

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

200
Refugee Scholars

FROM: JHW

DATE: May 11, 1942

TO:

RFE		

COMMENTS:

SUBJECT: REFUGEE SCHOLARS

To state a policy for the orderly liquidation of our obligations re refugee scholars requires restatement of the objectives which led to the grants for refugees.

I take it the prime objective of the refugee program was to salvage for the world of scholarship anywhere the best of the refugee scholars. There may have been a secondary specific purpose behind the program; namely, to broaden and make less provincial American scholarship by mixing in some of the best of European scholars.

At no time was the program intended as a relief program, although such considerations have undoubtedly had some weight in particular instances. But the longer the program goes on, the more it tends to take on the character of a relief program. Liquidation of the program as rapidly as is consistent with the achievement of the original objective and the goodwill elements of the situation is, therefore, indicated. This means, in general, that the following considerations should govern:

1. No new grants shall be made. (This, of course, does not exclude grants-in-aid for the work of a man who happens to be a refugee scholar. It merely means that such grants shall be considered as any other proposal would be; i.e., from the point of view of its fitness in the divisional program.)
2. Each current case (with the possible exception of the New School) must be handled as an individual matter.
3. In considering individual cases, the following factors should guide:
 - (a) No grant should be made if funds can be squeezed out of the institution.
 - (b) No grant (unless it should be a short concluding one) should be made unless the quality of the individual appears, on the closer acquaintance of his presence in the U.S., to be genuinely superior.

- (c) An attempt should be made to make the next grant a concluding one, wherever possible; although three more years of support (i.e., until the scholar becomes a citizen) may be necessary in some instances.
- (d) We must always be super-alert to the man of true greatness; we must never be so mechanical as not to be ready to break rules for him.

In working out these adjustments it is hardly necessary to note that we are dealing with human beings, some of whom are quite superior, - in any case they are human beings who have been severely battered and are entitled to all the gentle sympathy and understanding we can give them as we work out their problems with them.

The refugee scholars at the New School present a somewhat different problem. Each case should be studied, and a general conference should then be held by JHW and RFE with Alvin Johnson in order to estimate our financial commitments. The future of each man should be discussed in terms of AJ's plans, prospects of ability to finance him at the New School, and, if there is prospect of extended financial requests in any cases from the New School, the possibilities for each individual elsewhere. If a lump sum exit from the New School appears cheaper and more clean-cut for RF, its possibility should be explored.

JHW:SR