PRIVATE BATTLES

DIANA LEAT
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Many people helped me in the process of writing this book. The book was started during a three month period as a Visiting Scholar at the Rockefeller Archive Center where all of the staff were unfailingly helpful, generous and knowledgeable. I am grateful to every one of them, especially James Allen Smith.

Kitty Cowles and Nina Ryan gave me valuable advice, and Carol Bokuniewicz, David Norris, Gerry Salole and John Smallwood were encouraging and supportive in what at times seemed like an enormous task. Without Alessandro Borsello and Wendy Richardson this publication would have been much the poorer.

Diana Leat
Private Battles: A Foundation at War

Private Battles is more than just a fascinating tale of the trials and tribulations of a foundation working in a dramatically changing political situation: it is an important insight into the evolving, distinctive roles that philanthropic foundations might play which is still deeply inspiring. Of course my own biases, as a historian and the current Director of a European foundation, made me naturally curious to read Diana Leat’s take on the Rockefeller Foundation in Europe during the Second World War. But beyond a personal interest, when I first read this manuscript I was struck by the uniqueness of the story being presented, but at the same time its universality.

This is in fact a most unusual story because it is an extremely well-documented presentation of aspects of war that most of us will feel we already know fairly well. While we have all read about the Second World War in our history books, been shocked by the enduring images from the period, and seen numerous films on the topic, the story presented in these pages narrates the period from the human perspective as it is largely told through the letters and diary entries of Rockefeller Foundation staff from the time. On a personal level, this book recounts the foundation’s struggle to nourish the values which Adolf Hitler fought and they defended. It transports us directly into the mindset of the grantmaker at the time, as their difficult decisions and sleepless nights are meticulously chronicled. For foundations, knowledge is a currency we deal in frequently as foundations don’t just fund good work: we, along with our grantees and partners, create knowledge, and this is one of our greatest assets. The Rockefeller Foundation, by obliging its staff to keep such detailed records and then painstakingly archiving these for the benefit of future generations, is certainly exceptional in its early reverence for knowledge management.
Beyond the historical facts, these accounts also provide curious insights into the daily realities of wartime down to the most minute of details, for example which cigarettes were in shortest supply. Through the key players in this story - Gunn, Fosdick, Makinsky, and the rest of their colleagues - these stories take on life and meaning. This drives home the enduring point that foundations’ work was, and in my opinion must continue to be, deeply rooted in people and their convictions. For the Europe-based Rockefeller Foundation staff, leaving Europe at the outset of war was an impossibility as the grant holders relying on them were not names and numbers on a docket, but rather real people with whom they had shared discussions and dinners. The foundation’s involvement in intellectual cooperation in connection with the League of Nations between the First and Second World Wars had cemented its deep-rooted belief in the importance of having robust networks of partners, thinkers, allies. Decades later, I feel that little should have changed in this regard and that good foundation work must be based on personal engagement and shared values.

Private Battles dramatises many of the debates that foundations in Europe are still playing out today. The Rockefeller Foundation’s principles and practices had stood the test of time, but were of course severely challenged by the Second World War. Though admittedly less dramatic, in the context of the current socio-political crisis in Europe, I can’t help but wonder how many foundation professionals reading this book in 2013 are weighing the same fundamental questions that Gunn and his staff were grappling with? Should a foundation be engaged in short-term relief when the situation around it is dire, or should staying the course and maintaining long-term vision take precedence? This precarious balancing act and extreme sense of urgency are contrasts to business as usual.

I believe that this wartime story provides a valuable and inspiring reminder about bravery, and what can be achieved in exceptional circumstances. Any
foundation working in a war zone or other extreme circumstance will know this dilemma – just when, arguably, need is greatest, the risk for the foundation is the most obvious. Even for those organisations working in less perilous contexts, the story of the Rockefeller Foundation in the Second World War still offers significant lessons about foundations’ possible determination, vision and valour. For these reasons, I commend Diana Leat for completing this important piece of writing, and thank her for allowing the EFC to be one of her partners in this worthy undertaking.

**Erik Rudeng**

Chair, European Foundation Centre
Director, Fritt Ord Foundation
Chapter 1
An American Foundation in Paris

Brilliant gold and silver stars showered the night sky over Paris. The noise was deafening as the synchronized fireworks flashed and roared from the tip to the bottom of the Eiffel Tower. Selskar (Mike) Gunn, director of the Rockefeller Foundation’s European office in Paris, and his wife, Carroll McComas, the beautiful American film actress, wandered among the crowd admiring the city decked out in its finest. Carroll, with her dark, Elizabeth Taylor looks and her elegant Parisian clothes, and Mike, clean-cut and handsome, were a striking couple. No expense had been spared for the State visit of the young British King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. Multi-coloured fountains sparkled on the Seine; the Crillon and Admiralty were draped in cloth of gold and the buildings’ facades hung with scarlet Beauvais tapestries woven for the coronation of Charles V. All of the finest architecture of Paris was flood-lit and trimmed in finery.

Carroll had followed every minute of the visit since the royal couple arrived in Paris on May 28, 1938; Parisians had admired the young queen’s elegant all-white, Norman Hartnell–designed mourning wardrobe (worn since the death of the Queen’s mother, Lady Strathmore) and were entranced by her shy smile.

Perhaps even Gunn had been a little more relaxed this evening. Gunn was prone to attacks of debilitating depression ever since contracting tuberculosis while working on the Rockefeller Foundation’s campaign against the disease in France in the 1920’s. Listening to his conversations with colleagues, Carroll knew Gunn worried constantly about the possibility of war in Europe. Were they really going to go through the hell of another war so soon after the last -

1 Unless otherwise noted all references are to the Rockefeller Foundation archive at the Rockefeller Archive Center.
“the war to end all wars”? If war came, all of the Foundation’s work in Europe would be in jeopardy. All the research projects and the ground-breaking work in science, medicine and public health that Gunn and his colleagues had so carefully selected and nurtured might come to nothing. The exchange fellowships that were doing so much to develop academic capacity and foster international understanding would be threatened too.

Gunn was born in 1883 in London to a hugely wealthy theatrical Dublin family who were close friends of the James Joyces; Gunn’s father was said to have given the loan to the producer Richard D’Oyley Carte that enabled the survival of the Gilbert and Sullivan partnership. In 1900, after a pampered upbringing and a succession of private tutors, Gunn left for America determined to pursue a serious education. Gunn’s fortunes changed dramatically when the nephew his father had selected to take over the theater-building business lost the family fortune. Graduating from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1905, Gunn took a job as a bacteriologist at the Boston Bacteriological Lab, and worked with the American Public Health Association in its formative years. Moving on to the Rockefeller Foundation, Gunn worked on the American Tuberculosis Commission in France from 1917 to 1920 and then as an advisor to the Ministry of Health of Czechoslovakia. In 1927 he was made vice-president of the Foundation, with responsibility for Europe.

Gunn and his colleagues were committed not just to a job but to a passionately held set of beliefs and values. They believed in the power of knowledge to improve people’s lives; they believed in democracy, free speech and academic freedom as fundamental values and as a route to world peace. Working for the Rockefeller Foundation enabled them to put these values into practice.
The Foundation had been created from the merger of four foundations started by John D. Rockefeller (JDR) between 1901 and 1918. Rockefeller had broken with traditional giving by creating an endowment not for a single cause but one that was deliberately broad enough to allow for changing needs over time. The distinction between charity and philanthropy was equally fundamental to JDR’s thinking. Giving money to a beggar was charity, he believed; exploring the root causes of poverty — and mapping a way out — was philanthropy. The merger gave the Foundation assets worth around $9 billion (at today’s prices). Initially, Rockefeller had wanted to give the Foundation to the American people, making it accountable to elected representatives in Congress. But Congress, wary of the power of wealthy individuals to direct policy, rejected the proposal. After various legal difficulties that stemmed partly from an ongoing (1911) antitrust suit against the Rockefeller-owned Standard Oil, and suspicion about too much Rockefeller influence on the spending of the endowment, the Foundation was formally established in May 1914.

The Foundation’s mission — to promote “the well-being of mankind throughout the world” — was grand but vague. On which aspects of this vast undertaking should they concentrate, and how should they work? At one level the money at the Foundation’s disposal was huge, but relative to the size and scope of the mission it was a drop in the ocean. The Foundation quickly established key principles governing what it would do. To ensure that any work begun by the Foundation would be continued and expanded to all, the Foundation only embarked on programmes if there were assurances of ongoing support, usually from the relevant government. To avoid creating a population of dependents, the Foundation generally only supplied half of the cost of any project.

It was hard, intensive work, and the officers kept in regular contact with
the people and projects supported by the Foundation's money. First-hand knowledge and a deep understanding of the work, people and institutions supported was regarded as essential for good grant making. For the Paris based staff this meant hectic schedules criss-crossing Europe at a time when travel was slow and difficult.

**PROBLEMS IN GERMANY**

In the 1920’s and 30’s the Foundation had given millions of dollars to German universities to support work by some of the most brilliant scholars in the world, only recently pledging more money to the famous Kaiser Wilhelm Gessellschaft University to create a medical research institute in cell physiology and neurology. But the latest news from Germany was troubling. A number of German university scientists funded by the Foundation had been dismissed from their posts simply, it was rumoured, because they were Jewish or expressed Communist or anti-Nazi views.

Despite the fact that American journalists visiting Germany generally reported nothing wrong, attributing the talk to overblown rumour, Gunn had been deeply troubled by these dismissals. Still, he and his staff agreed that funding in German universities should not be terminated; the Foundation must always be politically neutral. Furthermore, as someone pointed out at a staff meeting during the period, if the Nazis were penalising people for being Jewish, the Foundation should not penalise people for being German.

Even though colleagues tried to persuade him that war could not happen again, Gunn remained desperately worried. Like many others, Gunn believed that
sooner or later the German people would wake up and chuck Hitler out. When it was clear that Hitler was staying put, the international press had generally ignored or placated him. The line taken by The Times of London could be summed up in 1938 as: "If you have reached maturity and are confronted with what may be a delinquent child, obsessed by one or two legitimate grievances, your first duty is to remove those grievances; to be firm but kind, and thus lure him with sweet reason back into the family circle—for the alternative might be the break-up of the home."3

Gunn was worried about more than the possibility of war. The Board of the mighty Rockefeller Foundation, then the richest foundation in the world, was getting anxious about the Foundation's declining income. Like most philanthropic foundations, the Rockefeller Foundation lived off, and spent each year, only the income earned on its billions of dollars in invested assets. Before the Wall Street crash in 1929 this had given the Foundation around $1.5 billion (at today's prices) to spend each year.

Through the Depression years the Foundation's income had decreased, however, and the Board had had to dip into its capital fund in order to maintain expenditure levels at a time of such massive need in so many countries. But now, with little sign of investment income picking up, the Board was starting to discuss belt-tightening. One obvious way of cutting costs would be to close the Paris office and scale back work in Europe. This would not only save money but also

3 Bielenberg 1988: p. 29
appeal to those who saw the new world of the Americas – not the old world of Europe – as the future.

In theory the Board governed the Foundation. In practice it depended heavily on the recommendations of the Foundation’s staff and in particular those of the President (Raymond Blaine Fosdick), the directors of the various subject divisions and Gunn as vice-president for Europe (the office in Paris was subordinate to the Foundation’s head office in Manhattan). Fosdick and his staff could recommend where the Foundation worked and what it did – but if the Board wished, it could reject those recommendations. And sometimes it did.

As the summer of 1938 ended, Parisians returned home from holiday feeling hopeful. In early October 1938, Parisians lined Premier Daladier’s homecoming route from le Bourget to the War Office, celebrating news of the peace agreement negotiated in Munich with Hitler. Carroll may have felt reassured; her husband was not convinced. The streets of Paris appeared peaceful enough. London had made preparations for air raids, but Paris

In September 1938 the Munich settlement gave Hitler most of what he wanted including the western areas of Czechoslovakia which Hitler claimed were ethnically German. Prime Minister Chamberlain tried to persuade Hitler to modify his demands; then after mobilisation of the British fleet Hitler invited Chamberlain and Daladier - the French Premier - to Munich for talks which culminated in an agreement. Some saw this as a triumph for peace; others saw it as a betrayal of the Czechs and a fatal surrender to Hitler.
had done little more than bring in sandbags. Parisians still lingered in the afternoon sunshine, smoking Gauloises and drinking coffee on café terraces. But behind the scenes the threat of war was real enough that in just three days the government had moved 2.5 million troops to the Franco-German border and the American embassy had laid in stocks of gasoline, food, cars and supplies to serve the 14,000 Americans in Paris. Two cruisers waited at Brest to evacuate American nationals. But every time war came closer, the seesaw tipped again from pessimism to optimism – and then back again.

4 Flanner 2009: p. 233
Meanwhile in New York, Fosdick, a close confidante of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (JDR, Jr.), was growing concerned about events unfolding in Europe. The assurances of Chamberlain in England, Daladier in France and Roosevelt at home that peace would prevail were not enough to end Fosdick’s worries. It seemed like only yesterday that Fosdick and his friends had fought in World War I; since then he had used his considerable public influence to press the cause of peace.

From a Baptist family of modest means, when Fosdick was offered a place at Princeton his mother promised that she would somehow find the money to fund his studies. Not long after Fosdick took up the place his mother died and Fosdick records often going hungry during his time at Princeton. In his first few days at Princeton Fosdick met Woodrow Wilson and was inspired by Wilson’s belief that public opinion and the conscience of mankind could be harnessed for the good of the world. This became one of Fosdick’s guiding beliefs in all he did.

Moving from Princeton to New York Law School, Fosdick lived and worked on the Lower East Side at the Henry Street Settlement; later he took a summer job with the City of New York Government and became involved in investigating and prosecuting fraud and corruption within government and the police. Sitting on a special grand jury in Manhattan, Fosdick met JDR, Jr., who asked Fosdick to make a study of police organisations in Europe. In 1913 Fosdick and his wife sailed for Europe to begin the investigation. After serving in the First World War (1914 – 1918), Fosdick returned to New York in May 1919. Two days later Fosdick was asked by President Wilson to become Under Secretary General in the embryonic League of Nations then based in London. Reluctant to leave his
young family yet again, Fosdick nevertheless sailed for London.

In late summer 1919 Fosdick made clear his views on peace in a letter home describing the recent Victory Parade: "They called it a Victory Parade but it was the saddest thing I have ever seen because it was really a funeral march for 50 million Allied soldiers who are buried on the Continent."\(^1\)

In mid-October 1919, on a visit to Washington, Fosdick realised both the level of Senate opposition to the League of Nations and the seriousness of Wilson’s illness. Tormented by fears of the failure of the League of Nations, Fosdick wrote: “Those dreadful memories of dead men hanging on barbed wire won’t let me sleep. Must this thing happen again?”\(^2\) Now Fosdick, as president of the Rockefeller Foundation, was facing the prospect of yet another war.

The Foundation’s principles and practices had stood the test of time pretty well, but Fosdick knew they would be severely challenged by war. Governments would have little time or money for much other than defense. The Board would inevitably ask what the Foundation could realistically do without government support. The Foundation had active projects throughout the world, but the work in Europe was some of its most important. The very best brains and research were in European universities. Of the 100 Nobel Prizes awarded between 1901 (when they began) and 1932 (the year before Hitler came to power), close to one-third went to Germans or scientists working in Germany, 18 to Britain and only six to the US.\(^3\)

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1 Fosdick 1958: p. 205
2 Ibid: p. 209
3 Medawar and Pike 2001: p. 3
If war came yet again, Fosdick was determined that the Foundation would not succumb to the easy and obvious pressure to provide short-term help. In 1914 when the First World War began, the Foundation was barely a year old. In just five years between 1914 and 1919 it had spent more than $22 million on “charitable relief”, chartering ships and loading them with food for the starving people of Belgium, creating commissions of inquiry and sending supplies to countries like Poland, Albania, Serbia, Syria, Armenia and Montenegro. It gave thousands of dollars to organisations that contributed to the health and morale of the troops, to demonstration hospital units and to prisoners of war.

Sitting in his office in Manhattan, Fosdick began to list the likely pressures. First, and quite separate from the question of war, were the questions already being raised about the Paris office. The Board wanted to find ways of cutting costs; they were becoming uncomfortable about the use of the capital funds to subsidise low investment income. Closing the Paris office would be, in many ways, a quick solution. And it was appealing to some of the younger members of the Rockefeller family, including Nelson, who saw exciting opportunities to promote education and health closer to home in Latin America.

