

700  
War  
(General)

STAFF CONFERENCE

Tuesday, October 24, 1939

Present: RBF, TBA, SHW, AG, DHS, GKS, WET, FBH, JHW, RAL, JM, GJB, ER, WAS, NST, AJW.

Section for 700  
Cambridge action

AJW Who had just arrived from Europe, recounted the events which had taken place in the Paris Office since the outbreak of war. Routines being established so that mail service is much improved, air mail resumed one week before he left, telephone service improved, transportation by train from LaBaule to Paris improved but travel difficult in general (fifty hours Paris to Lisbon). Still necessary to have a police visa to leave France and special re-entry permits. Diplomatic visa for RF officers under discussion but prospect at moment not bright. At present can only take 5,000 francs out of France and there is difficulty in transmitting money to projects. LaBaule will be an uncomfortable place in winter. The house which the RF has is not heated. All hotels have been requisitioned for hospitals and troops and supplies are coming in through Saint-Nazaire. The sixth and seventh floors in Paris are not as yet being used, although requisitioned by Naugier as a favor to RF. It has proved somewhat difficult to get documents in and out of England. O'B's papers retained when he returned from London by air. Question was raised as to sending copies of letters, etc., to Europe. AJW has brought home seven drawers of active IHD files. The active files from 1929 were moved - seven cases - to LaBaule.

RAL Questions the possibility of carrying on research and, if possible, in what parts of Europe. Answer: This cannot be said at present. AJW doubts if there is a normal country in Europe. All that is possible is to keep contact and watch.

Question was raised as to another location outside Paris. Not known here whether the French could make another location available. AJW does not believe Paris will be bombed except possibly at a much later stage. Letort may not be actually called to the front. He has been given a "blue card".

Section filed 4015  
LSF

JHW Brings up the question of an emergency grant to the London School. Under what conditions should such a grant be given? The London School is at Cambridge, its international students gone. Many of its faculty have been called to government posts. Its income has shrunk even more rapidly and there is some doubt of being able to hold the remaining staff together. RBF: One difficulty is that, as we step in, governments may be tempted to step out. This should not be determining with us. With some assurance of the type of the people remaining and some inkling that the University Grants Committee will not take advantage, the repercussions of an emergency grant may be wider than the London School itself. It is important for the RF to do some things. AGREED by JHW and RBF that any grant should be clearly understood by University Grants Committee.

JHW Chatham House. This is joining the war machine and its position is pretty much compromised. The RF's grants would normally continue certainly to the end of the year. More facts are needed. Its status doubtful.

AG Reports suggestion from O'B in the direction of officers in Europe having more freedom to take action quickly on certain things. Trustees might be approached in December for a review of grants in aid procedure. Cabled exchange as a possibility in place of complete paper work.

AGREED that this matter can be postponed for a month.

SHW Suggests that grant in aid funds will have to move up in December.

TBA Reports the case of a Polish fellow proposed for special research aid and other cases of Polish fellows reported stranded. Feels the present types of fellowships and grants in aid should be reviewed, that old mechanisms are failing and some more elastic kind of fund might be considered. Also suggests the advance of free funds to Europeans - example, Mellanby or Losier.

AGREED case under immediate discussion can be taken care of through grant in aid.

SHW Mentions TBK's "Friendly enemy alien" problem.

There was some discussion of the deposed scholar fund with doubts expressed as to whether this should continue.

AGREED to postpone decision.

RBF Reports WW's written suggestion that leading scientific institutions in European countries be asked to send a certain number of young scientists out under military orders to pursue scientific work. There was no agreement on this procedure. AG expressed the opinion that tentative exploratory discussion in staff conferences was needed.