

SEP 23 1941  
AUG 28 1941

CABLE ADDRESS: ACOLS

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF LEARNED SOCIETIES  
MEMBER OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL UNION OF ACADEMIESEXECUTIVE OFFICES  
907 FIFTEENTH STREET  
WASHINGTON, D. C.AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, 1727  
AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, 1780  
AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY, 1812  
AMERICAN ORIENTAL SOCIETY, 1842  
AMERICAN NUMISMATIC SOCIETY, 1858  
AMERICAN PHILOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, 1869  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF AMERICA, 1879  
SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE AND EXEGESIS, 1880  
MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, 1883  
AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, 1884AMERICAN ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION, 1885  
AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION, 1900  
AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, 1902  
AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION, 1903  
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA, 1904  
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN GEOGRAPHERS, 1904  
AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL SOCIETY, 1905  
AMERICAN SOCIETY OF INTERNATIONAL LAW, 1906  
HISTORY OF SCIENCE SOCIETY, 1924  
LINGUISTIC SOCIETY OF AMERICA, 1924  
MEDIAEVAL ACADEMY OF AMERICA, 1925

July 30, 1941

SEP 10 1941

Dear Dr. Stevens:

I told you at Ithaca that there had been at least a lot of talk and activity with respect to the development of American work in unusual languages to be promoted on the basis of funds now in hand with the officers of the Rockefeller Foundation. As I understand it, the idea is to take advantage of every opportunity which presents itself, or can be created, of developing Americans competent in the languages and civilizations of those parts of the world not now generally treated in our university and college curricula. While this development is not completely a matter of the emergency, nevertheless, the emergency does condition its direction and its tempo in that we should give first attention to those studies most likely to be of value to government agencies in the emergency, and in that we must work faster than we should in ordinary times. In addition to these factors it seems to me desirable to operate in such a way as to lay the basis for developments which might result in the organization of a National School of Modern Oriental Languages and Civilizations, or some American organization which will serve the same purposes as the foreign schools, but more consonant with the American scene.

So far as organization is concerned, I envisage a small central holding committee which already exists, a more fluid advisory group from the agencies of the Federal Government, and some secretarial individual to do the hard work. This body, operating from Washington, should be able to seize every existing opportunity, to create opportunities, and to turn vague ideas into opportunities for getting specific jobs or work done in Washington or elsewhere with a minimum of red tape.

In accordance with this plan the Committee should be able to expend funds for the following purposes:

1. Instruction.

Expenditures under this heading would be for full or part-time salary to teachers, lecturers, and assistants, for necessary travel to get this personnel to the place of instruction, or for guaranteeing to a university or other institution that it will suffer no financial loss from the presentation of a certain course or courses developed or sponsored by the Committee.

2. Implementation.

Expenses under this rubric include the purchase of dictionaries and other teaching materials, records of speech and all payments necessary for making records or reproductions for compiling aids to teaching and study, and for publishing them in such forms as

may be most expedient. All of these materials are to be the property of the holding Committee, and are to be deposited with those institutions where instruction is going on.

3. Fellowships and Study-Aids.

In some cases it may be necessary almost to purchase attendance at courses offered. In any event, all too frequently the most likely candidates will be unable to take advantage of instruction offered without some financial assistance. In general, this should be made available on a system approximating to that of the Council's system of study-aids with a little more flexibility.

4. Administration.

The work cannot be done unless somebody does it. Expenditures should include salary for an administrative assistant on part or full time as developments warrant, stenographic and clerical help, and office expenses. These need, however, not be very large, since the mechanism is to be kept at a minimum. Two or three younger men are known who are believed to have the qualities of administrative assistant; preliminary conversations have been held with two of them.

The following paragraphs suggest some of the activities to be undertaken by this organization just as quickly as they can be set into operation, presumably at least by the beginning of the coming university year. It will be noted that they involve, in general, intensive full-time courses designed to produce a level of competence defined as ability to read newspaper materials readily and/or auditory comprehension of equivalent materials.

Japanese. As a result of the Ithaca Conference, it seems possible that there will be set up in one or more universities intensive courses in the Japanese language. Personally, I should hope that these would be set up by the universities themselves and not limited to the Navy or any other branch of the Federal Government, but open to whoever can avail himself of the opportunity. The ability of the Federal Government to finance attendance at these courses by selected individuals is an important item in the program, but that is all. Personally, of course, I think that the degree of competence alleged to be attained by naval officers and others under the Nagamura method has been much exaggerated, and that in all probability better results in just as quick a time can be reached by the Elisseeff-Reischauer combination or some modification of it. I believe

further that if delays ensue in setting up such a course we should take the bull by the horns and see to it that some such course is started somewhere by guaranteeing the universities in question against loss. This must be done, of course, in such a way as not to take over the job for the Navy but simply to provide the impetus which will get the thing started. Probably our best material for a first intensive course consists of half a dozen available young Americans with good Chinese and good language training who could, in a short intensive course, be turned into instructors for further intensive courses in Japanese. Meanwhile, we must develop sifting courses on a more modest scale for beginners. The first of these is now to be undertaken at George Washington University.