On the other hand, JDR had always been very fond of Europe and regarded the family’s European visits as an essential part of his children’s education. After the First World War, JDR, Jr., had personally given over $3 million for the restoration of the Versailles and Trianon palaces, Reims Cathedral and the chateau of Fontainebleau. The Foundation’s spending in Europe was not mere sentimental snobbery, however. It funded research and teaching in European universities, including Oxford, Cambridge and the Sorbonne, because they were the best in the world.

But it was also true that things were beginning to change. The world was beginning to look less to Europe and more to the emerging power of the US. Many Americans would no doubt have been perfectly happy to see the
Foundation pack up and leave Europe. Only the year prior, after Fosdick had commented publicly on the barriers to research presented by totalitarian states, the Baltimore Evening Sun immediately asked: “If the Foundation cannot work in parts of Europe, why not concentrate effort and money on Americans?” Fosdick’s letters and diaries suggest he feared that this was but a small warning of pressures to come.

Feelings were running high in the US against any involvement in another senseless war in Europe. Charles Lindbergh, the famous aviator and arch isolationist, regularly reminded people that Hitler was not threatening US shores and that the real threat was not Fascism but Bolshevism. In the last few years Congress had passed a series of neutrality acts designed to avoid the mistakes of the past. Truth be told, as Fosdick knew, the US simply did not have the forces and the material to go to war; in any case, the US saw no reason to get involved.

But the drums of war were beating nonetheless. Fosdick thought back to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s (FDR) passionate re-election speech just two years ago: “I have seen blood running from the wounded. I have seen men coughing out their gassed lungs. I have seen the dead in the mud. I have seen cities destroyed...I have seen children starving. I have seen the agony of mothers and wives. I hate war.” Now FDR was proposing war readiness measures while at the same time assuring the American public that he would not send American boys to war in Europe.

As long as America remained neutral, the Foundation — as an American organisation — must also remain neutral. But for Fosdick, it was more than that. It was his conviction that the Foundation must never be embroiled in politics
Neutrality wasn’t just about not taking sides. It also meant not directly or indirectly subsidising any political agenda – especially one that was destructive. Fosdick had already had a spat with the Trustees about this. Just a few years ago in 1933 he had written a furious letter to the Foundation's Executive Committee complaining about a $50,000 award they had granted to the Science Advisory Board for Naval Research under Admiral Standley. Fosdick wrote: “The funds of the Rockefeller Foundation are dedicated to the welfare of mankind throughout the world. They are not dedicated to destructive purposes of any kind, directly or indirectly. They certainly are not dedicated to help the United States in a race for naval supremacy. If...any part of our fund is employed to make more efficient the machinery by which civilisation will reach its final cataclysm, it is, to my way of thinking, a betrayal of the high purpose for which the fund was created. This is strong language but with the crisis that is confronting the world at this moment, it seems to me the time for strong language has come.”

Neutrality was one thing; helping people in a time of need was quite another. With the spectre of war looming, the Foundation might have to make some gesture – a donation to the Red Cross, perhaps. But Fosdick was convinced that providing relief, food for the starving and blankets for the homeless – while admirable – was not what the Foundation was best equipped to do. If the Foundation was going to do...
something, Fosdick wanted it to be something that took full advantage of the Foundation’s knowledge, networks and independence. This, Fosdick knew, would certainly be the view of Gunn and his staff at the Paris office.

Fosdick continued to wrestle with the problem. Surely, he thought, the Foundation could not simply abandon Europe if the worst happened. But it was difficult to see an alternative. He was responsible for the safety of the staff, and they clearly would not be safe in Europe if war were declared.

Already, as people were called up for military training in England, the Foundation was beginning to see the practical effects of impending war. Military service was a disaster for universities’ income from student fees, and there was a real danger that some would have to close down. The Foundation had already given the London School of Economics a substantial sum to help it survive without income from student fees. The Foundation’s fellowship programmes were suffering too; men were simply not available to take up Foundation fellowships and, if war came, those not drafted would be quickly snapped up by governments in need of the best brains around for war work.

If continuing research and fellowships were not practical, maybe the Foundation could do more to help scholars leave Europe and come to the US — especially those who had been dismissed from their posts. Fosdick knew only too well the potential practical and moral objections to that idea. The thorny logistics involved not only getting such people out of Europe, but getting them in to the US. In July the US had brought together representatives from 31 countries at Evian-les-Bains on the shores of Lake Geneva in the hope that homes could be
found for the growing number of Jewish refugees. Every nation, including the US, considered its existing immigration quotas sufficiently generous and no nation was willing to receive “penniless Jews.”

The moral issues would be considerable too – how would the Foundation decide who to help and who to ignore? If it stayed true to its mission of advancing knowledge for the benefit of mankind, presumably only the best scholars would be chosen. But, some argued, would you then need to distinguish between those who were older (with little left to give) and those with a long career ahead?

At recent meetings in New York and Paris, the staff had talked through some of the wider day-to-day practicalities. If war came, movement of money would be restricted, and communications and travel would be difficult. The situation would be too uncertain, too unstable, to make sensible decisions; and sources and channels of information would be unreliable. No one proposed a clear way forward that was acceptable to all. For some New York-based staff, the simplest answer was to leave Europe – the last, and worst, option for the staff in Paris. Finally, Fosdick knew, he would have to face questions from the Foundation Board, some of the most astute and powerful men in the US, such as Winthrop W. Aldrich, chairman of Chase National Bank; Julius Rosenwald, chairman of Sears Roebuck; and Arthur Hays Sulzberger, publisher of The New York Times. How, they would ask, could the Foundation continue working in countries where funding partners have dried up? How could the Foundation accomplish its goals in places where governments were unable and unwilling to give any guarantees of continuing work? Whatever Fosdick decided to recommend, he knew that his arguments would have to be clear and powerful.

7 Baker 2010: p. 88
While Fosdick wrestled with the options from the safety of New York, Gunn and his staff had more immediate anxieties. Despite diversions such as the Ballets Russes de Diaghilev exhibition at the Louvre, the Paris staff began to feel anxious. The Foundation’s office on rue de la Baume received a steady stream of visitors from all over Europe as scientists and scholars became more and more concerned about their future.

Pat O’Brien was Gunn’s closest ally in the Foundation’s battle to stay in Europe. A larger-than-life Irishman from Torrington, Connecticut, Daniel Patrick O’Brien, known as Pat, had trained and practiced as a physician before joining Admiral Richard E. Byrd’s 1926 expedition to the North Pole. In 1926/7 he joined the medical education division at the Rockefeller Foundation, travelling widely throughout Europe from his base at the Paris office. Living and working in Paris also allowed O’Brien to engage in one of his great joys in life: the city’s world-class wining and dining.

Tall, sandy-haired and well-built with striking blue eyes, O’Brien is one character in this story about which little is known, but he was one of the Foundation’s most socially and politically perceptive employees and an engaging diary writer (all officers were required to keep diaries). Known as a generous host, O’Brien was notorious for forgetting to put in expense claims for his extravagant wining and dining. But he wasn’t just eating
and drinking in his spare time. During the wartime bombing raids, O’Brien served as a night-time volunteer in a London hospital. On one occasion a nearby blast knocked him off his feet in the middle of surgery, but he picked himself up and continued the operation.

In the Foundation’s office on rue de la Baume in the fashionable 8th arrondissement, Gunn and O’Brien had spent hours discussing how to respond to the possibility of the Paris office being closed. With its heavy furniture, large desks and comfortable leather armchairs, the office exuded an aura of cool and calm. O’Brien and Gunn agreed that the Foundation must stay in Europe: the research in pure and applied science they were supporting was simply too important to let go, and they both knew it was the sort of work that governments would not be disposed to continue funding when more pressing concerns arose. Without independent funding it was likely that many university laboratories would simply shut down. The research on penicillin, on vitamins, on vaccines; the medical and public health education work; the work in the social sciences on international relations and on economics – all would become more, not less, important if war broke out in Europe.

If the Paris office closed, the Foundation would be starved of reliable information about issues, needs and people. Gunn, O’Brien and their colleagues had extensive networks in the academic communities, among policy makers and leading practitioners. Without these networks and up-to-date knowledge, it would be impossible to make sound decisions.
on the ground were essential in ensuring proper use of Foundation money. Furthermore, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to rebuild the Foundation networks again after the war ended.

More fundamentally, perhaps this was exactly the time for the Foundation to do what governments were unable or unwilling to do. This was a time to show the unique strengths of independent foundations – not a time to run to safety. Fosdick was fond of reminding staff that the Foundation must always be neutral. Surely this was just the time to demonstrate that the Foundation was above politics and could and would stand steady, continuing its pursuit of knowledge for the welfare of mankind regardless of flags or boundary lines. This was about more and less than money. It was about the basic values and principles of the Foundation.

Gunn and O'Brien walked along rue de la Baume for O'Brien's favorite pastime: lunch. The Hotel Royal Fromentin’s Art Deco splendor and excellent food and wines never failed to please. Over a long lunch Gunn and O'Brien considered who in the New York office might support them. Fosdick, as president, was in a difficult position, caught between staff and Trustees. Alan Gregg, director of
the Medical Division, was an influential figure within the Foundation, widely respected and known to speak out about his principles. Gregg had been head of the Paris office for seven years before being summoned to his position in New York. Apart from his links with Paris and the people with whom the office worked, Gregg was known to believe that brilliant scholars – not just institutions – were fundamental to the achievement of the Foundation’s goals. That belief might encourage Gregg to favour continuing support to the many brilliant scholars in Europe. But in other ways Gregg was hard to read; unlike Gunn, Carroll and O’Brien, Gregg and his wife, Eleanor, were a very private couple and rarely entertained. George Strode, part of the International Health Division, and another ex-Paris office member, could probably be relied upon too. But the truth was that the majority of the staff in New York might not understand, or want to acknowledge, the value of staying in Europe.

Gunn and O’Brien knew only too well the stark contrasts in perception of news and views in New York and Europe. Those differences were underlined in November by reactions to the dreadful night of Kristallnacht, when the Nazis smashed the properties and possessions of Jewish people in Berlin and other
cities, blanketing the streets with broken glass. The next day The New York Times headline had read: “Nazis Smash, Loot and Burn Jewish Shops and Temples Until Goebbels Calls Halt.” The Times of London wrote: “No foreign propagandist bent upon blackening Germany before the world could outdo the tale of burnings and beatings, of blackguardly assaults on defenceless and innocent people which disgraced that country today.” Paul Joseph Goebbels, a German politician and Reich Minister of Propaganda, might have been a hero in New York but he was not one in London.

**THE WAR DRUMS BEAT**

In March 1939 German troops moved to invade Czechoslovakia, and the Spanish civil war ended with General Franco established in Madrid. In May Germany and Italy signed "The Pact of Steel" agreeing to defend each other’s interests. The American Embassy’s preparations for departure from Paris must have further unnerved Gunn.

Instead of closing the office altogether, Gunn and O'Brien decided to move the staff out of Paris. A move away from Paris would protect the staff and the Foundation’s office records to which, following JDR’s example, it attached huge importance. A move out of Paris might also pre-empt any calls from New York to close the office and come home.

Unfortunately, Gunn soon discovered, many other major organisations were thinking along the same lines, and finding a location outside Paris, but close enough to stay in touch, was not easy. Eventually the pair found a large house in La Baule, a fashionable seaside resort on the southern Brittany coast. La
Baule had a lot to recommend it, including a seven kilometre sandy beach backed by pine trees, chic shops, restaurants, tennis and golf clubs. It was a reasonable distance from Paris, and, most importantly, it had a big house available to rent. Ker Aimable was big enough (it could accommodate 20 people at a stretch), but it had no central heating. As the coldest winter in Europe for decades drew on, this proved to be an uncomfortable oversight.

Finding a house was only the first step. Paris was full of organisations seeking transport, drivers and gasoline to escape to a place of greater safety. Gunn set about trying to rent a couple of trucks. Impossible. As war loomed ever closer, transport became more and more difficult to find. Gunn decided to buy two trucks and hoped to sell them, in theory at no loss, when the job was done. Getting the trucks was one thing; drivers and fuel were quite another. To make matters worse, as the situation deteriorated, the French government threatened to requisition all vehicles.

At last the Foundation acquired a stock of gasoline, thanks to the somewhat mysterious powers of Gunn’s multilingual assistant Alexander Makinsky. Makinsky, Persian by birth, was a refugee from the Russian revolution and married to a Georgian princess. (How he became associated with the Foundation is unclear; personnel files are closed to researchers). Having acquired the gasoline, Makinsky then had a clever idea; some of the gasoline should be stored in Paris and some hidden, for emergency use, in the garden of Roland Letort, the Paris-based finance officer, at Alencon halfway between Paris and La Baule. Over a year later Makinsky’s clever idea proved to be of enormous consequence.

All private cars were to be requisitioned, but by early May 1939, after a few phone calls, Gunn had successfully used his networks in the French government to get six staff cars exempted. They now had cars to transport staff and their luggage, as well as trucks and sufficient gasoline to make several trips between
Paris and La Baule, hauling furniture, files and office equipment. Gas masks were issued and staff instructed on their use.

At the beginning of August 1939, Gunn was feeling more optimistic. He and Carroll had made regular visits to La Baule in preparation for the move. The sea air had done him good and it was a beautiful summer. The situation looked serious, but he and O’Brien agreed that it was unlikely that war was imminent. Life in Paris seemed so, well, normal. Staff continued to have meetings with scholars and government officials; funding requests were considered; reports on works-in-progress read. Anxious grantees were reassured that their funding would not be terminated.

Then the situation deteriorated rapidly. On August 23, 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union signed a non-aggression pact and agreed to carve Poland in half. On August 24, President Roosevelt sent a personal appeal to Hitler, asking him to address the Polish issue through diplomatic channels. On August 26, 1939, Janet Flanner, The New Yorker correspondent in Paris, reported that for the last three anxious days everyone prepared for war; Parisians remain calm, she noted, “maintenant nous avons l’habitude – we’ve had March 1938, had last September, now we have August.”

A date for the Foundation’s move was fixed, and everything was almost ready. Then a friend in the French government warned Gunn that they had no time to delay: the Foundation’s vehicles would be requisitioned the next day. At Gare de l’Est thousands of soldiers were leaving for the northern front. On the afternoon of September 1, 1939, Gunn wrote to Fosdick that the news was

8 Flanner 2009: p. 269
“very very serious” and told him that all staff going to La Baule would sleep out of Paris that night. That evening Hitler invaded Poland. On September 5 Britain and France declared war on Germany. America remained neutral.
Chapter 3
Numbed, Stunned and Divided

THE BATTLES BEGIN

On September 3, 1939 Britain and France declared war on Germany. That same day Gunn and his staff were getting settled into the offices in La Baule. A growing stream of grant holders were desperate for help and advice. Between La Baule and the skeleton staff left in Paris they tried to cope, reassuring grantees that the Foundation would do what it could to help.

The staff at La Baule were constantly busy. Purchase of blackout curtains was high on the priority list, along with the need to vaccinate staff against typhoid and smallpox in preparation for the effects of the likely refugee influx. Grantees were wanting grant instalments to be paid immediately. Every day the war felt closer and more real. On September 8 the French government announced that all incoming mail would be censored.

In Paris there were few taxis and buses, Metro trains were infrequent and the mail and telephone restricted and unreliable. In August, Carmel Snow of Harper’s Bazaar, in Paris for the summer collections, had written: “The city had become, almost overnight, an empty city. The taxis disappeared. All the telephones were cut off. You could walk for miles without seeing a child. Even the dogs – and you know how Parisians love their dogs – have been sent away.”

Now, in September, the nightly bombing alerts were making it very difficult to sleep and the Paris office changed its hours to give staff a little more rest.

Then Gunn received a coded cable from Fosdick ordering cancellation of all appointments and sailings of research fellows from Europe to America and vice versa. Was this the first step towards leaving Europe, Gunn asked himself.

1 Quoted in Dwight 2002: p. 59
A few days later a letter from Fosdick arrived. Of course, Fosdick wrote, they were prepared for the news of declaration of war but when it finally came everyone was “numbed and stunned.” Fosdick’s pain and despair were clear: “Two major wars in a single life-time are too much, and I am not all sure that the human nervous system was built to withstand the impact of calamity such as this generation has had to undergo.”

