

Blockade-Born University to Stay

THE FREE UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN, which was founded in 1948 as a living symbol of democratic education, has been given a substantial grant by the Ford Foundation to help alleviate physical difficulties.

The grant of \$1,309,500 (DM 5,502,105) is one of the largest made by the foundation for an institution outside the United States.

During a recent visit, Paul G. Hoffman, director of the Ford Foundation, and Henry Ford II, chairman of the board, expressed their admiration for the achievements of the students, faculty and administrative staff of the Free University. They were impressed by the assurances of the city and university officials that the school, although hastily improvised during the days of the blockade, was here to stay, and that the Germans would soon assume full responsibility for maintaining it as an independent institution.

In July the Ford Foundation approved the grant in recognition of the "great contribution being made by the university, against heavy odds, to the strengthening of intellectual life—and to democratic education for responsible leadership."

OF THE AMOUNT, \$1,190,500 will be used for the construction of a combined library and lecture hall and a students' dining hall. The remaining money was granted for the establishment of an extension service.

The lack of physical facilities has been the most pressing problem of the university. The 1948 political split of the city shut off West Berlin from the well-stocked state and university libraries located in the Eastern sector.

A "Books for Freedom" campaign is currently being conducted in the United States by CARE (Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe), the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and the World Brotherhood to provide reference material. In early August the first shipment of 330 new books arrived and was presented to the school. The volumes, including works on medicine, political science, sociology and economics, were purchased according to a list of needed books provided by the Free University.

The shortage of classrooms and the dispersal of buildings constitute a severe handicap for both students and professors. Many students, particularly those studying medicine and biological sciences, must trek all over West Berlin to get to their classes and laboratories. An American Army-operated movie theater has been placed at the university's disposal mornings for lectures.

Needless to say, there are no student dormitories, and hardly any social and recreational facilities for students or faculty. The student dining hall consists of a small barracks accommodating at most 300 persons. More than 5,000 warm meals, however, are prepared daily in these inadequate quarters and distributed by truck to the other, widely-scattered university buildings. These meals are part of a HICOG-financed school-feeding program which provides every West Berlin student — as well as some 5,000,000 school children in West Germany — from grade school through the university, with a free hot meal daily. There are many students who have little else to eat.*

* See "26,865,000 Meals a Week," Information Bulletin, June 1950 issue.

American and German officials and educators took part in ceremonies at the Titania Palast in Berlin Aug. 6 when presentation of Ford Foundation grant of \$1,309,500 was made to Free University of Berlin. Shown, left to right, are Paul G. Hoffman, director of the Ford Foundation, who made presentation; Prof. Hans von Kress, president of Free University, and Dr. Robert M. Hutchins, associate director of the Ford Foundation.

(PRB BE-HICOG photo by Schubert)