Russian. There is no dearth of people who use the Russian language in America. Unfortunately, too many of them have red or white or other colored predilections which make them unsuitable for most posts likely to be created in the agencies of the Government. There is a great shortage, however, of Americans with competences in the Russian and other Slavic languages as defined above.. I propose intensive full-time Russian at Cornell University in the coming university year, instruction to be offered by Dr. J. Posin, who has the reputation of being a very excellent teacher of the Russian language and who has, in addition, experience with the intensive course. It happens that there are conditions at Cornell University which make it possible to secure Dr. Posin's services, possibly even with a contribution towards his salary from the University itself. These conditions developed from certain misunderstandings for which apparently the administration of Cornell University feels some responsibility.

Siamese. In this field there is practically no American available. Moreover, the United States Army has already requested that plans be made for the production of Americans in this field. There are two or three available persons who have some kind of knowledge of Siamese who could be set to work with a couple of native Siamese to provide instruction and implements. This could probably be most conveniently done in Washington, and can be started immediately. It would result in a small group learning together.

Tibetan. Precisely the same statement as for Siamese, including the request of the United States Army.

Arabic. I propose intensive Arabic with particular emphasis on the Arabic of West Africa (this emphasis would not distort the picture so as to make it unreal). If Boris is imported he should be attached to this group. I visited Princeton on Sunday and Monday, and saw excellent work being done in intensive fashion, though for too short a period. I am assured that intensive Arabic can be so offered as to produce the result defined above within a college year, and from what I have seen I think that this is quite true; the problem is somewhat easier than it is with Japanese. I may remark that we are very badly supplied with people in Arabic who have the kind of competence we want, though there are a considerable number who can recite passages from the Koran.



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Malay. The Roster of Scientific and Specialized Personnel lists 41 persons as indicating competence in Malay. I suspect that in most cases this is mere conversational "kitchen Malay" such as<sup>is</sup> readily picked up by visitors to the Dutch East Indies, and has very little value for our present purposes. I am already in consultation with officials of the Netherlands Embassy and others who will be in a position to find a suitable scholar to offer instruction in this field. I propose that a small group be gathered at Yale University for instruction and development of implements of study and teaching in Malay. I choose Yale University because, in the light of the fact that the implementation in this field is very bad, the group now at Yale University would be very useful in developing the implementation. Moreover, Professor Leonard Bloomfield of Yale is well versed in the Tagalog language, which is in reality a Malay language.

Hindustani. A little group in Washington is already studying Hindustani. One of the group is from the Navy. The work could be made much more effective and speeded considerably by the expenditure of funds for a native Hindustanese (two good ones are known to be available) and the production of implementation

It will be seen that the plan involves a nuclear organization in Washington having its finger in operations wherever it seems those operations can be most effectively conducted. The local universities have shown themselves willing to cooperate. The American University, for instance, proposes to provide, in the event of a considerable development, a building, and its President is willing to raise money for the rehabilitation of the building to suit our purposes. For the moment I am not unduly aroused by this idea, though if the housing situation becomes any worse than it is at present in Washington, and if this development proceeds as I hope it will, this suggestion may be fruitfully used at some later time. For the present we have not discussed this phase of the question any further.

Needless to say, one of our first jobs, as soon as we get some help, will be combing the National Roster of Scientific and Specialized Personnel for people who might be either immediately useful or who might present the possibility of development into such usefulness.

Now, assuming that some such program as the foregoing is what is in your mind, it is necessary to determine how money is to be spent. If funds are to pass through the Treasury of the American Council of Learned Societies I shall have to get the Executive Committee to accept fiscal responsibility. This should not be difficult, especially in the light of the fact that the Council has already appointed a Committee in the matter. In this event, some portion of the funds, say \$10,000., should be made immediately available to the Council. If, however, you prefer some other method of handling the funds, please let me know.

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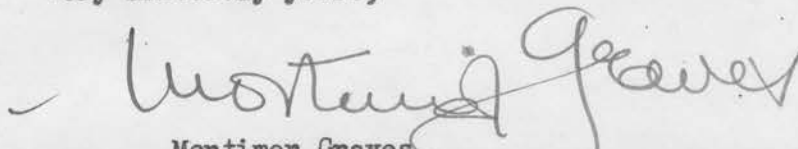
Dr. David H. Stevens

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If you want further elucidation I shall be happy either to come to New York or to discuss the question with you on your next visit to Washington.

Very sincerely yours,

  
Mortimer Graves  
Administrative Secretary

MG:B

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MB, I have not yet cleared all of this  
with my committee, but that fact  
will not hamper us. mg.

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