Fosdick had reluctantly accepted the need for staff to leave Paris but it was clear to Gunn that New York saw the move to La Baule as only temporary; staff needed to be brought home or sent elsewhere. Gunn, O’Brien, Makinsky and their colleagues had other ideas: they were not moving, their work was in Europe, now more than ever. What they needed were some compelling proposals for continuing work in Europe.

The staff in France agreed that the Foundation should not do “relief”, its job was to conserve and support independent thinking and research. The danger, Gunn knew, was that all laboratories and research would be taken over for war-related activities making the Foundation’s role in supporting independent research both more important and more difficult. Their plans were unclear, but maybe with everything changing so fast this was a time to live from day to day seizing whatever opportunities they could. Gunn knew that this somewhat vague formulation would probably not play well with Fosdick. The Board liked plans and clarity. But to rush into decisions when all around was uncertain seemed wrong too. At the least the Foundation could try to preserve the research investments it had already made – and maybe it might also play a

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2 Fosdick to Gunn, September 7, 1939: 105, 14, 700, RG 1.1
The atmosphere at the hastily arranged staff conference in New York was tense in a room thick with cigarette smoke. The New York-based staff were anxious and uncertain. One person asked what the Foundation would do when, and if, the US entered the war; another asked what the Foundation would do when the war ended. Perhaps, someone suggested, the Foundation’s most effective work could be in reconstruction after the war, and maybe resources should be saved for that time. On the other hand, maybe the greatest need would be for more resources for a health programme in Europe – the effect of war on the health of the civilian population would surely be massive. Or maybe staff should be brought out of Europe and put to better use in the US and South America. Suggestions, doubts, worries came thick and fast. The one thing on which all agreed was that everyone on a Foundation fellowship must return home and all future fellowship exchanges be cancelled. That was the only responsible course of action.

That night Fosdick went back to the notes he had made just months ago in what now felt like a different world. Again Fosdick came back to the need to avoid getting drawn into providing relief. The Foundation’s job, he decided, was twofold: “First, in a dark world to keep burning the candle of intellectual life; and second, to make available the best of scientific research in the alleviation of human misery. This...in the long run (is) a more practicable service for us to render than to try to feed a Belgium or a Poland.” For now, he decided, he would try to maintain “business as usual” - little realising the serious difficulties this would later
create for the Foundation.

Back in France, Gunn and O’Brien continued to think about the Foundation’s role. The Foundation had a vast range of important, knowledgeable, influential contacts, a foot in many doors and a freedom to do and say what governments would find it very difficult to do and say in time of war. The Foundation could, for example, talk, or at least think, about peace – something a government of a country at war could not publicly discuss lest this be seen as defeatism or appeasement. O’Brien stressed the likely new health problems; typhus brought about by overcrowding and poor living conditions were likely to increase and a new flu pandemic, a major killer of the last war, was probable. The Foundation had huge experience in these areas and could contribute something of real value. But could they persuade colleagues and the Board in New York?

Gunn and O’Brien knew that it was impossible for staff in New York to understand the realities of life in France. Europe was a long way away. In addition, relations between Britain and America had been rather less than “special” ever since Woodrow Wilson’s dream of a League of Nations had been voted down by the US Senate in 1919 – 1920. This ”betrayal” of the League had annoyed Britain and added to the growing friction over trade and American expansion requiring raw materials from the British Empire. To make matters worse, the US
Navy wanted equality with Britain – something Winston Churchill vehemently opposed. In the 1930's relationships had deteriorated further as, after the Wall Street crash, American investors took their money out of Europe deepening the depression there. Trade barriers created other barriers and a blame game took hold: the Depression was the result of Europe failing to pay its First World War debts; the last war had been a huge mistake, and so on.⁴

Certainly many Americans, and perhaps some of the New York Trustees and staff, agreed with the American hero Lindbergh: “The destiny of this country does not call for our involvement in European wars...One need only glance at a map to see where our true frontiers lie. What more could we ask than the Atlantic Ocean on the East and the Pacific on the West?”⁵

Gunn was relieved that Fosdick was willing, at least, to give them a chance. But Gunn also knew that Fosdick was very far from convinced of the need to stay. He also knew that work in Europe was only viable if staff could travel around and there was open communication within Europe, as well as between Europe and the US, but the reality was that both were likely to be very restricted.

**DAILY STRUGGLES**

At this stage travel was possible, but very difficult. A plethora of passes was necessary – a permis de circulation for a car and its driver and a sauf-conduit for each individual; the former was valid for three months, the latter only for each journey. In addition to the passes, there were major problems getting a car and gasoline. Use of the telephone

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⁴ Reynolds 2007: p. 8
⁵ Quoted in Traynor 2001: p. 151
was limited and conversation in English forbidden without official permission. Cable communication between France and New York was regular but slow, and letter mail was running about one month late.\(^6\)

Every day in La Baule revealed new "essentials" left behind in the Paris office and impossible to replace in La Baule - an English-French dictionary, an atlas, a pair of eyeglasses, and a pencil sharpener. Could they really do any useful work under these conditions? And how long would Fosdick and the Board tolerate the unreliable communication? Gunn's only good news was that Laugier, a grantee and friend of the Foundation and its staff, was made Directeur de Cabinet to the Minister of National Education. Laugier helped to prevent the Foundation's Paris office being requisitioned, and, as if not more important, helped to arrange permis de circulation for Foundation staff enabling them to travel from La Baule to Paris and certain other parts of France.

September 1939 was filled with securing permits, making travel arrangements for family members and grantees wanting to return to the US or their home countries, obtaining visas, getting permission to make telephone calls, finding office equipment, getting mail, arranging banking and exchange facilities, and so on.

The rest of September 1939 was filled with securing permits, making travel arrangements for family members and grantees wanting to return to the US or their home countries, obtaining visas, getting permission to make telephone calls, finding office equipment, getting mail, arranging banking and exchange facilities, and so on. One important task was to get the Foundation classified as an organisation d'utilité publique which allowed various travel and gasoline coupon privileges. Then Makinsky exercised his mysterious powers and arranged to obtain passeports diplomatiques for staff to circumvent some of the travel difficulties.

\(^6\) Trustee Bulletin, October 1939
In the midst of these major events and upheavals, little things came to assume added significance. For some staff one of the “little” things was the lack of foreign cigarettes. Item 13 in a memo of a phone call on September 28, 1939 stated: “As it is not possible for the moment to purchase foreign cigarettes at La Baule, Nantes and/or vicinity, we request AM to send over...a supply of the following cigarettes: Chesterfield, Camels, Lucky Strike, Philip Morris. AM says that you can get in Paris as many as you want.”

Gunn was working hard to remain cheerful, encouraged by O’Brien. Like Gunn, O’Brien was determined that the Foundation would not give up on Europe in its time of greatest need. But like his colleagues in France and New York, O’Brien was still searching for the Foundation’s most useful role.

O’Brien was pleased to hear from Laugier at the Ministry of Education that, unlike in the last war when France lost most of its leading scientists, this time every effort would be made to continue scientific research and to protect scientists (from the draft) for research and teaching. This news would be important in persuading Fosdick and the Board that the Foundation’s work in Europe could continue.

Laugier also emphasised to O’Brien the importance of the Foundation’s continued presence. What really matters, Laugier said, was not so much the Foundation’s money but its continued presence as a gesture of confidence and solidarity. He saw the Foundation as having made a solid contribution demonstrating unique “objectivity of purpose and of leadership in scientific thought and in scientific education.” The present emergency had clearly shown that the French scientific and intellectual community, and others, are “looking in these difficult times to intelligent leadership, to objectivity in international problems, not only on health but also on social measures.”

7 Office memo: 105, 14, 700, RG 1.1
For the Foundation to leave Europe at this time, Laugier concluded, would be “an international disaster.” Just in case, Gunn or the New York office thought this an exaggeration, O’Brien noted that this view was said to be shared by influential and informed others, including the international journalist William Bird and Malcolm Davis of the Carnegie Peace Foundation.  

It was perhaps as well that Fosdick did not fully understand the realities of travel in Europe at this time. On one journey from Paris to London and back, O’Brien made the Channel crossing in a small ferryboat with 100 passengers all required to wear life jackets; the crossing took two hours and 15 minutes and had no convoy. In France, customs officials challenged the amount of money O’Brien was carrying; he explained that the money was for Foundation emergency needs and was allowed to proceed. Customs procedures on entering the UK were perfunctory but a visa was required from the British Passport Bureau to return to France. The queue was so long that O’Brien hired a man to stand in line for him from 9:30am - 5:30pm. There was a smaller queue at the French Consulate but filling in three forms complete with six photographs occupied more than a morning. The railway journey from London to Cambridge took twice the usual amount of time. On leaving Britain O’Brien had all but £10 of his money confiscated (with a receipt for the balance to reclaim from the Treasury Department) and the entire contents of his briefcase and coat pockets taken from him and placed in sealed envelopes for censorship and later returned to the Paris Office.

While in London, O’Brien visited Ed Murrow. He was the rising star of CBS

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8 Letter O’Brien to Gunn, September 16, 1939: ibid
radio broadcasting, then based at the BBC, whose reports from London later became broadcasting classics and were said to be hugely influential in turning US public opinion in favour of helping Europe. O’Brien had agreed to get Murrow’s views on needs in Europe on behalf of Marshall in the Foundation’s Humanities division. Murrow made various suggestions including the need for a study of the “present probable liquidation of the middle class in England, which is likely to occur because of the increasingly heavy taxation.”

9 O’Brien memo, October 3, 1939: 111, 15, 700, 1.1
Chapter 4
The Widening Rift

The Rockefeller Foundation was used to being able to get, or buy, whatever it needed and in late 1939 the New York office wanted, above all, hard information – but in 1939 that was an elusive commodity. Gregg in New York tried to give the Trustees some facts to hang on to, asking O’Brien for a list of Foundation funded projects that would not go ahead, those that would and those that might. Gregg was clearly inclined to support Gunn and O’Brien in their desire to stay in Europe: “My feeling is for staying as steady and dependable as we can for all projects not manifestly crippled or disorganised. It would be a poor performance for us to be more apprehensive than the recipients…”

Gregg’s key question was: what can the foundation do that others cannot? His own answer was: stay steady and dependable and above all focus on the post-war period – the period other organisations will not have the time or dare to talk about. But “staying steady” and focusing on the post-war period were not alone going to be enough to save the office in Europe. “Staying steady” and thinking about peace could just as well be done from New York. The problem, Gregg knew, was how to persuade the Board, New York officers and European officers to think in the same way when their experiences and exposure to the real issues in Europe “are so considerably and elusively different.” The difference between the everyday life of the wealthy Foundation Trustees and senior staff in New York, and that of the staff in Europe, was vividly illustrated by Lady Diana Cooper. Actress, writer, socialite and stunning beauty, Lady Diana Cooper arrived in New York in late October 1939 with her husband Duff on a lecture tour. Duff Cooper had resigned from the British government in 1938 as a protest following the Munich agreement (or as some saw it

1 Gregg memo, October 3, 1939
“appeasement”). Lady Diana described the gulf between the two worlds: “Mr and Mrs William Paley were the first to welcome us... Together they lived in a Colonial house on Long Island. The luxury taste slightly depresses me. The standard is unattainable for us tradition-ridden tired Europeans. There was nothing ugly, work or make-shift; brief and exquisite meals, a little first-class wine, one snorting cocktail. Servants were invisible, yet one was always tended... A little table in your bedroom was laid, as for a nuptial night, with fine lawn, plates, forks and a pyramid of choice-bloomed peaches, figs and grapes. In the bedroom were all aids to sleep, masks for open eyes, soothing unguents and potions...

It was difficult to be in New York in those early war days (labelled “Phoney” to one’s superstitious horror). The change back to normality was too sudden. I felt ashamed of everything, ashamed of some scrimshank English people pretending nostalgia for home, ashamed of the “Keep out of it” attitude of many highly intelligent Americans, although sympathising with them full-heartedly. News was plentiful and splendidly biased, though presented in small grey print. It told chiefly, I remember, of bitter hatred of Germany, and of how London and all England would be stormed.”

The chasm between the New York staff and Gunn and his colleagues grew as the reality of the war began to take hold. For the New York staff Europe was just “a region” much like any other region in which the Foundation worked. For the staff based in Paris, Europe was a second home; grant holders were not names and numbers on a docket but real people with whom they had shared discussions and dinners. For the New York staff the war was far away, abstract, probably un-winnable, and nothing to do with America.

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2 Cooper 1960: p. 15-16
For the Paris-based staff war was here, it was now – and it had to be won. The widening “chasm” between the New York and Europe-based staff was the chasm between Churchill and Roosevelt, between Britain and America, writ small. In September Roosevelt acknowledged the tension in his fireside chat. The US, he said, “will remain a neutral nation...(but) I cannot ask that every American remain neutral in thought...Even a neutral cannot be asked to close his mind or close his conscience.” But neutrality was one of the Foundation’s fundamental principles and Fosdick increasingly emphasised to Gunn and his staff that they must be, and be seen to be, neutral in everything they did.

The letters and cables continued erratically and unreliably. Gunn continued to argue that the Foundation had a long history of work in Europe, wide-ranging and influential contacts, an ability to open doors and make contacts, and a moral responsibility to stay put. But they had to come up with a programme that would persuade Fosdick and the Trustees that the Foundation could play a positive, constructive role.

Kittredge, with the social science division in Europe, suggested new activities related to problems growing directly out of the war and of preparation for an eventual peace. The Foundation might encourage relationships and exchange of information between groups in different countries thinking about peace. This was something other bodies, such as governments, would find impossible, and a task for which the Foundation already had knowledge and networks.

Warren, from the medical science division, emphasised the likely health needs but also pointed out that if governments were not going to pay their share of the costs of various programmes the Foundation would have to put up a much larger proportion of the funds needed. The Foundation’s relationship with

3 Quoted in Traynor 2001: p. 151
4 Letter Gunn to Fosdick, September 14, 1939: 105, 14, 700, RG 1.1
governments was going to change - whatever the Foundation’s own desires or intentions.⁵

O’Brien tried to move matters forward by setting out a “rational assessment” of the case for and against maintaining an office in Europe. Against keeping the office open he noted: war in general does not encourage sound, long-term research and calm, reflective judgement; countries at war are more likely to spend money on defence than on research; and, a large number of research workers have been called up. In favour of keeping the office open, he argued that: the last war showed the colossal but partly avoidable loss of men in the early stage of medical science training; leaving Europe would have an “unfortunate psychological effect” among leaders in science; it would be difficult to pick up the threads and recreate networks after the war if they were cut now; new younger people will be coming to the fore in administration and scientific posts and familiarity with those people will be a sound investment for the future. Furthermore, “Few, if any, organisations have the background and the knowledge of important scientific minds in Europe which the Foundation possesses”; the Foundation had already put large amounts of time and money into Europe, could it now “find ways of saving the heavy investment which the Foundation and other organisations have made in the scientific brains of various nations?” Finally, O’Brien argued, there may be new needs and opportunities (generated by war) such as work on war psychoses, brain surgery, and the effects of nutrition on the nervous system.⁶

⁵ Warren memo: 105, 14, 700, RG 1.1
⁶ O’Brien to Gunn, September 13, 1939: 105, 14, 700, RG 1.1
Unfortunately this cogent analysis of the pros and cons of maintaining the office – and work – in Europe coincided with the beginning of new and major cable problems between New York and La Baule. Fosdick again insisted that the European office had to move: the New York, Paris, La Baule triangle was clearly, he said, not working. Meanwhile the European staff were becoming more and more aware of the needs generated by war as they started receiving a deluge of requests for pieces of equipment from labs starved of funds by governments spending all their resources on defence. The Foundation generally did not fund those things for which a government had a responsibility, or might be expected, to pay. To “stand in” for government would obviously be a dangerously slippery slope. But these were not normal times, and without equipment scientific research could not continue. Gunn consulted New York for a statement of policy.

Meanwhile the European staff were becoming more and more aware of the needs generated by war as they started receiving a deluge of requests for pieces of equipment from labs starved of funds by governments spending all their resources on defence.

