

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

900
Program & Policy
Area Studies

FROM: CIB

DATE: September 12, 1950

TO:

CBF	SEP 13 '50	CBF
JM		JM
EFD	SEP 18 '50	EFD
CG		CG
RSM		RSM
MB		MB
JM	SEP 22 '50	JM

COMMENTS:

1st class.

FEB 20 1951

AM

hold.

SUBJECT:

I have read with the very greatest of interest JM's memorandum on Area Studies of the Near East. I should like to read it again a little later, and I am wondering if this is not one of the things that I ought to send to all Trustees. This strikes me as an excellent and valuable memorandum, and I am much pleased with it.

The only other comments I have are these: I think JM is concerned more than he needs to be with the disciplinary and interdisciplinary problems of these studies. I think what he calls "a layman's approach" is essential and that a quasi-mechanical interdisciplinary cooperation, although desirable and indeed important, is not a substitute for that approach - if one does not mean by "layman," and I am sure he does not, the man on the street, but one whose interest is comprehensive and whose background of knowledge and technique is broad enough so that he does not have to work from a single point of view. I would think this was particularly so with respect to area studies outside the American and Western European fields. Even in these cultural "continents" orthodox disciplines are, I think, at present pretty defective bases for the analysis of concrete situations.

My second comment would be a caution about overvaluing the influence of the intellectual. It would be quite a long story for me to set forth my notions on this subject if I could do it at all successfully, but in general I think most of us, by training and by interest, greatly exaggerate the effect of the intellectual pursuits on the way the masses of people behave.

CIB

C.I.B.

Of course, the latter meaning is what I intended. JM

A point that should be considered further with special regard to the N.E. where the intellectuals may have a rather special role. JM