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INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

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Refugee Scholars  
New School for Social  
Research

FROM: RAL

DATE: October 17, 1940.

TO: AG

COMMENTS:

RBF		RM
TBA		330
NY		NY

SUBJECT:

RF co-operation with New School for Social Research  
in bringing European emigrés to U.S.

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RS

I have never met Dr. Alvin Johnson. The following comments therefore have no personal basis; they reflect only my reaction toward the plan of co-operation with his committee.

The plan was based, I understand, on the assumption that in the emergency only through Johnson was there much chance of rescuing certain valuable scholars. It has been shown, I believe, that this assumption was not valid. A few scholars have been brought over through J's efforts, - but many more have come and are coming without his committee's assistance. It would be surprising, if not actually shocking, if in such a critical period only one man knew the ropes or had the pull to get scholars out of Europe. But if co-operation with Johnson was accomplishing what the RF had been trying to do since 1933 through other mechanisms, namely, the re-establishment of emigré scientists, the point I have just raised might be dismissed as irrelevant or inconsequential. As you have pointed out, however, Johnson simply puts the scholars in the warehouse; the problem of placement still remains. And since it is understood, I believe, that the RF will take care of the storage for an indefinite period it seems to me that we are not only building up heavy long-term commitments, but may be also actually discouraging absorption of scholars.

I doubt if there are many European scientists who would not prefer continued RF support to that of almost any university. Certainly the scholar should not be expected to find a job as long as he is assured of safe-keeping at RF cost. I should think that wherever possible we - in the M.S. at least - should continue the harder way of seeking a place where the scholar is wanted and needed before making a commitment, rather than follow the temptingly easy procedure of giving the Johnson "School" a \$4,000 check. While the latter may bring temporary relief it is certainly piling up troubles for the future.

As we are not nearing the end but really starting on a new era of deposed scholar grants with enormous financial implications, would it

not be well to review the whole program with a readiness to scrap present techniques if something better can be worked out?

On the ground that the present system of dealing with two committees as well as directly with universities makes for confusion and that the Foundation in making grants to the Johnson committee or any other such money-holding organization, is neither relieving itself of responsibility nor of work that could be as well or better done by our own group, I would suggest consideration of the two following alternative plans.

1. That the Foundation make a lump sum grant to some organization of the high character of the National Research Council and let that body have full and complete responsibility for deposed scholar aid.

2. That the Foundation itself handle the job with its own personnel. With representatives in Europe and a special staff here I think we could do all that is being done now (on RF grants) to rescue and place scholars, and do it a good deal better. The committees might continue to operate on funds from other sources.

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