Fosdick proposed keeping a skeleton Paris office under Makinsky and to maintain contact with Europe via O’Brien and Miller who would be stationed there. The La Baule office should be disbanded, and some older staff who

Communication problems continued. Letters were crossing in the post. Gunn received a letter from Fosdick suggesting a misunderstanding (or perhaps a change of heart on the part of the New York office). Fosdick now said that there was no debate about whether to maintain the European programme. The issue was only whether the programme was best administered from La Baule or New York. New York, Fosdick argued, was nearer the different points of Europe than La Baule and had a better overview than any belligerent country could have.
had been with the Foundation for decades let go because they would not be wanted after the war. Among other things, Fosdick was clearly disturbed by the news that 270 labs in France had been requisitioned by government for work relating to national defence: “This kind of research is (not) anything the Foundation can have relations with. This frankly isn’t our business.” The Foundation, Fosdick stated, would have to confine its work in countries where “the scientific tradition is preserved.” For Fosdick one of the underlying issues was that if governments were not going to pay their share of the costs of research: “Is Foundation money going to take the place of money that is now being diverted for bombs and planes? Are we prepared to recommend to the Trustees a sort of blank check arrangement by which, in relation to our old interests, the Foundation steps in as governments step out? I doubt it very much...We may have to come to the brutal decision that in a continent that is changing as fast as Europe is, it is time to let the old investments go - and charge them up to profit and loss.”

For the Europe based staff their work and relationships in Europe were very certainly not going to be charged to profit and loss without a fight.

Gregg continued to press O’Brien on “what financial assistance or moral support is it worthwhile tossing into a sort of kaleidoscopic maelstrom?” O’Brien agreed that this question was “a fair one”, but “what it does, I believe, is throw certain serious responsibility on RF officers for display not only of courage and leadership but also of experience and ability to interpret facts correctly. If the actual experience of the officers is worth what I think it is, I should think that the Foundation is in a better position

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7   Fosdick to Gunn, October 3, 1939: 105, 14, 700, RG 1.1
8   Ibid
9   O’Brien reply to Gregg: 108, 15, 700, R.G.1.1
than any organisation I know to get on with experiments which they can pluck from the kaleidoscope or rapidly changing picture, put into motion and back up adequately to satisfactory conclusion one way or the other. Prohibitions, inhibitions, cautions and hesitancies are certainly not going to help and are more likely to hinder. If I were asked for one outstanding criticism of the officers of the Foundation in Europe, it would be that their training in the past has put them in a state of hyper-protection and hyper-caution of such a degree as to make me wonder whether new courage and determination are not needed for real and significant progress in what are clearly new opportunities in a changing but receptive world.”\textsuperscript{10} O’Brien went on to say that, of course, the situation was complicated and the future unpredictable, but maybe not as complex as Americans believed. He was looking forward to talking with Gregg - there were so many things that could not be put in letters.

Relationships between the offices in New York and France did not improve. Fosdick continued to emphasise the importance of neutrality. But Gunn, echoing Roosevelt’s September fireside chat, argued: “It is not easy for the Foundation to be strictly neutral, and it is, indeed, impossible for the individual members of the staff to be neutral. Personal convictions are so strong when England and France are fighting for ideals which are not necessarily ours. This of course does not mean that we should engage in any activities which are definitely related to the conduct of war. But it is another matter to say that we should not be involved in aiding activities which are related to a successful peace, if such a thing is possible.”\textsuperscript{11}

Neutrality was not the only source of friction. From France, O’Brien took issue with the suggestion (by the New York office in a previous letter) that information regarding the war was better and more accessible in New York

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid
\textsuperscript{11} Letter Gunn to Fosdick, October 13, 1939: Ibid
than in France. O’Brien asked bitingly what “exactly was included in the term ‘information’.” He went on to say that he did not believe that US journalists such as Knickerbocker, Duranty, Bird and so on, have much, if anything, in the way of additional information not possessed by the group in France; and then added that people here “talk to people who wisely refrain from too many attempts at guess work but prefer to present the facts they know and let it go at that.” Again the quality of information — and who knew what, best — was in dispute. The rift between thinking in New York and France began to clarify not only priorities and values but also issues to do with the very nature of the Foundation and its assets. For the staff in Europe the Foundation was about much more than money:

October 24, 1939

“...The mere fact of the Foundation not pulling out of Europe has a great psychological value. Believe it or not our position in Europe is not merely based on the fact that we have money to give away...we have something to contribute which goes far beyond any pecuniary interest...the personal friendships developed by our staff with so many people in so many countries have a value which is not to be placed in the financial section of a Foundation report. Indeed it won’t fit in very well in any part of the report but it is an asset of real worth.”

Letter Gunn to Appleget: ibid

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12 Letter O’Brien to Gregg, October 23, 1939: 106, 14, 700, RG 1.1
Furthermore, maintaining staff in Europe was keeping open the “eyes and ears” of the Foundation. The debate went on — a debate that was not just about what to do now but about perceptions of the centre of intellectual gravity. O’Brien responded to a suggestion from Gregg that it was time to build up American institutions and tackle Europe later saying: “With what is this building up going to be done? And where? Have we not already over-built America? And I don’t mean merely in bricks and mortar...It is still my impression that, counting dollar for dollar expenditures, Europe may still be the better field if in our investments we are looking for new knowledge and new ideas. America may still learn from Europe.”13 Gunn continued to put the case for the Foundation staying in Europe as a matter of moral solidarity, 25 years experience and wide networks, as much as money.14

By the beginning of November 1939 nothing much had happened, the initial panic of war was abating and life in Paris was returning to a new “normal.” Communications were improving and trains were running again to Paris. But the European office was still restricted in the amount of money it could spend; the house at La Baule had no heating, and the New York office was still postponing the visits Paris staff desperately wanted to make in order to put their case to staff and Trustees in the US. And then on November 6, 1939 it was announced that no American passport would be validated for travel to any country in Europe.

Then, centimetre by centimetre, the Atlantic chasm began to close. Appleget,

13 O’Brien to Gregg, October 26, 1939: 106, 14, 700, RG1.1
14 Letter Gunn to Fosdick, October 26, 1939: ibid
the Foundation’s vice-president in New York, wrote to Gunn saying that he was delighted that the discussion was taking a lighter note, and how much he enjoyed the map showing how the universe revolves around La Baule. The map (possibly O’Brien’s idea) shows La Baule at the centre of a map of Britain and Europe, with a poem typed at the top:

Said New York with a violent curse
(which we hope they will put in reverse)
“What is this la Baule?”
Which indeed is quite droll
‘Tis the hub of the whole universe.

On reflection, Appleget said, he realised that New York decisions may have looked “drastic, sudden and perhaps reached without proper consultation with you.” Appleget also took pains to stress his admiration for what the staff in Europe were achieving against the odds. He ends: “I send my affectionate regards to you and Carroll. I wish we were having dinner tonight at Charles a la Pomme Souflée ‘at seven - don’t dress’.”

The annual December board meeting in New York was fast approaching. The staff urgently needed plans to put before the Trustees. With or without alternative plans there was a fear of “pressure (from Trustees) of some huge project sought as a gesture.” Would the Trustees feel that they had

15 Letter Appleget to Gunn, November 8, 1939: 107, 15, 700, RG 1.1
16 Ibid
to engage in “relief”? Staff were clearly beginning to feel more confident about formulating plans for a way ahead. Gregg wrote a memo headed “Criteria for any plan involving RF initiative in Europe”:

**October 26, 1939**

1. That it will meet an important need (whether or not the need has been formulated or expressed to us).

2. That it be definable, tangible and appropriately free from exploitation for military or political purposes.

3. That it be something the scientific and administrative acquaintance and the financial resources of the Foundation constitute the principal contribution, i.e. not the American personnel in any essential capacity.

4. That it improve the status of post-war populations and contribute to social order and public welfare after the war as well as serve immediate needs.

5. That it depend as little as possible upon personnel required for military duties: i.e. utilize non-combatant personnel.

6. That it be of a nature which can be begun in small units and expanded by reduplication if the occasion warrant.

7. That it be in no serious conflict or encroaching upon similar large-scale services of the Red Cross, Ministry of Public Health or other governmental services or obligation.

*Gregg memo: 106, 14, 700, RG 1.1*
At this stage the idea emerged of what later became a Health Commission for Europe. Neutrality remained the order of the day.

At the end of November Fosdick again reminded the European staff that the Foundation “is not interested in helping either side win this war...the causes and ideals which the Rockefeller Foundation is trying to serve transcend the present conflicts.” Staff must be quick to detect projects designed to aid a war purpose, “…detachment and objectivity are absolutely necessary if we are going to maintain ourselves as an international force for the future.”

At the December Trustees meeting Fosdick presented a plan for five general types of war work:

December 1939

1. Maintenance of intimate and continuing contacts with European scientists, universities and labs.

2. Utilization of our own laboratory work and personnel, in connection with epidemics growing out of the war.

3. Use of the emergency funds in the furtherance of research on problems whose significance has been increased by the war e.g. brain surgery, malnutrition.
No large sums were being suggested. Staff in Europe were to be asked to maintain their contacts in order to place relatively small sums of money to ensure the survival of activities “of high promise.”

But Fosdick knew that to persuade the Board he would have to address some bigger questions. If intellectual leadership was passing from Europe to the US, why have a European programme at all? Will there be enough left in Europe to make continued work there worthwhile? Why not spend the money in the US? These were obviously real dilemmas for the Foundation.

Was this just throwing away money on very, very
uncertain investments? Any foundation working in a war zone knows this dilemma - just when, arguably, need is greatest the risk for the Foundation is most obvious. In this case, there were additional bigger questions to do with the future importance of Europe relative to the US. Why was the Foundation continuing to invest in what some regarded as “yesterday” – and an increasingly damaged yesterday that might take years to get to tomorrow?\(^\text{18}\)

Fosdick’s answer was simply that it was questionable whether intellectual leadership had passed to the US. Europe, he argued, was still “the fountain head” of a large part of intellectual activity.

It would be short sighted for the Foundation to cut itself (and by implication “mankind”) off from science in Europe. To the great relief of all staff, the Board agreed to the outlined plans.

On December 15, 1939 the New York staff held an emergency meeting. They concluded that the “chasm between the viewpoint of the group here and the group in France is growing.” Gunn was summoned to New York.\(^\text{19}\)

But this created a dilemma for Gunn: he must go if the office in Europe was to survive but this was war and he had a pact with Carroll “that we either travel together in the air or not

\(^{18}\) Ibid: p. 19

\(^{19}\) O’Brien to Gregg, January 23, 1940: 108, 15, 700, RG 1.1
at all.” Luckily, Carroll “is a good sport and if necessary would have let me violate the pact.” In this case, even taking the boat was the better option.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{20} Letter Gunn to Fosdick, December 19, 1939: 107, 15, 700, RG 1.1
3 and occasionally for he was notion of starting
Mannes it was more severe and worse
badly injured - At Blagdon, when the station was
blown up into people, we were
across the station on the
machines, guzzling a pace or two
in a hurry, calling a pace or two
which we had moved from safety
in a hurry. Then or things went better, a
machines, guzzling a pace or two
one day late an more planes
bombed or blew up a place or two
which we had caught up a
Mannes to Blagden. - After about
weeks, I managed to manage, one of Mannes
we had seen a plane
in the air, was then practically deserted.

Dear Mr. Gunn,

Every day I have been passing by Mr. Gunn and every day I
must write to Mr. Gunn and every day I
put it off, uncalled for. The incredible last
and disorganisation which seems to have
run me and
over me and
do not expect first
I escaped in the midst of time, that is to say, of
from Piers on the 13th or
wait, wait, wait -
wait, wait, wait -
wait, wait, wait -

Aug. 6th 1940

SEP 11 1949
Chapter 5:
The First Escape

The winter of 1939-40 in Europe was bitterly cold and the “Phoney” war continued. In January 1940 Gregg sailed for Europe. There was a first class passenger list of forty with: “Four to five servants at each meal converting the convenience of having a waiter into the confusion of being the pivot of an unrehearsed ceremony. But, oh the delight of shedding a scheduled existence! Sleeping till I want to read, reading till I want to sleep, fasting till I want to eat.”

Reading and thinking, Gregg reflected on Europe and the causes of war. He saw the war as “symptomatic and superficial”, fundamentally to do with “five hundred million Europeans, frightened or needy or vengeful... The social and political and industrial modern world, having organised egoism and institutionalised it, finds that egoism can’t stand prosperity and won’t work in adversity.” People, Gregg concluded, are at their best when between surfeit and starvation: “therefore I prefer such arrangements as distribute wealth, or, preferably, share opportunity.” In Lisbon Gregg was delighted to be safely back on dry land. He met up with O’Brien and visited some grantees. On the way back to France via Spain they stopped on “what looks like the border of a country called Poverty” where they were frisked for “wads of currency we might have forgotten to declare.” They waited for

1 Table d’Hote Gregg memo, January 24, 1940: 108, 15, 700, RG 1.1.
2 Ibid: 1428, 202, 500, RG2
an hour and a half; all was cold, dark and dreary except for the “Italian diplomat with two elegantissimas signoras and 17 pieces of baggage.” Then came the news: O’Brien’s passport was not in order, they had to go back. The diplomat intervened, pointing out that Gregg and O’Brien were clearly gentlemen; he demanded to see the Station Chief who said he had orders from the Chief of the Frontier. The diplomat “with his dignity now exploding in every cylinder” ordered the Station Chief to telephone the Chief of the Frontier and tell him that he, Count Volpi di Misurata, would take full responsibility for the two American doctors. Count Volpi, it later emerged, was also vice president of the Wagons Lits; it also later emerged that O’Brien had been mistaken for Patrick O’Brien, the famous author of the same age who had been recently expelled from France.3

Gregg was shocked by what he saw and heard in France. At last the staff in Europe felt that someone from New York understood. He described the news received in the US as technically correct but psychologically dead and unreal at Hendaye, with the recent, bitter, bloody civil war fresh in his mind, Gregg spotted a poster which read “Spain — the dreamy hopes of an artist come to life.” In Paris he was struck by the lack of taxis, and the darkness (said to be the cause of more deaths in England than the war itself, he reported). His passport stated that he may not visit any country other than France and England (with transit through Spain and Portugal) but though his passport allowed him to enter by airplane it did not give any guarantee of leave to land. “Maybe…” he commented “…we will make just a circle or two over the field — trois petits tours et puis s’en vont.”4 Gregg was shocked by what he saw and heard in France. At last the staff in Europe felt that someone from New York understood. He described the news received in the US as technically correct

3 Ibid
4 Ibid
but psychologically dead and unreal. In Paris staying at the Hotel Bristol was, no doubt, fairly comfortable but Ker Aimable, the house at La Baule, was a different matter: “to call that house Aimable is something of a stretch.”

France was plagued by the grippe, Gregg reported, but he avoided “infection by fumigation with Gold Flake.”

While in Paris Gregg went to the cinema one evening:

March 4, 1940

“Travel pictures of a tour through the French colonies. Pictures of African Negro children carrying banners reading La France est Notre Mère received in rather palpable silence. Another film whose purpose is to show the boisterous and exhilarating rewards of the soldier in the air service was advertised for next week, also a romance of wartime rather pathetically entitled ‘Chantons Quand Même.’ The general atmosphere reminds me of a surgical ward half an hour before the dressings are to be changed.”

The New York office continued to press for a reduction in staff in the Paris/La

5 Excerpts from Gregg letters, February 5 and 6, 1940: 108, 15, 700, RG1.1
6 Gregg letter to Ivan, February 8, 1940: ibid
Baule offices. Gunn continued to resist. Work, he said, was beginning to pick up with more applications for grants. New York was still unhappy with the “bifurcated” arrangement of offices in Paris and La Baule but Gunn pointed out that this was a common arrangement in France at the time with many companies having evacuated staff from Paris. In any case, maybe the issue would be short-lived. When Gregg visited Brussels he learned from Rene Sand that:

**February 24, 1940**

“Betting odds at Lloyds said to be 66 to 100 on termination of the war in 1940 and 30 to 1 that Belgium will not go in. Apropos of bilingualism in Belgium, Sand says that the line of settlement between Walloons and Belgians is within two miles of where it was in 800 A.D. King of Belgians declared two years ago independence of Belgians from French in case of war so as to force French to continue Maginot line to the sea. This has been done since outbreak of war by the French and makes invasion of Belgium by Germany less inviting.”

