclear weapons to balance large Communist ground forces?

XI. Budget for National Security

1) "We believe that the security of the United States transcends normal budgetary considerations and that the national economy can afford the necessary measures." (93)

"By sacrificing the civilian sector, the Soviet Union has caught up with the United States in major fields of technology." (104)

Have we been indulging the civilian sector? How can the American people make voluntary efforts to increase their defense spending? Is our Congress virtually unable to increase taxes for defense expenditures?

What of President Eisenhower's farewell warning against the growing influence of a military-industrial concentration of power in this country?

2) "The present method of (preparing the defense budget) does not give...Congress or the public a clear indication of what the funds requested will accomplish in terms of military missions or effective units." (152)

Everyone in your group must work with a budget -- whether in the home, on committees, or in business. How would they like to see their country's defense budget presented?
I. The Challenge

"The challenge...is to build a new structure that will make possible the fulfillment of the basic purposes of humanity." (161)

Why should America be expected to take the lead in meeting this challenge? How far do the underdeveloped nations expect or want us to take the lead? How dependent is "the fulfillment of the basic purposes of humanity" upon a new economic structure?

II. The Nature of the Problem

1) "In (underdeveloped) nations, where the gap between reality and aspirations was larger,...the revolution of rising expectations became a dominant current in contemporary affairs." (166-167)

Why has this revolution of rising expectations occurred in our time? Why did it wait so long? What are the major expectations involved in this revolution?

2) "The world-wide social and economic revolution is made even more acute by the explosive increase in the world's population.... A number of these countries fact the paradoxical situation in which the standard of living may drop despite a considerable increase in the gross national product." (168-169)

Is checking this explosive increase in population an economic necessity? If not, is it wise to permit the world's population to increase indefinitely? If so, how can the population explosion be checked?
3) "...the Soviet Union has been engaging in a vigorous program
to expand its trade with the newly developing regions. ...The objective
is clearly one of economic and political domination." (177)

How extensive is Soviet aid and trade? Egypt, Yugoslavia, India,
and Turkey rank high in the tables on pages 176 and 178. How has Soviet
trade and aid affected the alignment of these countries?

Is Soviet trade dangerous in itself or as a means to propaganda
and other political actions?

III. A Twentieth-Century Economic Structure for the Free World

1) "We should consider our efforts not as an act of benevolence
but of partnership." (159)

"We produce 35 per cent of the world's goods and services." (188)

Can the American economic giant associate on equal terms with a
multitude of poor and weak economies? What can the underdeveloped
countries contribute to any partnership with America? What are the impor-
tant services which we can contribute?

2) "...the economic structure of the free world must find a way
to prevent excessive instability (in the supply and prices of primary
products)." (193)

Why is it particularly difficult, in America and in the world, to
control the supply and the prices of agricultural products? Can interna-
tional commodity controls be made effective? Would effective controls
involve almost intolerable restrictions of the liberties of individual
producers and farmers?
3) "In the field of science, international co-operation on a world scale is most readily conceivable... (This) experience... might then extend into other fields." (196)

Is this a realistic hope? Has the co-operation necessitated by the International Geophysical Year spread into other fields? How much experience of true world-wide co-operation has the world known?

4) "The major fault of United States (trade and) commercial policy, in recent years at least, has been its failure to provide assurance of direction and continuity." (203)

How can we make our policy consistent? Do we need a new guiding concept or principle? How much of our inconsistent trade policy is due to the efforts of pressure groups upon Congress?

IV. Special Problems of the Economic Development of Less Developed Countries

1) "It is essential that sights be set high. The total capital investment in the less developed part of the free world came to $17 billion in 1956 compared to $140 billion in the industrialized part, even though the population of the less developed countries is almost twice as great." (207)

Just how high should our sights be set? Should we tax ourselves heavily in order to provide the elements of a decent life in the under-developed countries? What kinds of capital are needed in most under-developed countries? Should we plan to export more American technicians to help people to help themselves; fewer or simpler machines?
2) "The Development Loan Fund should become the focal point... for United States effort in the international development field. ... One of its prescribed responsibilities is to be responsive to...our foreign policy interests." (216)

How far should American contributions to international development be shaped by our foreign policy interests? (Compare page 34: "The United States should be anxious, in particular, to make additional use of the UN in its approach to economic aid.")

