A War Time Program for the Foundation in Europe

Since the outbreak of the war every effort has been made by our representatives in the Paris office, in the face of great difficulties, to determine on the spot the conditions relating to the Foundation's running appropriations in Europe. There are 110 of these appropriations scattered in 22 different countries and totaling in all slightly in excess of $4,000,000. Nearly $2,000,000 of this total is for work in Great Britain; approximately $750,000 is allocated to Switzerland; $330,000 each to France and Sweden; and the balance in smaller amounts ranging down to $3,500 in Finland.

Some of these appropriations, such as the $1,000,000 due on the reconstruction of the Bodleian at Oxford, have been postponed. Other appropriations have been modified or will have to be modified due to a great variety of circumstances, such as the absence of key personnel on military service, the use of laboratories for military purposes, or the abandonment of plant because of military exigencies. In relation to a few of our appropriations, generally in the outlying countries, we still have no information or no adequate information.

However, in relation to a surprisingly large number of these 110 appropriations, work is being continued on a level that has been little affected by the war. For example, Heilbron's research in organic chemistry which the Foundation is supporting at Imperial College, London, is being conducted "to a large extent absolutely normally". Bohr's work in biophysics at Copenhagen and Svedberg's studies with the super-centrifuge at Upsala are also undisturbed. The Tavistock Clinic in London where we are financing research in psychosomatic medicine is proceeding - thus far, at least - without

interruption. Similarly, work in the general field of neurology, under grants from the Foundation, is going forward at the Universities of Brussels, Helsingfors, Leiden, Lund, Oslo and Oxford.

Moreover, in spite of some unfortunate exceptions, there seems to be a growing determination in influential circles in Europe to insulate important scientific research work from the shock of war and to allow the laboratory men, even in pure research, to continue with their tasks. In this respect, Europe is profiting by the tragic example of the last war when men like Henry G. J. Moseley, the physicist ("He can never be replaced," said Rutherford), von Prowazek, the parasitologist, Doubille, the paleontologist, S. B. McLaren, the mathematician, Karl Schwarzchild, the astronomer, and a great host of fresh new leaders in every field of science were killed at the front. Of the 240 enlisted students at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris - an institution which supplies the French universities with professors - 120 were killed. Among the graduates of this school, 560 who were already professors in the universities were mobilized; 119 were killed. Of the students resident at the Ecole Centrale des Arts et Manufactures, the most important engineering school in France, 179 were killed, together with 362 of the graduates.

Their memory is still fresh in scientific circles in England and France, and efforts are beginning to be made, with the help of both governments, to prevent in this war the recurrence of such ghastly sacrifice.

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The Rockefeller Foundation was only a year old when the last great war broke out in 1914. It had started its work in public health and was on the point of initiating its medical work in China; but apart from these two

activities it was only beginning to feel its way toward a program related to "the wellbeing of mankind throughout the world". The war suddenly presented an insistent demand that cut across every attempt to develop a co-ordinated, creative program such as Mr. Rockefeller, Mr. Greene, and their associates had in mind. The feeding of Belgium and Poland, the support of the Red Cross, and later, as the United States came into the war, the support of emergency agencies like the Commissions on Training Camp Activities of the War and Navy Departments, the War Camp Community Service, the Y.M.C.A., and a dozen others, absorbed the attention of the officers. Over $22,300,000 was spent by the Foundation for these general purposes from 1914 to the end of the war. In such an atmosphere of strain and compulsion Mr. Greene's prophetic memorandum of 1916 in which he foreshadowed the program of research and demonstration, which the Foundation is now following, came at a moment when it could not be put into effect.

With the close of the war the Trustees took stock of the situation. The war work of the Foundation was looked upon as an emergency measure. It was definitely determined that for the future relief was not a wise or proper field for Foundation activity. As Dr. Vincent said: "It is obvious that the resources of the Foundation, measured by the needs of governments, are relatively limited." A later committee of the Trustees expressed the idea as follows: "If used to ameliorate human distress caused, for example, by famine or flood or earthquake or any other calamity, our funds would soon be exhausted with no permanent result." Consequently, it was determined in 1920 to avoid in the future this type of activity and during the following decade our present program was developed with its chief emphasis on the advancement of knowledge, interpreted broadly to mean not only research, but

educational processes as well, including in many cases the demonstration and application of existing knowledge.

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The situation which confronts the Foundation in 1939 is therefore entirely different from that which we had to meet in 1914. Then we were feeling our way toward definite plans; now we have a program which has been hammered out and tested under the leadership of men like Dr. Vincent, Dr. Rose, Dr. Buttrick, Dr. Russell, Dr. Pearce, and half a dozen others.

Consequently, it would seem that any war program which the Foundation might develop in Europe would be intimately related to our present objective. Without departing from the spirit of what we are trying to do under normal circumstances we may have opportunities to make a unique contribution in helping to keep alive in Europe the spark of intellectual and cultural life. Moreover, through agencies like the International Health Division and the Medical Sciences division we may be able to render service of an immediately practical character in connection with threatened epidemics such as influenza and typhus, or in relation to studies by groups of scientists hitherto at work on problems whose significance has been greatly increased by war conditions, e.g., shell shock, brain surgery, and malnutrition. Finally, through the Social Sciences division we shall have opportunities to assist in studies which are now beginning to engage the attention of important groups in many countries - studies which relate to problems of the war, of the peace, and of the post-war world. This sweep of attention is worldwide and is a measure of the desire of all nations to find the way to a more stable world and to better policies than have obtained in the last two decades.