Gregg officer’s diary

From Washington Roosevelt again insisted that “American boys” would not be sent to fight another war in Europe, and wealthy Americans continued to

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7 Letter from Gunn to Fosdick, March 26, 1940: 1435, 203, 700, RG 1.1
Winthrop Aldrich (the chair of the Rockefeller Foundation, and a family member) led one fundraising committee representing wealthy people who wished to aid the French and the English through gifts of money and supplies for hospitals, welfare centres, foyers, refugee work, etc. Aldrich asked Gregg for help in identifying organisations in France with whom the Committee might work.

Gregg seized the opportunity of a conversation with Mr Aldrich to make some points about the dangers of philanthropy and “relief.” He emphasised the importance of leaving “a mark in the future” rather than simply meeting an immediate problem, of planning and organisation, and of “a pretty shrewd estimate of what is really worth doing.”

Distinguishing between generosity and unselfishness Gregg suggested that there should be little emphasis on the source of the money, encouraging “the French to continue later with a larger measure of pride in their own accomplishment.” Gregg continued in a letter: “I am afraid of people who go into this sort of game wanting gratitude or approval - not because they don't deserve it, but because they will be so bewildered if instead of approval they meet criticism and instead of gratitude, jealousy. The active agents in a game of this kind also have to be aware of the fact that most philanthropic organisations they might tie up to have local political or religious implications...”

Aldrich suggested that Gregg’s thoughts on the difference between generosity and unselfishness be “framed and hung in the office of every relief organisation.”

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8 Letter Gregg to O’Brien, April 8, 1940: 1435, 203, 700, RG 1.1
9 Letter Aldrich to Gregg, April 15, 1940: 1435, 203, 700, RG 1.1
By April 1940 life was improving for Gunn, O’Brien and colleagues. They moved to Villa Atlantis in La Baule – with central heating. After the fearful anticipation and preparation of 1939 all was still relatively quiet. Staff decided to start visiting universities in Europe again.

Kittredge set off on a tour visiting Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Germany and Italy - possibly one of the worst, or perhaps best, timed tours in the Foundation’s history. In Holland the situation was “less tense than in November last. The defence preparations have been continued and there is still grim anticipation of invasion from Germany...In Belgium as well as in Holland the feeling is growing that participation in the war may be forced at any time by a German invasion. Both countries would resist and hope for French and British assistance. This is a situation where almost any development is possible.”

In Denmark on April 3 – 4, 1940 things were “quiet”, the universities were functioning normally and “scholars were relatively freer to continue normal academic teaching and research than in any of the countries of Western Europe. The Danes felt that the non-aggression pact of 1939 would be respected by the Germans.” Less than a week later on April 8 – 9 Germany occupied Denmark, although the Danish government under German supervision supposedly retained a degree of autonomy.

In Norway on April 5 – 7, 1940 things were also “quiet” and “no one with whom I spoke had any real anticipation of the German move of April 8 - 9.” A new Institute of the Social Sciences was planned to open on July 1, 1940 at the University of Oslo with a mix of private, government and Rockefeller

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10 Kittredge Report on Visits in Northern Europe: 1435, 203, 700, RG 1.1
11 Ibid: p. 2
12 Ibid: p. 4
Foundation funding. Kittredge anticipated that if Norway did not become an active theatre of war then some programmes might be continued and/or the Foundation might consider helping some leading Norwegian scholars to continue their work in the US.

In Sweden from April 8 – 16 people were clearly very disturbed by the German occupation of Denmark and the attack on Norway. About 60 per cent of university students and professors had been mobilised. Nevertheless, Kittredge discussed with scholars projects which would continue or be initiated if Sweden were not involved in the war.

On to Berlin where Kittredge visited academics and acquaintances at the American Embassy. He recorded his impressions as including: absence of any enthusiasm for the work; absence of any real hatred against the English or French; general acceptance of the government’s version of the causes and objects of the war; and, a belief that Germany was fighting in self-defence and for necessary Lebensraum, and lack of any effect of war on daily routines except in rationing of food. German academics were continuing their work, he said, and were keen for contact with Americans.

In Italy there was little significant research. The political situation absorbed the energy and attention of academics; Italian foreign policy, Kittredge commented, is very vague and he suggested that this period should be used to send abler, younger people to the US on fellowships.13

We have no jitters but are simply trying to look ahead as far as is reasonably possible

13 Kittredge to Fosdick, January 10, 1941: Effects of the War on European Universities, 1435, 203, 700, RG 1.1
The optimism of early 1940 was short-lived. As spring turned to summer “catastrophe follows catastrophe.” Germany invaded Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, and began the move on France. Gunn was increasingly worried but reassured New York: “I don’t feel that the group here or in Paris are unduly nervous. We have no jitters but

HOPES DASHED

As Hitler moved further into France the French and British troops fled from Dunkirk. The British Prime Minister Chamberlain resigned and Churchill formed a coalition government.

In France, some staff, like many other people, continued to believe that a solution would be found. When the Germans attacked the outcome was perfectly clear to all French men and women – France could not possibly fall, it was unthinkable. Before the war there had been some temporary evacuation plans and people and organisations (like the Foundation) had left Paris on their own initiative. Evacuation had been played down as sending the wrong message and by the end of 1939 most people had returned to the city. Reynaud, the French Premier, managed to keep the French army’s defeat out of the news and as late as May 24, 1940 he assured the French people: “France has been invaded a hundred times and never beaten...our belief in victory is intact.”

There were no formal evacuation warnings and life went on much as normal: people lingered over long lunches; flowers bloomed; gardens were tended. There was talk of government ministries leaving Paris but then the order was rescinded. In mid-May people moving away from the Northern towns were interfering with military movements and the government issued a call for people to stay where they were – it was unpatriotic to leave and, in any case, the rumours were just German propaganda designed to cause panic and block the roads.

1 Quoted in Diamond 2007: p. 8
2 Ibid: p. 35
are simply trying to look ahead as far as is reasonably possible.” Fosdick was worried that the Foundation might be accused of supporting the enemy. He ordered no communications with people in Germany or Czechoslovakia, even if it was only about grants made long ago. The Foundation must, he emphasised, be above suspicion.

By May 25, 1940 Gunn wrote that perhaps the easiest decision would be to “shut up shop”, pay off the employees and come home. But, he added, this would not necessarily be the wisest decision. The staff remained unanimous that it was not time to close either or both French offices. As a precaution, staff contracts were to be terminated on June 30, giving everyone an end of contract payment. If work continued they would be re-employed on a monthly basis. As another precaution, reservations were made on boats to the US.

**TIME TO GO?**

Just four anxious days later on May 29 with the Germans drawing ever closer, Gunn and the Foundation staff in France painfully, reluctantly accepted that it was necessary to leave the country. The office in La Baule would be kept open with a small staff under Makinsky and with Blandin and his wife as ultimate caretakers should closure finally be necessary.

14 Letter Gunn to Fosdick, May 10, 1940: 109, 15, 700, RG 1
15 Letter Gregg to O’Brien, May 10, 1940: 1435, 203, 700, RG1.1
16 Letter Gunn to Fosdick, May 25, 1940: p. 2, 1435, 303, 700, RG1.1
17 Letter Gunn to Fosdick, May 29, 1940: 109, 15, 700, RG 1
Meanwhile on the same day at a staff conference in New York there was discussion of how to respond to increasing pressure for a contribution to a Red Cross appeal which had been raised from $10m to $20m (and so far had only raised $3m). Staff were told that the Carnegie Foundation had secured a legal opinion preventing any contribution from them and Fosdick reported a conversation with Chairman Walter Stewart who was vehemently opposed to contributing. The Rockefeller Foundation, Stewart argued, was the last organisation that could think in terms of 25 years hence. Nevertheless Gregg raised the question of how long the Foundation could maintain this position and stay out of relief; emergency conditions, he argued, would remain in Europe for years to come. Gregg also wrote: "We do not want to cut our optic or auditory nerves by entirely withdrawing. Europeans will not be able to forecast opportunities for us. Wants O’Brien there.” Others pointed to the massive refugee problem which would need exceptional, and non-existent, resources and competence in the Ministry of Hygiene. Could the International Health Division help with, for example, the loan of French speaking Americans? It would be essential to work through the Ministry and avoid creating a quasi-autonomous agency.18

18 Ibid: 32, 5, 904, RG 3
While the New York office grappled with Foundation principles, events in France were worsening by the day. On June 3, 254 people were killed in the bombing of Parisian airports and parts of the 15th and 16th arrondissements. On June 8, 1940 the Gunns, Kittredge and Miller left France. Anatole (a temporary chauffeur), Groll (a husband of one of the office staff), and Makinsky drove them to the border.

On the drive back near La Roche-sur-Yon, Makinsky and Groll were stopped by the police looking for parachutists seen in the neighbourhood. Makinsky arrived back in La Baule at 9:30pm to find his family installed in the Gunn's house along with Miller's dog. On Sunday June 9, as the French government discreetly left Paris, Makinsky was busy in La Baule meeting the local police, settling final accounts and making all arrangements temporarily to close the La Baule office. At 8:30pm there was a telephone call from Montagnon (another member of staff in Paris) “begging us to send a car tonight, to get Miss Crowell (a former member of staff) out of town.” She reported: “The Germans are advancing rapidly, and Paris is in a state of panic since two hours. Most trains are cancelled and the American Red Cross does not seem to have any cars at its disposal.”

Anatole was reluctant to set out on such a trip alone so Makinsky decided to go with him and take the opportunity to sort out some remaining problems in the Paris office. Makinsky and Anatole set out:

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19 Alexander Makinsky officer’s diary, June 8, 1940: p. 1, RG 12.1
20 Alexander Makinsky officer’s diary, June 9, 1940
21 Ibid
At 9am on June 9 Makinsky and Anatole arrived in Paris and arranged to leave at 3pm with Miss Crowell, Miss Montagnon and the father of another member of staff. Did Anatole and Makinsky encounter the young women joining the exodus in the suburbs of Paris described by Georges Sadoul? “The young women are powdered, well made up with lipstick. The women’s magazine Marie Claire must have had advice to give those who were leaving as among Parisian salesgirls there seems to be a desire to start a new fashion, that of the refugee chic. They wear relatively short grey or light blue trousers with a navy blue jacket or cardigan. On their hair a kerchief is no longer knotted in the peasant style according to last year’s trends but now in ‘madras’ style...” 22 Some had brought make up and clothes along but no food or drink – surely they could shop along the way?

It took Anatole and Makinsky seven hours to get from Paris to Dreux - roads were closed, there were hundreds of refugees, all the lights were out, and there was one alert. Anatole was driving for a second night without sleep.

On Wednesday June 12, 1940 news of the German advance on Paris created tension in the house at La Baule. Several staff wanted to leave immediately and insisted that it was Anatole’s “duty to take them out in RF cars to whatever

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22 Quoted in Diamond 2007: p. 60
place they select for their final residence.” Meanwhile Anatole did not want to leave La Baule. Makinsky wanted to collect the stores of gasoline hidden earlier at Letort’s cottage in Alencon — gasoline was hard to get in La Baule and would in any case be lost if the Germans occupied the region. After much debate Makinsky left with Anatole at 5am to get the gasoline.

June 12, 1940

“The roads are almost impracticable. Paris cars are seen by thousands; thousands of carts loaded with peasantry taking away all of their belongings; families escaping on bicycle, on foot. Numerous retiring British troops between Le Mans and Alencon. We get to Bourg-le-Roi just in time to find Mme Letort and her mother with their hats on their heads, ready to escape from the Germans, who are supposed to be 50km from Alencon. Mme Letort slightly apologetic: the two cars standing in front of the house, ready to take her and some of her friends, are filled with RF gasoline! She also ‘confesses that another 150 litres have disappeared: ‘Je ne sais pas comment.’ She offers to pay… I naturally refuse. We load into our car the remaining 230 litres, plus a bottle of Calvados which Mme Letort offers to the Foundation’s staff, adding very kindly that: ‘Maintenant cela ne me servira plus, de toute facon.’ She leaves with me her tentative address… so that if Letort should make any inquiries about her, we can tell him where he should write.”
On the way back to La Baule Makinsky called in to see a friend on the Military Staff.

**June 12, 1940**

“On arriving at the Headquarters, I am shocked to learn that France is expected within three or four days to ask for an armistice. I am naturally asked to treat this news as confidential, but there is no reason for me not to take it into account in making any plans for the RF and for myself. I am told that there will be no battle on the Loire because there is no more army to fight it out. The ‘debacle’ is complete, and there is nothing that France can do except to capitulate.”

They were advised to leave La Baule immediately before the bridge at Nantes was blown up and the region cut off.\(^{23}\)

On Friday June 14, 1940 Makinsky returned to the office at La Baule amid scenes of increasing tragedy. The roads were crammed with people and cars; there was no gasoline, no water, no food; people abandoning their cars and starting to walk to Lyon, Bordeaux, wherever; two old women begging for just one litre of gasoline.

On Saturday night bombs fell on La Baule. Rumours were rife; British troops

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\(^{23}\) Alexander Makinsky officer’s diary, Thursday June 13, 1940: p. 4
had disappeared overnight. Anatole (the chauffeur) was offered 30,000 francs to drive the family of the Peruvian Minister to Bau. “The temptation”, Makinsky noted, “is obviously great, certainly as great as my fear that I may find myself deprived of a chauffeur at such a critical moment.” 24 The capture of Paris was officially announced.

On Monday June 17, 1940 Makinsky declared the office at La Baule officially closed, with Blandin and his wife left in charge as caretakers. “12:30pm Petain announces the decision of France to ask for an armistice.” La Marseillaise was played. “Everybody, including Blandin, Anton, Anatole...weep like children. An incredibly tragic moment.”

Makinsky’s main concern then was to get the British staff, their families and friends out of France. They drove to Saint Nazaire where, as bombs fell on the town, the British were allowed to board a battleship: “Ten minutes later, a British destroyer sinks at Saint Nazaire, right in front of us.”

After paying all the bills and the remaining staff, and issuing letters which he hoped would protect the staff and property (explaining the Foundation was a US organisation that worked in all European countries in the pursuit of science), Makinsky left for Lisbon via Bordeaux. On the way to Bordeaux they learned that the bridge at Nantes would be blown up that evening, and that the destroyers that took friends to England yesterday were heavily bombed not far from St Nazaire in the open sea.

On Wednesday June 19 they arrived in Bordeaux. The town was packed with people and cars and there was nowhere to stay. The Grolls arrived from La Baule with personal luggage but not the Foundation records (which they had been asked to bring) because, they argued, personal luggage was more
important. This, Makinsky commented, “may or may not be true; anyway I am glad to have brought at least certain things with me and to have others in my memory, so that I do not run the risk of being seriously handicapped.”

Records were part of the Rockefeller Foundation religion.

**Wednesday June 19, 1940**

“We get to Bordeaux at noon. I never saw such a crowded city. The Place des Quinconces is transformed into a huge garage accommodating 2,000 cars with families sleeping in them. The number of people living out in the streets of Bordeaux is estimated at 50,000...

...No reply from Hitler as yet to Petain’s proposal. The Germans continue their advance. Nantes is supposed to have been occupied this morning. At lunch in a restaurant I listened to Petain’s speech: the entire crowd, soldiers and civilians, stood up weeping silently, and then sang three times the Marseillaise.”

He met a friend who offered some straw in their building but only for Makinsky’s wife and mother-in-law – not for the men. Then they were promised beds at the American Red Cross on some of the 50 beds put up every night in the office for refugees. Makinsky wrote in his diary:

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25 *Ibid: p. 9*
In Bordeaux the main task was to get a visa to enter Portugal - but this was the plan of another few thousand people. On Thursday June 20, 1940 they finally left Bordeaux and started on the journey to Bayonne. “The last man we see in Bordeaux is Paul Reynaud, standing in front of the Splendide, all alone, without a hat, in a rain-coat, looking vaguely in the direction of the sea as if he were waiting for a miracle to happen...”

Reynaud had resigned to be replaced by Petain who broke France’s agreement with Britain and surrendered to the Germans.

