

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

900
Program & Policy
Area Studies

FROM: CBF

DATE: August 23, 1950

TO:

LFK	AUG 24 '50	LFK
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COMMENTS:

copy filed:
401
Oxford Univ
Gibb
AUG 20 1951

SUBJECT: "Area Studies" and the Near East

You will, I think, be interested in the attached memorandum by JM on "Area Studies" and the Near East, and the letter of August 11, 1950, from Professor H.A.R. Gibb, leading English Near Eastern scholar, commenting upon it.

JM places particular emphasis on the problems created by westernization in the Near East. Dr. Gibb refers to the accompanying "disintegration of social structure and social loyalties." This is a central problem, not only in the Near East, but also in Southeast Asia, the Far East, and Latin America. I think the implications go quite beyond the scope of JM's memo and have important relations to RF program, particularly the range of problems which are in the process of discussion under the rubric "human ecology." I hope to be able to give you a further memo on this in the fall.

JM's other principal comments at the end of his memo relate to the proposed conference of Arab and Western scholars. We hope to have this proposal ready for presentation to the Executive Committee in October or November. I should like to emphasize that we are conscious of the need to place the emphasis in such a conference on analysis by scholars in the Arab countries on their own problems, for clarification of their own needs and further developments, rather than on "explaining" the Arab world to the West. We are also conscious of the problem of Israel, and are tentatively planning for EFD to visit there this fall.

I agree with JM that the Near East is an important area for RF work in the humanities. I am happy that JM is taking the active interest in it which he is and feel that the careful work which he has done is an asset to the Foundation.

CBF

CBF:wmd