3) "...the driving force in a free country comes from the initiative, imagination, and willingness to assume responsibility on the part of innumerable individuals." (218)

What can America do to encourage the spirit of individual initiative in underdeveloped countries? Should our government grant aid only when favorable conditions for free enterprise are advanced? What role can private American businessmen play in encouraging local enterprise in underdeveloped countries?

V. The Western Hemisphere -- A Test Case

"Serious consideration should be given to...working toward... a common market embracing the entire Western Hemisphere." (229)

What would be the major advantages of such a common market? The major obstacles? NOTE: "At present the intertrade among the Latin American nations amounts to less than 10 per cent of their total trade." (228) Why? Similar economies? Poor communications?
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VI. The Significance of Economic Growth for Attaining World-Wide Objectives

1) "A widening disparity between the industrialized and the less developed nations would make the attainment of a peaceful community of nations increasingly difficult." (237)

What are the facts? Are the rich nations getting richer while the poor remain poor? Might the world divide in terms of poverty against wealth? Are the Communists better situated than we are to pose as friends of the poor?

2) "Any attempt to raise the rate of investment in the less developed areas by massive international loans or grants would very likely prove disruptive if attempted in too brief a period." (242)

Why is this so? How can we teach patience to the peoples caught up in "the revolution of rising expectations"?
Report IV -- THE CHALLENGE TO AMERICA: ITS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ASPECTS

I. The Challenge of the Future and
II. The American Economic Heritage (might well be discussed together)

"The challenge before us is whether our purposes can generate the effort to fulfill our opportunities." (256)

"...our national attitudes (to economic incentives) are a blend of individualism and social consciousness... The precise combination of (which) has changed over time and has always been a constantly evolving process." (258)

How are individual drives and social responsibility combined in our own time? We have inherited an economic tradition in which ethical and religious considerations played a decisive part. How vital are such considerations today? The most creative Americans can easily attain an adequate living in today's wealthy society. How far will they respond to the challenge to work for the sake of a good society in our nation and in the world?

III. Policies to Promote Growth

Economic Stability

1) How will economic growth in the '60's affect people's jobs in America? Will increased automation cause increased unemployment? How can workers displaced by automated machinery be helped to find other jobs?

2) "...even after two decades of rising prices, the evils of inflation are not understood sufficiently." (251-262)

What are the major evils of inflation? Which groups suffer most from inflation? How far can these groups protect themselves by political action?
Which groups stand to gain, in general, from a protracted yet steady inflation? How much political power do these groups command?

3) "Power to force inflation upon the nation as a whole cannot be left in the hands of private groups. If such power exists or comes into being, it will have to be restrained, preferably by the self-restraint of business and labor leadership." (271)

Have private groups forced inflation on the nation? Can we have full employment, free bargaining over wages and free setting of prices, and also maintain stable prices? (During the second World War we had full employment and stable prices, but wages and prices were controlled.) If labor and business groups fail to restrain increasing prices and wages, what kind of restraints must be imposed on them?

The Encouragement of Growth

1) "The basic factor that will determine this country's future rate of economic progress is the degree to which we keep alive the incentives upon which growth depends." (272)

"Government policy and action influence the economic climate in a host of (direct and) indirect ways..." (272)

Traditional capitalism acknowledges one overriding incentive to economic growth: the profit motive, virtually free of governmental interference. Socialism claims that production can be motivated by a concern for the common good, as interpreted and enforced by government.
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How far have developments in America made these old notions obsolete? In our remarkable partnership between government and private industry, so new it still lacks a name, what are the main responsibilities of each partner?

2) "...our tax structure has grown haphazardly... . Systematic tax reform, at federal, state, and local levels, is long overdue." (275)

Which taxes, in the opinion of the group, are most in need of reform? Local property taxes? Income taxes? Depreciation allowances?

What approach would you take to tax reform?