During an alert, driving without lights, they were involved in a serious car accident in which Makinsky’s mother-in-law was wounded. Makinsky remained the consummate Foundation employee; noting that the accident was entirely the other man’s fault, he worried “but we cannot write to Sprinks, as the only address we have for him outside of Paris is Dinard, near Saint-Malo, and the Germans are already there” (Sprinks was the Foundation’s insurance agent). On Monday June 24, 1940 Makinsky finally arrived in Lisbon via a long and eventful route.

26 Ibid: p. 12
CHAPTER 5: THE FIRST ESCAPE

The rest of the story of Letort and his wife and their escape from Paris was received months later, back in New York, when Gunn received a handwritten letter from Letort describing the days after the occupation of Paris. Letort begins by apologising for not writing sooner which he attributes to “the incredible laziness and discouragement which seems to have crept over me and my fellow refugees. There is nothing to do and worse still, nothing to be done except just wait, wait, wait…

I escaped from Paris on June 13, in the nick of time, that is to say just a few hours before the Germans entered the city. Paris was then practically deserted, but never had it been more beautiful. Everything was closed, and apart from the Metro which never ceased working, no means of circulation was available. The last few days we fed on bread and pieces of chocolate (nobody felt very hungry anyway) and worked practically day and night requisitioning cars and trucks for the refugees. Gasoline was distributed to all those who wanted some, free of charge, and needless to say we had plenty of applicants.

You cannot imagine the mess and disorganisation of all the services. It is simply unbelievable, and if I had not, with a couple of pals, taken the precaution of setting a car aside in case of need, I am afraid I would have been a prisoner the next morning.

We left on June 13 at about 6pm and took the direction of Bourg le Roi where I hoped to see my wife. It did not take long for the fun to start. The roads were...
absolutely blocked up with refugees of all descriptions; in cars, on bicycles, but most of them on foot, pushing in front of them their miserable belongings in prams, wheelbarrows etc. It took us five hours to do 30km, and we slept in the car at Dampierre. We left there at 3am, passed Chartres which had been bombed very badly a day or two before, and were bombed ourselves at Nogent le Roi, Mamers and Alencon. I cannot find words to describe the panic, the cries of the children, the incredible jam of cars, but I will never forget the awful vision. To be fair the first bomber which came at Nogent le Rotron just dropped two small bombs at a safe distance from the road and obviously for the sole purpose of starting a panic. He succeeded alright. Mamers, it was more severe and several people were badly injured. At Alencon which was literally blocked up with people, over 20 people were killed when the station was bombarded. However, we reached Bourg le Roi safely and found that my wife had moved off in an unknown direction. From then on things went better, and apart from one single bombardment, accompanied by a little machine gunning a few miles from Alencon we saw no more planes.

A couple of days later we caught up our service which had left Paris on June 11 and settled at Arcachon. After about a week we moved to Maulion, south of Pau, where I was finally demobilised on July 17.

For over three weeks I remained without news from my wife and my family,
until finally I learnt that she had reached Mont de Maison and then had moved on to a little village in Auvergne where I have joined her.

My brother, who had already gone through the Dunkirk affair, after having been repatriated via Southampton and Brest, had also managed to reach a safe place, travelling from Le Mans to Maimande way down south on a bicycle.

We are now all together and physically at least none the worse for the adventure. Materially it is another question. Paris, of course, has not suffered at all but I am not so sure about our cottage at Bourg le Roi. The building is not hurt but I am afraid that a good deal of pilfering has taken place. Nothing very serious however.”

Letort went on to say that he had been asked by Fosdick to prepare the final accounts and that he would start work on this when he got word regarding the whereabouts of the books. He also noted that he owed the Foundation money from his outstanding salary for gasoline which had been stored at the cottage and which his wife used to make her getaway: “As a matter of fact there is still about 100 litres hidden in the garden under a wood pile and they may come in useful later on.” He was also concerned to let the Foundation know that, being close to Vichy, he might be of some use to Strode and O’Brien when they visited France in connection with the “refugee problem.”

In a letter on the same day to Makinsky, Letort made the same offer of help,

27 Letort to Gunn, August 6, 1940: 1435, 203, 700, RG 1.1
noting that the formalities for any travel were lengthy and complicated and that many of the Foundation’s old government contacts had been “revoked or displaced.” Letort was also concerned about accommodation: “Vichy and Clermont are absolutely full and it would not be good form to see GKS (George Strode) or O’B (Pat O’Brien) having to sleep at the station or in a park.”28 For men used to staying at the best hotels in Europe this was undoubtedly true.

Only months after leaving, the Rockefeller Foundation was coming back to Europe.
CHAPTER 5: THE FIRST ESCAPE

The first escape was a daring and ingenious plan that involved a complex network of...
Chapter 6
Saving Lives Saving Science

THE TALE OF TWO LOST HANDKERCHIEFS

Maybe some of the Foundation staff felt a little envious of Makinsky living in neutral — and beautiful — Lisbon. When Cecil Beaton, the photographer, visited there in July 1942 he was amazed by the availability of luxuries — sweets, liqueurs, silk stockings: “My eyes were out on sticks as the wagon of Hors-d’oeuvres was wheeled over the thick carpet towards me. These proved to be a banquet in themselves.” But living and working in Lisbon was far from easy all of the time:

February 15, 1941

“From 4:30pm to 6pm a terrible cyclone. 120 killed in Lisbon alone. All telephone and telegraphic communications between Lisbon and the rest of the country are interrupted. No trains...no boats to the other side of the Tagus. The damages are apparently incalculable...There will be no planes to London for some time...”

Alexander Makinsky officer’s diary: p. 158

It must have been a very low week indeed for Makinsky. Just a week before the cyclone Makinsky had received a letter from Professor Otto Meyerhof, a world famous Jewish scientist, whose escape from Europe Makinsky had

1 Beaton 1965: p. 195
orchestrated in a long and hugely complicated saga. Makinsky recorded in his diary:

February 7, 1941

“I confess I am slightly irritated by Professor Meyerhof raising the question of one or two articles of personal belongings which are missing from the suitcases which O’B took over with him last December. Professor Meyerhof should be particularly happy at having a post; being in the US with his wife, and knowing that his son will probably join him in the near future. I did all I could to help him and his wife get out, and I am continuing to do all I can to get his son out; but I shall certainly do nothing recuperating the supposedly lost handkerchiefs or sweaters. I am surprised at his ever raising such a question. Besides I have in my office a whole suitcase of wearing articles left by M., when he was here, for his son, and it is possible that what he thinks is missing is actually in that particular suitcase.”

Alexander Makinsky officer’s diary: p. 147
The background to Meyerhof’s lost handkerchiefs began in 1933 when on a routine visit to German universities a Foundation officer was shocked to hear that racial and political tests were being imposed on scholars, and that several professors with grants from the Foundation were “in a state of great uneasiness.”

After years of supporting some of the most brilliant scientists in the world, staff at the Paris office had many good friends in German universities. Surely these rumours could not be true? Perhaps they were just more left-wing Bolshevist propaganda? The Bolsheviks were, after all, seen by most people as a greater threat than Hitler.

If the stories were true what could or should the Foundation do? Fosdick came over from New York: the rumours, and the evidence, had to be addressed. Were the rumours true? If the rumours were true, was it time to leave Germany? Some staff felt that the Foundation should not ignore such a flagrant abuse of rights and Foundation work in Germany should be suspended immediately. Others argued that the Foundation was known for keeping its “promises” (of money) and that, whatever the personal views of staff and Trustees, the Foundation must always remain politically neutral - work should continue. There was also a view that German scientists should not be penalised for what their government happened to do. O’Brien’s own view at this stage was that the Hitler regime was surely temporary, and that if the Foundation left Germany it would further undermine liberal thinking as well as provoke the wrath of the government.

2 The Problem of Refugee Scholars, Trustee Bulletin October 1939: p. 2-7
Staff decided that the best course of action at this stage was to meet with German government officials and make it clear that the Foundation could only continue funding if the independent pursuit of knowledge was possible. The officials assured O’Brien and Weaver that the government was in favour of moderation and any violence or prejudice was the fault of “the mob.” Presumably implying that the US had its “difficulties” too and was in no position to preach, they also alluded to racial prejudice against Negroes in the United States. Weaver responded to this last point by saying that race prejudice in the US was indeed disgraceful but the government was ashamed of it and sought to eliminate it.\(^3\) Interestingly, Weaver took no chances with this particular section of his diary and handed it directly to Makinsky in Paris.

After much debate, the Foundation decided to continue work in Germany – for the time being. But, at the same time, staff wanted to find ways of helping scholars dismissed from their posts because of race, religion or political views. Obviously, the Foundation itself could not provide jobs, nor could it impose people on universities in other countries. Foundation staff knew only too well that universities in other parts of Europe, the UK and the US were still struggling through the Depression and had barely enough money for their own needs, let alone those of others. At this stage, the problem for dismissed scholars was less about leaving Europe, and more about finding somewhere else to go.

The solution was the Deposed Scholars Programme. The Programme gave grants to universities and research institutes in the US and Europe to enable them to offer positions to deposed scholars. The genius of the scheme from the Foundation’s viewpoint was that the universities were responsible for choosing the scholars, for making all arrangements for their travel, visas etc., and for their futures. The Foundation dealt only with the university, not with

\(^3\) Warren Weaver officer’s diary, May 26, 1933: RG 12.1
the individual, and the grant was temporary and never more than half of the total required – the university had to want the person and be prepared to contribute.

Initially grants were made for periods of one to three years, but it soon became clear that these deposed scholars would not be going back to Germany for the foreseeable future; so from around 1934 grants were only given to organisations that could give some assurance that the grant would lead to a permanent position. As the dismissal of scholars for political or racial reasons spread to Spain, Italy, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland, the programme became yet more complicated, and bigger in scale.

By 1939 the Foundation had given $140,000 to help 121 sacked scholars from six countries. Most of the scholars who went to the US were appointed to a relatively small number of universities in the Northeast states - a fact that would later be seen as significant.

In many ways the Deposed Scholars Programme was always riddled with ambiguity. Fosdick liked to emphasise that the focus of the programme was: “Preservation of scholarship rather than on personal relief for scholars” but, at the same time, would admit that “Coloring all applications was an inescapable element of humanitarian interest.” As time went on and the problem grew in size this dual emphasis became increasingly difficult to manage.

At first all seemed to be going well. The universities welcomed the programme as a way of doing “our share in an emergency” some university departments

4 The Problem of Refugee Scholars, Trustee Bulletin October 1939: p. 4
5 Quoted in Appleget report on the Refugee Scholars Programme 1939: 4, 544, 47, 200
were revitalised by new blood, and the émigré scholars were seen as contributing to cultural life in America.

1940 NIGHT FALLS OVER EUROPE

In June 1940, as Hitler began his drive toward Paris, Fosdick became increasingly concerned: “I note the fall of the Reynaud cabinet yesterday - and the steady gains of the Nazi armies. Is not the time either here - or very near - when RF should face the situation which seems to be impending for the scientific and scholarly personnel of France? Night appears to be settling down on the people who have given the finest meaning to the word ‘culture.’ The time may not yet have come for action but the Foundation should be prepared for quick action, since the opportunity may pass if the Nazis once garrison the whole of France. Just how to ‘take hold’ is the difficult question. I don’t think we know enough to answer it now...our obligation is to do what we can to preserve the best of the scientists and scholars of France for civilization.”

For O’Brien and his colleagues the problem was how to help people leave when those people might have no money, no transport and no knowledge of where they would be welcome. And how would the Foundation avoid being swamped by requests from every person who wanted to leave France? In other circumstances the Foundation might have begun by consulting and spreading the word among its very knowledgeable and influential network of contacts. In this situation even asking for information about people who might wish to leave France could be interpreted as being defeatist – surely France would not fall – or as “ambulance chasing.” And yet again there was the issue of how

6 Fosdick letter to Gunn, June 17, 1940: 1, 1430, 202, 500, RG 2
After the invasion and agreement to an armistice with the Nazis, France was divided into two areas (three including the forbidden zone around the northern coast): an occupied zone which included Paris and an unoccupied “free” zone which included the town of Vichy where the French government re-located. For many years French society had had a strong anti-Semitic element, although this was a complicated and subtle matter which distinguished between recent immigrants and those who were “properly French.” The French government at Vichy relatively quickly passed various laws abolishing divorce, imposing the death penalty for abortion, and restricting the rights and movements of Jewish people. Among these restrictions were ones concerning employment by public bodies such as universities (in fact, as in Germany, deposed scholars included a wide range of people including anyone opposed to Fascism – Jewish or not).

Through the summer of 1940 refugees flocked to the port of Marseille in the unoccupied zone hoping for a way out of France. 190,000 people swelled the city’s population by over one-third; few ships were sailing but still people kept on coming.

To stay in the city legally every visitor needed to apply to the prefecture for a permis de sejour; but to get a permis they had to show that they were leaving the city as soon as possible and that meant having an international visa to another country. Without an onward visa a person could be sent to an internment camp in France. Queues formed at the US Consulate, but the embassy was issuing very, very few visas.

The one faint hope was to get out of Marseille to Lisbon. Because Portugal was neutral there were still some international sailings from Lisbon (all shipping from France was under German control). But to get to Lisbon a sheaf of papers were required: a valid passport, a sauf-conduit pass to the French border, a French exit permit, both Portuguese and Spanish transit visas, and the all important international visa. All of these papers had expiry dates, and obtaining one often depended on having already obtained another – so timing was critical.

Very soon international aid groups, such as the American Emergency Rescue Committee, began arriving in Marseille; but they were severely constrained in what they could do. The problem was complicated by the fact that the US government – in addition to its fears of spies, Bolshevists, and, in some cases, its anti-Semitism – wanted to maintain good relations with the Vichy government. As far as the US State Department was concerned, internment camps in France were a matter of French domestic policy. Varian Fry, working with the American Emergency Rescue Committee, was summoned to the consulate in Marseille to be told that the State Department could not countenance anyone evading the laws of countries with which the US maintained friendly relations; Fry was told to return to the US (an order he ignored for some time)."

1* Sullivan 2007
to limit the Foundation’s responsibility – even if the Foundation could get the scholars out of Europe it could not support them forever.

Given these evolving circumstances the existing Deposed Scholars Programme would no longer meet the needs of those it served. Apart from any other consideration, it was too slow, involving negotiations with tens of different universities. By 1940 a different sort of response was needed. Many of the sacked scholars were personally known to the Foundation staff, they were in urgent danger, and they needed financial and other help to escape. There was no time for lengthy procedures negotiating with institutions to secure placements for individual scholars, or leaving it to others to find reservations on boats, or visas. “Action, to be effective, had to be taken at once.”

The 1940 Emergency Programme for European Scholars therefore had to be different. The new programme had to: make grants for travel expenses; meet State Department requirements of assurance of a teaching position for at least two years to obtain a non-quota visa; avoid any direct “contract” between the Foundation and the scholars by finding an institution which would invite and receive the scholars; and, make some provision for the future if scholars could not return home.

The Foundation came to an arrangement with the New School for Social Research in New York to accept not more than 100 scholars to be selected by the Foundation. The New School, the Institute of International Education and the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars could recommend scholars but the final decisions rested with the Foundation. The US State Department was persuaded that assurance of a teaching position for at least two years should qualify the person for a non-quota visa (problems

7 Appleget, Refugee Scholars Programme, 1940: p. 2, 545, 47, 555, RG 1.1
8 Ibid: p. 3
later arose when the State Department quibbled over whether the New School had university status). With all arrangements in place the Foundation invited 89 scholars. 31 people either did not accept the invitation or could not leave, six accepted but could not in the event escape and 52 scholars successfully reached the US and took up teaching positions. ⁹

In Europe by now even the most mundane things were difficult. In this case one of the many problems was how to get invitations to scholars. Addresses had often changed, scholars might be in hiding, or had simply have moved to another place. In one case, for example, Makinsky could not locate a Polish professor the Foundation wished to invite; he contacted the Polish Minister in Portugal to see if he could help; the Minister was unable to, and so the only way left seemed to be to transmit the invitation through the German authorities but, Makinsky wryly noted, “this seems definitely inadvisable.” ¹⁰ Contacting scientists through the relevant French government department in Vichy was also, Makinsky argued, a bad idea. ¹¹

Not everyone wanted to leave. For some French scholars, at some stages, leaving was seen as a form of collaboration with Vichy. If they left then the Vichy government would be able to fill their posts with pro-German people. This théorie de la présence was, according to Makinsky, out of vogue by December 1940 as more and more people came to the conclusion that nothing was to be gained by staying in France. ¹²

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⁹  Ibid
¹⁰  Makinsky to Johnson, December 20, 1940: 534, 47, 200, RG1.1
¹¹  Makinsky to Miller, December 23, 1940: ibid
¹²  Ibid
The dilemmas for Makinsky and the Foundation just kept on growing. What to do with people who were older and thus with no career ahead of them? Some people were turned down simply because they were not “still in their active period of contribution to scholarship” – this was the reason given for refusing a man aged 66 years.\(^\text{13}\) A similarly difficult issue arose for those without the ability to speak English and again, at some stages, it seems that this was a reason for rejecting applications.

