

JUN 19 1940

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Refugee Scholars

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

FROM: JHW, 11/6/40

DATE: June 3, 1940

TO:

COMMENTS:

RBF	11/6/40	RR4
SHW		SHW
SM		SM
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ME	JUN 18 '40	ME

SUBJECT: If Hitler wins -

The contours of the Europe which will result in case of a Nazi victory may now be reasonably clearly estimated, at least so far as Great Britain and France are concerned. There may be an attempt at total enslavement by incorporation into the Reich,- in which case concentration camps and executions for persons with capacity for independent leadership may be expected.

But even if a more "moderate" program is followed, the devastating consequences on life in France and Britain,- and on other defeated countries,- are obvious. No one can predict the exact lines of Nazi policy, but such acts as these are likely elements in their picture if they conquer:

The amputation of most of the British and French Empires.

The compulsory adjustment of financial, production and foreign trade policies to fit in with and serve the needs and greater prosperity of the German economic (military) system.

The forced migration of millions of people from their present homes and occupations in order to make room for expansion of the German race.

The suppression of all independent expression which is in any way critical of the acts or ideologies of the Nazi regime.

What these measures mean is clear,- both economically and intellectually. If, for example, Great Britain is forced to work on lines of production acceptable to Germany, is shut out of much of her European and Asiatic markets and much of her colonial markets, loses most of her international shipping business and her functions as international banker,- it may well be that

Great Britain will not be able to support more than half the present population at the present standard of living. The resulting discontent will be perfect for Nazi purposes.

The intellectual consequences are no less appalling. Great Britain, France, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, will almost certainly cease to offer the kind of milieu in which social science research can flourish.

With millions of people having to or desiring to migrate from their homelands, the pressure on the Foundation to become a relief body will be terrific. I suggest, - at least so far as SS is concerned, - that we choose now as the small part of the total task which the Foundation's limited resources permit it to undertake, the responsibility for relocating such of the best of the scientific and scholarly men and women from France, Great Britain and other over-run countries as may be available to leave.

I would suggest these fundamental departures from the refugee policies which have obtained in the past:

1. I would take the initiative and shop for the best. I would do this cold-bloodedly on the assumption that Nazi domination of these countries makes them a poor place for a first-class person to remain in. And on the further assumption that the Foundation could make no finer contribution to our culture than to bring over, say, 100 of the best minds from Great Britain, 75 from France, and smaller numbers from the other countries. We could contribute to much needed distinction of our universities by facilitating such immigration.

In the case of the German refugees, we waited for what the individuals concerned were able to promote or universities originated. I think it is not unfair to say that a great many were not really first-rate.

In reversing this process I would suggest that we start now with the collaboration of a few leading social scientists in considering the idea. If the plan were approved, a list of the men and women in the various social science fields whom we would most like to see here could be prepared. Thus we could be ready if the final tragedy occurs. This should be done as quietly as possible. Such a list should not be used woodenly, and of course we could and would lower the standard to fit many situations; but the emphasis should be on the highest quality. Most of the others would just have to turn to other perhaps less intellectual occupations.

2. I would consider that all North America,- especially Canada,- and all South and Central America would constitute possible markets for these scholars. We have been searching for "something to do" in South America. I think this could be one concrete way to begin.

3. If this policy were adopted, we would be immediately confronted with the "elbows out" attitude toward refugees on many United States campuses. I think this difficulty need not be insurmountable. The emotional attitude in the event of a Nazi victory will be different. Concentration on high quality will also help. Furthermore, English and French scholars will be more readily fitted into the American scene than have some of the German refugees. And, finally, it may be necessary to increase the rate and period of Foundation support.

RF spent \$750,000 in assisting refugees, chiefly from Germany, to locate in this country. It may be confronted with an opportunity,- greater for the United States and greater for civilization.

Two steps would seem to be necessary to implement this policy:

1. Quietly, with a few leading scholars, explore this plan and, if approved, develop the list of preferred scholars.
2. Be prepared for systematic exploration of the market and quick action if necessary.

If Hitler loses -

Then the need will be of a totally different character,- with prompt action of a totally different kind indicated.