3) "Public expenditures in support of growth are a traditional and an essential part of our economy." (279)

Traditional public expenditures? How about our railroads, waterways, land-grant universities, highways, TVA, atomic energy? Essential public expenditures? What would happen to our future growth if we failed to provide the public services which support growth.

Are there any clear limits to the proper sphere of public expenditures in support of growth?

4) "One resource we must actively conserve is water." (286)

What are the water resources of your community and state? What is being done about any problem of water pollution? Are plans being made now to supply greatly increased future needs?

5) "The greatest single active force toward economic growth is scientific advance." (289)
How far does American industry act as if it believed this statement? How can we encourage basic scientific research? How can the national effort to encourage basic science be kept free of short-run military and industrial needs?

IV. Problem Areas in a Growth Economy

1) "The proper approach to a farm policy would be to concentrate efforts and funds on measures to assist the necessary readjustment of our whole farm sector." (294)

What are the main readjustments needed in our farm sector? What are the forces holding back these necessary readjustments? Given our commitments to individualism and a pluralistic society (see pages 427-429), what would be the political consequences of encouraging the liquidation of the inefficient majority of our family farms?

2) "The metropolitan problem has been called the major domestic problem of our times. But the nation as a whole has not awakened to its gravity." (299)

If the metropolitan problem is our first domestic problem, why have other problems -- for instance, agriculture -- received much more attention? Who should speak for the cities? How are our cities represented at the national level? Should there be new administrative regions for metropolitan areas?
V. Economic Growth and Human Welfare

1) "The realization of the growth potentials we have found in our economy should double real wages in the next thirty years." (306)

If this happens, what effect will it have on life in a typical American suburb? Can increased wealth be oppressive? If so, at what point? Should we begin to consider a limit on our economic growth, an idea of wealth sufficient for a decent life, or is such an idea incompatible with the dynamics of our economy?

2) "It appears likely that the importance of income insurance will increase in the next decade and that it will cover more citizens more fully." (310)

How is income insurance related to our basic ideals: for example, equality of opportunity? Is there any wise limit on such insurance? Some point at which insurance begins to sap individual self-reliance? If so, are we in any danger of approaching that limit?

3) "...how (can we) pay for high quality medical care so as to spread costs among a large group of individuals and families...?" (314)

What are the pros and cons of group practice prepayment or a national health insurance system linked to Social Security?

VI. The Key Importance of Growth to Achieve National Goals

1) "...consider carefully the relative advantages of increased government programs in key areas as opposed to increased private consumption expenditures." (324)
"If there is widespread agreement that a greater share of our production should be devoted to government programs, then private expenditures cannot keep growing at (their past) rate..." (328)

What considerations should govern a decision to finance growth in a key area by private or by public expenditure? Does public interest in better schools, more highways, more powerful defense, etc., add up to a widespread agreement on increasing public expenditures?

Is there any widespread feeling that private consumption does not need to continue growing at recent rates?

2) What does the group consider to be realistic targets for economic growth? Of the various proposals for increasing economic growth outlined on page 332, which are the most difficult to achieve?
I. The Dignity of the Individual

1) How is the pursuit of excellence related to our natural right to the pursuit of happiness? Can we be truly happy without excelling? Is happiness the final objective of excellence? Why do we have to pursue excellence and happiness?

2) "But in its deepest sense, our concern for human excellence is a reflection of our ideal of the overriding importance of human dignity." (341)

What is the source of this belief? If we believe in the dignity of each individual, should we concern ourselves with excellence which implies the unequal worth of individuals? Does every individual have some capacity for excellence?

II. The Nature of the Challenge

1) "So we may expect for 1975 a nation both less regionally diverse and more uniform as to living environment." (345)

Given our commitments to individual independence and difference, should we try to check this trend to a uniform environment (and culture)? Should we make efforts to save family farms, small businesses, and plan our cities and suburbs to minimize dull uniformity? What is the "educational" effect of a uniform environment?
2) "...the true difficulty...is the constant pressure of an ever more complex society against the total creative capacity of its people." (350)

Why is our society increasingly complex? What determines the total creative capacity of a society? Can we change our education in order to increase our creative capacity, or is creativity a mysterious, uncontrol- lable force?