The fall of France had raised other issues. One was how to respond to French scholars who “might turn out to be the supporters of a regime with which we shall probably not be too friendly.”\(^\text{14}\) Attitudes to the Vichy government were complicated. Some saw them as Nazi collaborators, others as the legitimate government of France – with whom the US was not at war. This particular dilemma seems to have been fairly short-lived – and French scholars were certainly accepted.

\textbf{MAKINSKY’S MAGIC}

Leaving aside any moral or political dilemmas, some very practical problems had to be resolved. Once a fleeing scholar had received and accepted an invitation to another post there were a multitude of practical problems in obtaining the necessary papers, exit and entry visas.

\(^{13}\) Kittredge to Strode, December 6, 1940
\(^{14}\) Marshall memo, October 29, 1940: 1428, 202, 500, RG1.1
Makinsky, in Lisbon (the route out for most émigrés), bore the brunt of providing practical help, negotiating his way around the labyrinth of restrictions. It was a complicated process involving (for the French) a French passport, a Spanish visa and a Portuguese visa. These, of course, were in addition to the American Immigration Certificate and other papers. As the numbers seeking safety grew, officials in the US government, opposed to further immigration and fearful of spies and Bolshevists, adopted a policy of slow obstruction to those seeking visas. Breckinridge Long, in charge of refugee matters in the US State Department, urged officials to advise US consuls to “put every obstacle in the way and to require additional evidence and to resort to various administrative devices which would postpone and postpone and postpone the granting of the visas.”

After acquiring all the necessary papers, the person had to actually get to Lisbon, and then secure, and pay for, a passage on a boat sailing to the US. Makinsky spent countless hours arranging papers, boat reservations, ticket payments, and so on. He even kept a lodging in reserve: “In a city where every cubic foot is at a premium, where even the hotel bathtubs have been rented as beds on occasion...as fast as the room is vacated by its departing refugee, there is a newcomer to take over.”

Meyerhof (he of the lost handkerchiefs) presented a fairly typical set of problems. In 1938 Meyerhof had moved to a post in France where all was well until just before the fall of France when he, his wife and son left Paris and took refuge in a city in the south of France. But it soon became clear that the Meyerhofs had to get out, and, in July 1940 the Foundation made a grant to

15 Quoted in Kearns Goodwin 1994: p. 173
16 Lisbon Bottle Neck to Freedom, Trustee Bulletin March 1941: p. 19
the University of Pennsylvania to take Meyerhof into the medical faculty.

Having found a university and secured a grant for Meyerhof, Makinsky’s work was just beginning. The problem was to get out of France as there was a clause in the Franco-German armistice which forbids French authorities from granting exit papers to former Germans. Makinsky sent numerous telegrams to officials in Vichy, and wrote to the director of the International Police in Lisbon, the American consul general in Marseille, and other people of influence. Meanwhile the ship on which he had engaged passage for the Meyerhofs sailed for New York on July 30.17 Makinsky recorded:

In view of the uncertainty of postal communications with France, Makinsky sent two letters to Meyerhof to inform him (one by post, one via a friend leaving Lisbon for France on Monday), and asked Strode to write to Meyerhof with the same message at Hotel Splendide Marseille.18

On August 14 there was a telegram and letter from Meyerhof indicating that he

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17 Ibid: p. 17
18 Alexander Makinsky officer’s diary, August 9, 1940
was having difficulties getting a French exit permit. Letters were now taking
two to three weeks to reach Lisbon from the French free zone. Makinsky
telegraphed Meyerhof explaining the arrangements made and suggested that
in case of difficulty Meyerhof should contact O’Brien at Vichy. He then sent
a telegram to O’Brien with the same information. On August 22 the second
ship sailed, the barrage of appeals to Vichy continued, the American Charge
d’Affaires added his pleas, there were cables from the University and from the
State Department (all arranged and orchestrated by Makinsky) – but there
was no way a German could be allowed to leave France.

On August 23 Makinsky received another telegram from Meyerhof saying that
he still had no exit visa, would not be arriving for August 28 and would Makinsky
please send money and look after luggage forwarded by Cooks. Cooks’ office
had promised Makinsky that, if necessary, the reservations for the Meyerhofs
could be transferred to an American Export liner leaving on September 12.
In spite of that promise Cooks now said there was no space on that boat and
refused to reimburse Makinsky for the cost of tickets on the Greek Line. After
a day spent at the American Export Line office, the Greek Navigation Line
and Cooks, the American Export Line agreed to take Meyerhof should he
arrive before September 12 and the Greek Line insisted that Cooks refund the
Foundation’s money. On August 27, 1940 Makinsky recorded: “To Cooks to get
back the amount in dollars paid in advance for Professor Meyerhof’s ticket.”

Makinsky had already met Meyerhof’s request for funds to be cabled to Cooks
in Barcelona for his trip, but then a new note arrived indicating that the
problem was not Meyerhof’s visa but that for his son. On September 7, 1940
Joseph Stokes of the American Friends Service Committee brought news that
Professor Meyerhof was unable to secure his exit permit and that Meyerhof
had therefore left Marseille for the Pyrenees Orientales. A month later on

19 Alexander Makinsky officer’s diary, September 2, 1940
October 7, 1940 two telegrams arrived from Meyerhof now in Barcelona, announcing their arrival in Lisbon by plane on the afternoon of October 8. Makinsky wrote in his diary:

**Tuesday October 8, 1940**

“The telegram said: ‘We are both arriving’ – I suppose it means Meyerhof and wife, and that their son stayed behind. AM is requested to meet Meyerhof at the Cintra aerodrome, with proofs in hand that passage has been reserved, otherwise Meyerhof will not be allowed to land.

AM meets M at the Cintra aerodrome with a letter from American Export Line clarifying that they will try to get accommodation...on the Exichordia sailing October 16. Nothing, however, is less certain, as the company has a large number of people on the waiting list. If this is not possible AM will cable New York to see what they can do...M’s son has remained in France.”

Noting that “Meyerhof very much in the clouds about everything that concerns such matter of fact things as funds or travel arrangements”, Makinsky gave Meyerhof more money, reserved rooms for them at Hotel Tivoli, and paid the American Export Line for their reservation. He also arranged for them to see
various people including the Director of the International Police, telegraphed other people about their safe arrival, and arranged that the University of Pennsylvania was informed.

In October, Makinsky was still working to help the Meyerhofs. He gave Meyerhof a letter to the American Consulate at Marseille certifying that Meyerhof’s son Walter was a student of the University of Pennsylvania and that the RF was taking care of travel expenses for Meyerhof and his family. Another letter went to the International Police at Elvas and at Cintra indicating that the Foundation was making travel arrangements for Walter Meyerhof’s trip to the US. Makinsky also forwarded to O’Brien Meyerhof’s request that his books, etc. be packed up and kept safe in Paris.

On October 10, 1940 Makinsky saw Cordell (the American Consul) and was told that Walter Meyerhof could go to the US on a regular quota visa. He immediately informed Meyerhof, who had been offered a cabin on a boat sailing that day but did not take it because he was waiting for his luggage to arrive. At long last on October 15 Makinsky gave Meyerhof money for the American Export Line plus more money for expenses and arranged to pay for and forward luggage when it arrived. The Meyerhofs (without Walter) sailed on the Exichorda the next day.

Through the rest of October, November and December Makinsky responded to Walter Meyerhof’s requests for help in arranging visas and finding a boat passage. After hours of work and numerous set-backs it was January 31, 1941 when another telegram from Walter Meyerhof arrived: “Got French exit visa. Made second application for Spanish visa yesterday at Perpignan. Please cable again Spanish Foreign Office. Please inform Dr Joy, Hotel Metropole, Lisbon. Thankfully. Meyerhof.”20 Walter Meyerhof finally left in May.

20 Ibid: p. 137
For the Meyerhofs the story had a happy ending: Walter did indeed join his parents (and later won his own Nobel Prize for his work at Stanford). As outlined above, the ending of the story for Makinsky was less happy. Perhaps adding insult to injury, Makinsky later learned that Walter had allowed the Quakers in Lisbon to cable their committee in Philadelphia that he was “stranded” because of lack of funds.

The Meyerhof family saga was just one of many that Makinsky dealt with at this time. In addition to dealing with the people who had been offered places at the New School (and elsewhere) the Foundation had to deal with those who had nowhere to go. The impression that anyone could seek help from the Foundation was heightened when a list of invited scholars was mistakenly sent to all American consulates. The list included not only scientists but also novelists, journalists and so on. This not only increased pressures on the Foundation but may also have contributed to the idea that the Foundation was “importing thousands of scientists” into the US. By 1945 the new programme had helped 303 scholars from twelve nationalities. In addition to many leading scientists, scholars included: Paul Tillich, Jean Benoit-Levy, Claude Levi-Strauss, Thomas Mann, and Karl Mannheim, among many others.

Benoit-Levy, the leading producer of French educational and cultural films, was one of the lucky ones. With some difficulty, he was finally able to leave France with his wife and two daughters to take up a post at the New School in September 1941. Most of Benoit-Levy’s difficulties in getting to the US were not of his making but when Benoit Levy informed Makinsky that the boat on which Makinsky had secured reservations for him and his family was “trop pénibles pour ma famille” and asked for a reservation on another boat, Makinsky was understandably exasperated.21

21 Alexander Makinsky officer’s diary, June 23, 1941: op.cit
Problems with the programme were not confined to Europe. Local reactions, within the US, were also a matter of some concern. In December 1940 the Foundation received a letter from a professor at the University of Chicago spelling out some of the difficulties with the programme from the viewpoint of American universities.

“One of the chief points of difficulty in the recent past has been that a number of the scholars have assumed – or at least their friends have assumed – that they ought to be added to some American faculty irrespective of the prospect of their adjustment, their competence, or their potential future contributions. I think it should be accepted as a norm that only in rare cases can we expect the European scholar to be placed in an institution in academic life in America corresponding to what he had in Europe before the disaster. Normally, we should assume that some other way out will have to be found. The proposition with which many universities, including our own, have been in conflict on a number of occasions in recent years is: ‘will you ask so-and-so to your faculty?’ Considering the condition in which many of our universities are, the only possible answer to such a challenge in most instances is ‘no’: (a) we do not have the means, and (b) if we had, he might not be the best man for the job, and (c) if some foundation underwrites him temporarily we still could not take him because we cannot give an honest promise that we will employ him thereafter.”

The professor went on to point to the effects of refugee scholars on younger native students and staff. “It is, of course, a very noble gesture to be able to say that we welcome the foreign scholar and Hitler’s barbarism has been our good fortune. But this will not assuage the young person near the beginning of his career who sees his opportunities thwarted or at least limited when even an eminent man is added to the staff of his university or even when

22 Wirth to Kittredge, December 4, 1940: p. 1, 534, 47, 200, RG 1.1
for the time being the money comes from the outside, for it does not always
mean that a department in a university is strengthened thereby. Often it may
actually mean – or the young academician may think it means – that as a man
is added at the top the road for him from the bottom up becomes more and
more precarious.”23

Much more effort, he suggested, should go into the study of a person’s past
career and qualifications beyond simply getting references and a curriculum
vitae, and the “rosy picture of academic opportunities” needed to be deflated.
Openings in colleges in the Mid-West and South should be explored, as well as
other types of posts.24

As the war continued there was a growing problem of what to do with people
who came over on funding to temporary (two year) posts, and then could
not go back. To deal with this and the problems outlined by Wirth above, the
Foundation commissioned a survey of openings for refugee scholars outside
the major northern cities.

Yet more problems arose early in 1941 when Dr Faria, a government official
in Portugal, complained that the Portuguese government agreed to assist the
Foundation with a base in Lisbon in the hope of some advantage. Instead,
he complained, local facilities had been used merely to get visas or other
privileges and the Foundation employees stayed for the shortest possible
time, on their way to work in countries which were neither stable politically
nor economically; and the Foundation was evidently not considering doing
any work in Portugal. Furthermore, he went on, the Foundation was helping a
great many refugees to leave occupied and other territories and proceed to
the Americas. That these were largely Jews – and some of them German Jews

23 Ibid: p.2
24 Ibid
— had caused criticism in certain quarters, or at least conjecture, and had given rise to complaints. 25 There is, however, some uncertainty about where these complaints were coming from — the Germans or the International Police.

In early December 1940 Willitts, working on the programme in New York, wrote an office memo stating that a decision had been made to suspend activities in bringing over new scholars and to focus instead on trying to “market to scholars already here.” An exception might be made for a “paragon.”

In 1941 the Foundation gave a grant to the Emergency Committee in Aid of Deposited Foreign Scholars to employ Dr Seelye to travel around the US exploring opportunities to place the refugee scholars. In New Orleans, for example, the University of Tulane became very enthusiastic over a plan to bring French scholars from the New School to Tulane. “The idea is to set up an institute of French culture, a little Sorbonne within Tulane...” 26

1942: LEAVING LISBON

In July 1941, as the situation deteriorated further and with the US in a state of emergency, Makinsky returned to the US. Back in New York in April 1942 staff were becoming concerned about the future of the scholars and the programme. No amount of “marketing” to other universities was going to overcome some of the fundamental issues. How long could the Foundation be responsible for these people? Was this going to be a lifetime commitment? And then things became even more difficult.

25 R. B. Hill officer’s diary, February 1941: 28, 4, 700, RG 1.1
26 Resettling the Refugee Scholars, Trustee Bulletin October 1941: p. 17
The State Department in Washington had already become concerned about entrance visas for some Foundation sponsored scholars, and summoned the Foundation to a meeting early in 1942. Makinsky attended on behalf of the Foundation. The State Department was not happy:

January 24, 1942

"The State Department is not anxious, apparently, to bring over many new aliens, and their decision with regard to entrance visas is more and more influenced by the immediate usefulness of the scholar from the point of view of national defence. The State Department is therefore inclined to give preference to men representing such fields as physics, chemistry and mathematics, to the detriment of social scientists, philosophers or historians...it is this, and not discrimination against the New School as an institution which accounts for the delay in the consideration of New School applications.

Another guiding principle of the State Department seems to be not to admit to this country individuals who are likely to become politically active, even if that activity is in line with present US policy...It is likewise obvious that
Rumours were rife in Washington that the Foundation was stopping all aid to refugee scholars after two of the men brought over by the Foundation were arrested by the FBI.27 That evening Makinsky learned from another source that there was likely to be a rift between the US and the Vichy government very soon, but that this did not mean that the State Department would be prepared to recognise General Charles de Gaulle.

When Makinsky went on a tour of universities in 1942 the complaints received earlier were confirmed and there were further allegations about prejudices towards foreigners, anti-Semitism and the failure of European professors to adapt to US teaching styles. The rescued scholars themselves complained about the lack of research assistants, the low pay, and so on.

27 Ibid
While the US, unlike Britain, had retained reasonably cordial relations with the Vichy government, de Gaulle in London had set up what was in effect a French government in exile. Who to relate to - Vichy or de Gaulle - was tricky and it was anyone's guess what an eventual post-war French government might look like.

The universities were trying to manage with reduced income, but money was not the only problem. There was also “a psychological problem” about filling posts of drafted Americans with deposed scholars. As fellowships ended and people were stranded in the US with no means of support there were other problems, including worries that some of the deposed scholars were being treated better, or more leniently, than American staff of higher quality.  

The US “inherited” some of the brightest and best of Europe’s scientists and scholars. The effect for Europe was also profound. The New School hosted what became known as “the Sorbonne in exile.” As Alvin Johnson (Director of the New School in New York) commented in 1945, the programme saved lives and hopes, and it preserved a group of exceptional individuals who subsequently returned to Europe to take part in post war reconstruction of education and other services.

