

9/26/41

41287

200R
ACHS
Modern Languages

It was, on motion,
RESOLVED that the sum of Fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000),
RF 41082 or as much thereof as may be necessary, be, and it
hereby is, appropriated to the AMERICAN COUNCIL OF
LEARNED SOCIETIES to provide for expenses of special
intensive instruction in the Chinese, Japanese and
Russian languages during the period ending Decem-
ber 31, 1943.

AMERICAN COUNCIL
OF LEARNED
SOCIETIES -
SPECIAL CHINESE,
JAPANESE, AND
RUSSIAN LANGUAGE
TEACHING

The following were the considerations presented:

Humanities

Previous Interest: For ten years the Foundation has assisted the American Council of Learned Societies, the Institute of Pacific Relations, and various American institutions to develop personnel for teaching and research in Chinese, Japanese, and Russian. The activities of the Council have been in the hands of its Far Eastern committees, and of the Foundation's support of Council program there is available for the year 1941-1942 up to \$15,000 for the committees' work.

In June, 1941, the Foundation appropriated \$50,000, payable at the discretion of the officers to the American Council of Learned Societies, or another equally responsible institution, for developing personnel and resources in teaching modern oriental languages in institutions of the United States during a three-year period ending approximately June 30, 1944.

General Description: In June, the Council, through a special Committee on a National School of Modern Oriental Languages and Civilizations, began investigation of what is to be demanded of American scholars in the way of personnel and resources for teaching modern oriental languages in this country. As its name implies, the ultimate goal of this committee is the establishment in the United States of the equivalent of such national schools as the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London, the Ecole Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes in Paris, and the Etnikidze Institute of Oriental Languages in Leningrad. For the present the committee is advising with regard to urgent needs and present opportunities for meeting them.

The Foundation's June appropriation of \$50,000 for language work through the Council is now being used in a program of developing personnel and resources in the teaching of modern languages which as yet are hardly, if at all, taught in this country. For the Siamese, Tibetan, Malayan, Hindustani, Arabic, and Turkish languages there is a serious lack of personnel and teaching resources in this country in the face of urgent needs for competent linguists both within and outside the government.

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(Continued)

The present proposal is of another order, namely, to help with intensive and specialized instruction in languages for which personnel and resources now exist in American institutions, notably Chinese, Japanese, and Russian. In doing this the Council proposes to utilize the services of these American universities and colleges to meet present demands. For example, the Council through its committees has arranged for intensive courses at the Harvard-Yenching Institute in Cambridge, to produce as rapidly as possible personnel able to read Japanese newspapers. Similar intensive work would be arranged at Harvard or elsewhere to train personnel with the high degree of auditory comprehension of Japanese required to listen to and analyze Japanese broadcasts. A need for auditory comprehension of Chinese exists, not only in respect to the national speech (Mandarin) but as well for dialects which are now being used in broadcasting. Russian is already intensively but insufficiently taught. The Council regards it as important to open up other centers for intensive teaching of all three languages in order to meet present emergency demands.

Finances: The recommendation is for a grant of \$50,000 to the Council to be available as needed during the period ending December 31, 1943. The principal use of this money would be for additional personnel.

Future Implications: None.

Comment: This recommendation reflects the growing urgency for American personnel competent in the modern spoken and written languages in which hitherto adequate instruction has not been offered in American institutions. Present prospects of inevitably wider American participation in international affairs justify the belief that current needs for personnel will continue after the present emergency.