3) "Among the tasks which have increased most frighteningly in complexity is the task of the ordinary citizen who wishes to discharge his civic responsibilities intelligently." (351)

How do members of the group assess their own education considered as preparation for intelligent citizenship? Should the whole idea of "education for citizenship" be rethought and expanded?

4) "What organizational patterns and practices may be devised that are least destructive of individual initiative and autonomy?" (354)

Which large organizations generally succeed in fostering individual initiative? Universities? Hospitals? The electronics industry? (THINK)

III. The Educational System

1) "By 1969, high schools will be deluged by 50 to 70 per cent more students...; by 1975, our college and universities will face at least a doubling...of present enrollments." (361)

What is being done in your state and in your community to meet this tidal wave of students? Are the plans adequate? Do they provide for improving the quality of education?
2) "The number of new school teachers needed in the next decade is between one third and one half of all the four-year college graduates of every kind in the same period." (363)

What can be done to interest more students in teaching? Does your state have unduly technical and trivial requirements for teachers certification?

3) Any educational system is, among other things, a great sorting-out process." (369)

Is there enough "sorting-out" in American education? Can dividing students in terms of intellectual capacity be consistent with maintaining a democratic sense of equality?

4) "Perhaps the greatest problem facing American education is the widely held view that all we require are a few more teachers, a few more buildings, a little more money. Such an approach will be disastrous." (374)

How widely held is this view in Congress, in the nation, in your community? Do we need a national plan for education? What are the responsibilities of the Federal Government?

IV. The Use and Misuse of Human Abilities

1) "Yet the availability (of many married women) will be wasted -- despite (their) eagerness...to work -- if we do not take active steps to utilize this potential resource." (382)

Are women's talents the nation's most wasted resource?
Does women's education prepare them well for the dual role of homemaker and worker?

2) "A degree is not an education, and the confusion on this point is perhaps the gravest weakness in American thinking about education." (385)

What is an education?

What does "well-educated" mean?

"Education is never finished." (385) Why not?

How can education be made a continuing process?

V. Motivation and Values

1) "In short, we will wish to allow wide latitude in the choice of values, but we must assume that education is a process that should be infused with meaning and purpose... ." (392)

Every system of education must be based on some ideas of value. What values are taught in our public schools? What meaning and purpose should infuse public education? In the introduction to the next report it is stated that democracy draws much of its moral strength from religion. Can our secular public schools do justice to the religious sources of our ideals? Can our religious schools do justice to the secular sources of our ideals?
I. The Ideals of Democracy

1) "Democracy accepts its own fallibility. But it provides a method by which its mistakes can be corrected." (401)

   How does this acceptance of our fallibility lead to our commitment to an open society? Why are Communists committed to a closed society? Is it because communism claims to be an exclusive and infallible system, by means of which perfect societies may be established? What is our equivalent claim? Does Winston Churchill give us a clue by his definition: "Democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms which have been tried from time to time"?

2) "The man with democratic... convictions looks upon all men as members of the same moral community and as initially endowed with the same fundamental rights and obligations." (401)

   How far do we practice our belief that all men -- at home and abroad -- are members of the same moral community?

   The Declaration of Independence mentions only the fundamental, natural rights of all men. Do all men have natural obligations? How would your group amend the Declaration of Independence to include man's natural duties alongside his natural rights?

3) "The great wager on which (democracy) stakes its destiny is that the imperfectible individual is improvable." (406)
"The democratic view is...that the exercise of individual judgement is itself an ultimate good of life." (402)

How do we measure individual improvement? Must everyone work out their own standards of improvement and debasement, right and wrong? (See page 403: Democracy "asks men...to choose their own ultimate beliefs.")

Is this one reason why individual judgement is itself an ultimate good? Given this stress on individual standards, how have we avoided moral anarchy in America?

II. Consensus in a Democratic Society

1) "In a democracy the preservation of those rules (by which social decisions are reached) normally takes priority over the achievement of any other social purpose." (414)

What are the most important of these rules? How does the quotation apply to the contemporary dispute over Negroes' rights in the South? Are written constitutional rules worthless unless they are sustained by a general belief in fair play? What happens if a social purpose takes priority over preserving the rules?