As a result of the study which has been made by the officers, and particularly by the Paris staff, the beginnings of what might be called a war program for The Rockefeller Foundation are now slowly emerging. For example, at the last Executive Committee meeting of the Foundation on November 17th an emergency grant of $51,250 was made to the London School of Economics to enable it to continue its important work in spite of sharply reduced income. The London School occupies a unique status among British institutions and cessation of its activities would be a disaster. Another example is represented by the case of Dr. Boris Ephrussi of the Rothschild Institute at Paris, a young scientist in the borderline field between genetics and physiology, and so outstanding that he has three times been given one of our fellowships. With the declaration of war, Ephrussi found himself with important material on which he could not work and which he could not even maintain or protect. It is a gratifying example of the interlocking significance of our activities that the one man to whom he could send this material, with confidence in the integrity and competence of the recipient, was Dr. George Beadle of Stanford University, who has also held a fellowship financed by the Foundation, and with whom Ephrussi had worked during a fellowship experience. The Paris office released funds to provide for the transport of Ephrussi's important materials from Paris to California.

These cases are illustrative of the opportunities which await the Foundation within the limits of its own program. It is still too early to attempt more than a bare outline of the area of activity. As the officers see it now it would cover - to summarize what has been said above - perhaps five general types of work:

1. The maintenance of intimate and continuing contacts with European scientists, universities, and laboratories.

2. Utilization of our own laboratory work and personnel, through the International Health Division, in connection with epidemics growing out of the war, such as influenza and typhus.

3. Use of the emergency in the furtherance of research on problems whose significance has been increased by the war, i.e., brain surgery, malnutrition, etc.

4. Support of studies relating to the problems of peace and the post-war world, carried on by significant and promising groups in various countries, including the United States.

5. The conservation and salvage of a few key institutions, of research materials and of groups of younger scientists - in other words, an attempt to keep the candle from being blown out.

Necessarily this will have to be a modest program. No large sums are contemplated. But with good judgment, and with our officers in Europe in close touch with what is happening in universities, libraries, and research institutes, relatively small sums of money, strategically placed and carefully timed, may mean the difference between survival and extinction in relation to values of high promise to the future.

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By occasional observers the question is asked: "Why bother about Europe?" This question is predicated upon the assumption - for which, perhaps, some argument can be made - that intellectual leadership is passing from Europe to America. If this is the case, why not concentrate in the United States such resources as the Foundation possesses in order to reinforce the scientific future of this country? In other words, why have a European program at all? Is there going to be enough left of Europe after the war to make continued work there worth while? Why not postpone any salvage work there until the war is over, in the meantime placing our whole support behind our own scientific work here at home?

These questions seem to overlook certain vital considerations which ought to be kept in mind. As one reviews the history of Europe as a whole the conclusion is inescapable that it is the home of an exceedingly virile and productive collection of human beings who have come back strong and vigorous after days far darker than the present. Moreover, while it may be true that the trend of intellectual leadership is westward across the Atlantic, the fact remains that in many fields the leadership has not yet passed, and in many others genius and stimulation are as potent on one side of the ocean as on the other. In physiology, for example, it would be difficult to determine whether the leadership lies in Europe or the United States. The same is true of anatomy and pathology. In fields like pharmacology, tropical medicine, ophthalmology, legal medicine, social medicine, dermatology, biophysics and organic chemistry - to mention only a few - leadership is unquestionably still in Europe. In countless ways Europe is, as it has been in the past, the fountainhead of a large part of our intellectual and cultural activity. As Dr. O'Brien of our Paris office recently wrote: "Europe still has, and I think will still have following the war, as good quality per square meter of psychic terrain as we have in America."

If because of chaos or disintegration the cultural chain snaps in Europe, it will have disastrous consequences upon the cultural life of America. The research institutes which can be kept going in Europe, the young brains which can be conserved, are certain to be the foundations on which the future of science, both there and here, with its new and involved social implications, must inevitably be built. In other words, to turn our backs on Europe now would be self-defeating, even from the standpoint of national interest. Nothing is to be gained by this kind of parochialism. It cuts at the tap-roots

of the tree. The fundamental unity of civilization is the unity of its intellectual life. The Foundation has no greater service to perform than to assist in giving the world a conception of civilization both as a co-operative achievement and as an international responsibility. The original objective of the Foundation, "the wellbeing of mankind throughout the world", was based on a vision which has become, during the last twenty-five years, sounder and wiser, perhaps, than even its creators foresaw.

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In a recent letter to Mr. Fosdick, President Wilbur wrote as follows:

> "There is a constant temptation in periods of stress and war to try to get the Foundations to enter many fields that can be better handled by the benevolence that usually accompanies war and its attendant social changes and horrors. There is a better opportunity for such organizations as the Red Cross to collect funds than during ordinary times. In my view the particular function of the Foundation is to keep active as many of its intellectual and cultural interests as possible. It is most important that there be no cessation of scientific and other studies and of research work in general. I believe that the second function is to make available the results of scientific research, in connection with our health and medical work, in the relief of human misery. I believe, though, that even in this connection our work should not primarily be aimed at the relief of any individual but should be for the advancement of science and the improvement of method and then the widest possible distribution of helpful procedures."

This point of view expresses the opinion of the officers. If after discussion by the trustees a resolution is desirable, it might be phrased in some such way as follows:

> RESOLVED, that the Trustees record their agreement with the tentative outline of a war program in Europe as developed in this docket and direct the officers to continue to explore the situation and to report to the next meeting of Trustees or to the Executive Committee further developments or specific proposals for consideration.
