

JUL 10 1940

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(memo)

## INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

200  
Refugee Scholars

FROM: JHW

DATE: June 17, 1940

TO:

COMMENTS:

RBF		RMA

Fess Wilson  
Hush

SUBJECT:

I note the fall of the Reynaud cabinet yesterday, - and the steady gains of the Nazi armies.

Is not the time either here, - or very near, - when RF should face the situation which seems to be impending for the scientific and scholarly personnel of France? Night appears to be settling down on the people who have given the finest meaning to the word "culture."

The time may not yet have come for action but the Foundation should be prepared for quick action, since the opportunity may pass if the Nazis once garrison the whole of France.

Just how to "take hold" is the difficult question. I don't think we know enough to answer it now. But I would assume the general objective stated in my memorandum of June 3, 1940 (copy attached). Our obligation is to do what we can to preserve the best of the scientists and scholars of France for civilization. The Rists, the Jannets, the Maurois' are universal possessions. Many of them may prefer to stay and suffer with France. But for many, - especially of the next younger group, - the future lies still ahead. And, in France, that future may be either stultification or a concentration camp. Those who are prepared to leave may lack funds or transportation or any knowledge of the place where a welcome awaits them. And the task of reaching and discovering the ones we want without being deluged with ones we do not want is complicated.

I doubt whether it is yet in order to discuss this question with the French Ambassador unless you know him well, - for France may fight on and we do not wish to appear as ambulance chasers. But three preliminary steps seem to be in order:

1. Informal discussion with Lothian and perhaps others concerning the possibility and practicability of aid (as applied to France only)

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2. Informal conference with the State Department
3. An officers' conference when SMG and TBK return
4. Possible despatch of someone to Lisbon and Bordeaux if action is indicated.

If any responsibility is assumed it should be a strictly limited one, - limited to the ablest persons and limited until we can see the future of France more clearly. The best limited liability suggestion I have received is one from Grance of SSRC. He proposed that invitations be extended to 25 or 50 of the leading scientists or scholars of France to spend a year in this country. They can do little in France during the next year. They would be welcome additions as visiting professors here. Invitations for one year would not commit us beyond that year, - although if life in France went black we would be morally bound, - but we could well afford to assume some responsibility. And, if France regains a measure of freedom, they could return.

JAW

JHW:LMG