2) "...compromise...is the workaday instrument of practical democracy. ...The effort of democracy is to arrive at arrangements that will convince most men that their interests have been taken at least party into account." (415)
Does this description go to the heart of our major political parties? From time to time groups have arisen in America committed to inflexible or ideological principles. What has been their political fortune?

3) "A democratic government's task...includes the duty to remind citizens of the larger frame of reference within which they act and to embody and enforce the common purposes to which they must contribute." (417)

When has the Federal government achieved outstanding success in both pointing out large issues and enforcing common purposes? Major industrial strikes? Anti-trust action? School segregation? Public grants to parochial schools?

III. Social Conditions of a Democratic Consensus

1) "The home and the school...are among the primary agencies by which democratic patterns of behavior can be fostered and consolidated or, conversely, discouraged and weakened." (421)

The discipline taught in our homes and in our schools is generally acknowledged to be vital to our survival. This democratic discipline is complex and difficult to understand, but no authorities appear to be responsible for studying and laying down its rules. Is this a weakness or a strength of democracy? Faced with a superbly disciplined opponent, can we afford our informal methods of teaching discipline?

2) One valuable function of civil liberties is the provision of "avenues of legitimate action...through which (citizens) can register their complaints..." (424)
Just how fundamental is our right to complain about our government without fear of reprisal? Would any government deny freedom of speech and the press to those who wished to praise the established order. Are elections basically a system for registering and measuring popular discontent? Are complaints -- freely expressed and redressed -- a major cause of our political efficiency? What prevents a totalitarian government from being efficient in this way? (See pages 460-461.)

3) "The ethic of compromise and mutual understanding on which democratic political processes rest require citizens who do not feel that their backs are against the wall... Poverty is incompatible with this state of affairs." (427)

Most of the world's people are poverty stricken. Does this argument imply that they are unfit for democracy?

IV. The Consent of the Governed

1) "...the town-meeting ideal catches an important meaning of freedom and expresses a classic conviction of believers in democracy." (432)

Why is the town-meeting ideal so important in a democracy? How far does the vitality of national democracy depend upon the vitality of local democratic government? How vital and how democratic is local government in your community?

2) Concerning the idea of "representation" (436-440), should the agencies of democratic government seek to represent the permanent interests of their constituents against temporary needs or impulses?
What do most Senators and Congressmen represent in Washington? Their Parties? All their constituents, or only the most powerful groups among them? Who represents the nation? What do the Justices of the Supreme Court represent? (See page 441.) Are there any important parts or interests of American society not actively represented in Washington?

V. The Private Sector

"A democratic society...is recurrently confronted by the problem of where to draw the line between the private and the public, and it cannot be definitely settled for all time." (448)

How useful is Lincoln's attempt to draw this line: "The legitimate object of government, is to do for a community of people, whatever they need to have done, but cannot do at all, or cannot, so well do, for themselves -- in their separate, and individual capacities."?

How does this distinction apply to the current controversies concerning federal aid to education and national medical insurance?

VI. The Power of the Democratic Idea

1) "The desire for freedom is very old; the experience of freedom is very rare." (451)

Compare: "...free democracies are rare occurrences in the history of mankind..." (397)
"There is...an extraordinary degree of human discipline involved in allegiance to a democratic ethic." (403)

"It is the democratic dream that is keeping the world on edge." (397)

Why have freedom and democracy been so rare? Has democracy depended on a rare combination of geographical fortune -- remoteness, great natural wealth -- and long-established moral traditions -- religion, education? What are the minimum conditions for the establishment of stable new democracies? How can the peoples fired with the democratic dream be helped to achieve democracy?

2) "The democratic method...is for the confident and the tough-minded. ...it relieves no one from the pain of throught or from the responsibility of facing as many facts and respecting as many human values as possible." (461-462)

How does your group assess the Rockefeller Panel Reports as examples of this democratic method? How do you assess your own discussions by this standard?

3) "What, in summary, are the resources of democracy? What are its inner strengths that give it the power to meet its problems?" (459)

Discussion of these questions would provide one fitting way of summing up the work of your group.