Looking back on the programme it clearly had a profound effect on intellectual life and teaching in the US. The US “inherited” some of the brightest and best of Europe’s scientists and scholars. The effect for Europe was also profound. The New School hosted what became known as “the Sorbonne in exile.” As Alvin Johnson (Director of the New School in New York) commented in 1945, the programme saved lives and hopes, and it preserved a group of exceptional individuals who subsequently returned to Europe to take part in post war reconstruction of education and other services.

For the Foundation, as well as for the universities and no doubt the scholars, the programme was riddled with problems. Was this a humanitarian
programme rescuing and giving sanctuary to people whose lives were at risk? Was it an intellectual, hard-nosed effort to save the best brains and academic work in Europe? Was it an effort to save the best brains and serve the US in the process?

The Foundation never seemed quite sure. In the end it seems that the Refugee Scholar programme was curtailed because it became too big to handle. The universities could not take more scholars; the State Department could not, or would not, take more refugees; and the Foundation could not, or would not, assume global responsibility: “Although the officers are distressed over the refugee problem in this country, in Great Britain, and elsewhere, it has grown to such a magnitude as to constitute a world problem.”

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30 Willitts memo, 534, 47, 200, RG1.1
Chapter 7
France Encore

PLANS FOR THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION HEALTH COMMISSION IN EUROPE

In New York, on the night of Sunday September 3, 1939 George King Strode wrote in his diary: “Great Britain declared war on Germany this morning and France followed suit five hours later. Until five or six years ago I had thought it might be avoided. I have never felt more despondent and discouraged. It was impossible to leave the radio and by midnight I was utterly worn out.”

Strode had been with the Foundation’s International Health Division since 1917 when he was assigned to Brazil. After serving in the US Army Medical Corps in France in the First World War he returned to the Foundation and was based at the Paris office overseeing the Division’s work in Europe, Africa and the Near East. In 1938 Strode had been promoted to director of the International Health Division based in New York. Only a year before his promotion his wife Elizabeth, whom he had met while she was nursing during the First World War in France, died after a brief illness.

Once war had been declared Strode and his colleagues knew that there would be enormous pressure for the Foundation to do something immediate. The idea of a Health Commission for Europe, suggested by Fosdick in early 1940, seemed like a useful and appropriate response to the need for action. At first the idea was fairly vague – something around assessing the

1 George Strode officer’s diary, September 3, 1939: Reel 3 p.113
health needs of Europe. Over the following months Strode and others worked on the focus, shape and scope of the programme.

The idea of a Health Commission troubled some staff. Staff were anxious to help the people of Europe but their experience during the last war had shown that it was difficult to make any lasting difference at such a time. It was difficult to work with governments when they were pre-occupied with fighting a war, and without government support the programmes would not be continued. In France during the last war, for example, the programme to prevent tuberculosis had been successful but the bigger issue of persuading the government to reorganise public health services ended soon after the Foundation’s last grant.

Despite these reservations Strode and Dr Wilbur Augustus Sawyer were allocated to work full time on the Health Commission as from July 1, 1940. O’Brien joined the team later.

Sawyer graduated from Harvard Medical School in 1906, served in the last war as a Major in the US Army Medical Corps and then joined the International Health Division in 1919. After five years in Australia working on the hookworm campaign and acting as Adviser in Public Health, in 1924 he returned to the US as Director of Laboratories for the International Health Division, acting as consultant to most of the states in developing public health services. In 1926 Sawyer was sent to Lagos, Nigeria where he stayed for nine months revising the yellow fever programme and starting new work. From 1932 he became unofficial consultant to the League of Nations in all matters relating to yellow fever, as well as initiating research that led to the development of an effective yellow fever vaccine.

A number of outstanding scientists at that time had died as a result of their research work in yellow fever. Sawyer decided that only he and a small group
of fellow workers should take the risks the work required – inoculating the
monkeys with the yellow fever virus, feeding them, cleaning their cages,
performing the necropsies etc. Then he caught the disease. Unable to test
the vaccine on himself because of the immunity gained by his recovery from
the disease in 1931, he successfully inoculated his only son (then ten years
old) and later nine other volunteers. But the vaccine was still not suitable for
mass production. In 1935 Sawyer became director of the International Health
Division and the research continued under his direction. Two years later Dr Max
Thieler, a member of staff, developed a vaccine suitable for mass production
for which he later received a Nobel Prize.²

Summer 1940 was filled with meetings, information gathering and diplomacy.
As always, the Foundation did its homework before finally deciding on the
shape of a programme. Sawyer and Strode met with the American Red Cross
and the State Department in Washington where they were advised that they
should write to all Ambassadors or Ministers in European countries.

On July 8, 1940 the Foundation’s Trustees “heartily approved” the proposal
for a Health Commission to Europe. After yet more discussion the scope of
the programme was decided. In mainland Europe the focus was initially to be
on nutrition and general sanitation, especially delaying diseases caused by
poor diet, and in Britain the influenza vaccine (developed with the help of the
Foundation) would also be supplied, largely for research purposes.

$500,000 was allocated to establish and maintain the Rockefeller Foundation

² By 1940 Sawyer and his associates had inoculated two million people in South America
against yellow fever and a supply of the vaccine was prepared for US troops who
might be sent to places still having the disease. In 1944 Sawyer became Director of
Health of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.
Health Commission in Europe.\footnote{In the event the Foundation spent $2.25 million on the Rockefeller Foundation Health Commission between 1940 and 1947, including some work in India and China, as stated in the Report of the Commission, July 1946 to December 1947: 27, 4, 700, RG 1.1} Plans worked out with the Red Cross, the State Department and the French and British governments drew a supposedly sharp division between relief and technical assistance. The relief agencies were to supply food, shelter, clothing, etc. while the Commission was to provide technical advice and staff in building an adequate health system, and, in cooperation with governments, undertake the control of epidemics arising out of the war.

The Commission was also later asked by the War and Navy Departments to provide sufficient yellow fever vaccines to immunise 100,000 people; and the British National Institute for Medical Research asked for enough doses of the Foundation’s new influenza vaccine to immunise two million people (500,000 doses were shipped; 115,000 were lost when the Western Prince was torpedoed but these were later replaced).

In all of these plans Strode and Sawyer put great emphasis on cooperating with other bodies in the US and Europe, not duplicating what others were doing and not rushing in without understanding the intended and unintended consequences of any course of action.

Strode and Sawyer had lunch with Lord Lothian, the British Ambassador. Perhaps predictably the Ambassador wanted to know what food, clothing and drugs the Foundation would be giving to Britain. The team emphasised that they were not supplying any material help, but quickly assured Lord Lothian that vaccines might be available if required. They sketched out their plans to work first in unoccupied France and other parts of Europe not actively involved in war and “when occasion presented itself” to work in Great Britain as well.
July 12, 1940

“The Ambassador could see no reason why we should not proceed but suggested that as a matter of record we should furnish him with a letter setting forth the aims of the Commission in broad outline which he would then transmit to his government for its information.”

George Strode officer’s diary: p. 123, R.G.12.2

Lord Lothian then helpfully telephoned the French Ambassador to arrange an immediate interview for the Foundation team. At the French Embassy, Count Rene Doynel de Saint-Quentin:

“The Ambassador received them courteously but with all the appearance of a broken man. The Embassy itself was without the slightest animation and there appeared to be no business going on. The Ambassador felt quite certain that there would be an opportunity of working in France and that the Commission would be welcome there. He saw no reason why we should consult with the German Embassy regarding admission into unoccupied France. He suggested that a letter be written to him setting forth the facts relating to the Commission which presumably he will transmit to his government and which will also serve him in issuing instructions to his Consul General in New York respecting visas for the passports of the Commissioners.”

Ibid: p. 132-3
As word of the Foundation’s plans spread, the Commission team became a calling point for other organisations wanting to help in Europe. For example, Mr Johnson (of Johnson and Johnson) called to say he knew of 50 available ambulances for use in France, plus a field hospital with 100 beds “ordered by a group of people interested in France. Curiously enough, the hospital project was conceived without relationship to any personnel whatsoever.”4 This, of course, was precisely the sort of hasty, well-intentioned help that the Foundation sought to avoid through its seemingly ponderous preparations.

Strode and others continued their visits in New York and Washington to gather information about work in Europe; and they visited the German Vice Consul in Washington to inquire about visas. At the same time, they met with scientists directing previously funded studies on nutrition to discuss in detail the technique and apparatus necessary for measuring vitamin deficiencies.

Finally, the team set off for Europe. Strode wrote in his diary:

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Sunday August 4, 1940

“On board DIXIE CLIPPER the commission members assembled at the PAA office, on Forty-Second Street...Drove from there to La Guardia Field, where we went through the usual formalities prior to boarding our plane, the DIXIE CLIPPER.
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4 Ibid: p. 137
No difficulties whatever. We got off about 3pm, but spent over twenty minutes being taxied about. When the throttle opened, we made real time and were in the air within a minute, or at 3:25pm. Thus with simplicity and no fanfare we set off on what seemed like a real undertaking, but which in reality proved very simple. Weather was good throughout and the ocean showed scarcely a ripple. We rode with more steadiness than the smoothest train.

...The first part of the journey was along the North Shore of Long Island. We looked down on Fishers Island, Block Island, Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket from about 8,000 feet, the altitude we maintained a good part of the way. Soon we lost sight of land and settled down to making acquaintances with fellow passengers, among whom were: Dr Joseph Stokes and Mr Burns Chalmers of the Quakers’ organisation; Mr Fry a YMCA man representing John Mott; Mr Mackey an Australian and author of “Federal Europe”, now living in London and returning there after having circled the globe in an airplane; an official of the PAA; the French purchasing agent to the US (returning for good). There were three ladies as well.

We learned that the American Friends Service Committee now has 34 workers in Europe...Kershner is in charge in unoccupied France...while Miss Margaret Fawley is in charge in the occupied area...
Dinner aboard the plane was very tasty - fried chicken, peas and potatoes, with soup and dessert. The berths were commodious and comfortable, but Strode slept poorly on account of the noise, which a fellow passenger told me later he overcame by stuffing his ears with wax. We all turned in early because we were scheduled to arrive at Horta about 5:30am (New York time) and therefore had to rise about 4am.

**Monday August 5, 1940**

**Horta - Lisbon**

The chief hold-up on the plane are the facilities for toilet in the morning; still, since no one really has to finish shaving at a certain hour and no one seemed to mind waiting, all got through eventually. A substantial breakfast of bacon and eggs, etc., was served, and then we came down for re-fuelling at Horta, the picturesque port in the Island of Faial...An old Portugese gun boat was the only thing to recall that we were nearing Europe’s field of conflict. Horta’s brightly coloured houses, its ox carts (drawn by milch cows), its girls with straw hats a yard wide and its small, well-tilled fields combined to give character to the place. The sail-like windmills also characterise the countryside. On our way from Horta we flew over several other members of the Azores group, and after the usual seven hours or so, we came into sight of land and soon started following the Tague up to Lisbon and the debarkation pier.
The city was most attractive in the light of a setting sun. We touched water at about 8:30pm Lisbon time...Our flying time was about 23 hours, and it seemed strange indeed to be walking about Lisbon today, whereas yesterday we had been away off there in New York City.

They were met by the Charge d'Affaires of the French Legation with instructions from his government to help in any way in getting the Foundation team into France:

About 10pm we got down to the business of dinner, and then turned in for the day. Makinsky gave us interesting comments on the sort of rumours that constantly circulate here in Lisbon and keep everyone in a state of uneasiness”

Ibid: p. 141-2

The initial plan was to maintain an office in Lisbon for the Commission, with Makinsky in charge, and for the Commission's first work to be done in unoccupied France with headquarters in Vichy. The team soon realised that it would take as long to get from Lisbon to Vichy as it took to get from New York to Lisbon. The plan was to drive from Lisbon to Madrid and take the train from there to Vichy by some route. No one was sure how to get from Vichy to Paris because all communication between the occupied and unoccupied zones had been suspended.

Americans leaving Europe to return home had cars to give away and Strode was given a friend's “big Graham.” Only later did he realise the problems of
obtaining – and paying for – gasoline. Food and gasoline were the two worries when they left Lisbon and drove to Madrid on August 9, 1940. From Madrid they flew to Barcelona and then took a train to Cerbere, another to Narbonne, and another from there to Toulouse. From Toulouse they boarded a train to Limoges to wait for a train to Vichy.

France was in chaos. People who fled from northern France as the Germans approached were still searching for places to live, and many were making the long and hungry journey home, not knowing what home they would find. The roads and railway stations were packed with soldiers and refugees. Strode and his colleagues were in the midst of the mêlée:

**Friday August 9, 1940**

“The train was as crowded as I have ever seen a train - even the WC in our coach was occupied by a party of four women who had to develop a technique of crowding into the overall rear platform whenever the WC was needed for other purposes. WAS (Sawyer) can explain how they worked it out. GKS (Strode himself) had a space of about 8x10 inches on which to stand and others were equally cramped. About 7 hours of such travel is about enough at one stretch and we were delighted when we arrived at St Germain where we changed trains for Vichy.”

Ibid: p. 151
When the Foundation team arrived, hotels in Vichy were already packed. The hotels were occupied in a clear hierarchy – the government stayed at the best hotel and minor civil servants and secretaries in the more Spartan establishments. Used to staying in the best hotels, the Foundation team had to make do with two rooms in a third class hotel. Much to their relief a day later they managed to move to Hotel Majestic and again “have real comfort.”

The first stop was a meeting with Robert Murphy, the American Charge d’Affaires. He described the difficulties of communication between the occupied and unoccupied zones and the slow reorganisation of France into 28 provinces.

After the German occupation of Paris the government had moved first to Bordeaux and then to Clermont-Ferrand where it stayed only a day because of lack of accommodation. Vichy, a sleepy spa town, was finally chosen as the least worst option. Its advantage was that it had no Radical mayor (as did Lyon, for example), no potentially troublesome working class population, and plenty of large hotels to house government officials. The hotels soon became overcrowded; bedrooms doubled as offices and bathtubs were used as filing cabinets. There was talk of returning to Paris (as the terms of the Armistice allowed) but the Germans did not like that idea and nothing happened.

Vichy functioned like a court with Petain at its centre. When Reynaud (the Prime Minister at the time of the invasion of France) resigned, Marshal Petain, hero of the last war and now aged 83, was asked to form a government. Petain negotiated an armistice, telling the French people that the defeat had been the result of “a spirit of enjoyment” overcoming the “spirit of sacrifice”; France had become soft, indulgent, corrupt; he, Petain, would institute an intellectual and moral renewal in France. Petain trusted no one, least of all perhaps his Deputy Prime Minister Laval who was later tricked into resigning. Vichy was a nest of vipers, plots and counter-plots.

1° Jackson 2001: p. 142

5 Ibid: p.152
Britain and Vichy were no longer in communication and Britain had been required to withdraw its diplomats as a result of the tragedy of Mers-el-Kebir. French warships moored at the Algerian naval base had been asked by the British to surrender the fleet. When, possibly through a series of misunderstandings, the French commanders did not meet the British ultimatum the Royal Navy sank the French fleet to prevent it falling into German hands. 1267 French sailors were killed. In retaliation Petain cut off relations with Britain and ordered an aerial bombardment of Gibraltar.

Equally important was the news that there was a possibility that health services might be relocated to Paris; if this happened the team would also have to move their operations to Paris in the occupied zone. Over dinner the talk centred on the coming winter, the fear that Britain would stick to its threat of refusing to allow food into France lest it be used to feed the Germans, and the difficult relations between the British and Vichy governments.6

Moving on with the work required contacts with people in government. In the old days the Foundation staff in Paris had friends in government, but this was a new government from which many of the team’s old friends had been dismissed or had fled. Murphy introduced them to Monsieur Badouin,

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6 Ibid: p. 153
Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, as a first step in getting in touch with the Vichy government. No doubt they were encouraged when the Minister said the Foundation was “well known in France and he wished to welcome the Commission.”
CHAPTER 7: FRANCE ENCORE
Chapter 8
Fighting for Health in France

THE HARDSHIPS OF PARIS

By the end of August 1940 O’Brien was back in Paris. The summer had been beautiful; the flowers were fading and the lawns dry. On a visit to the Foundation’s temporary offices in La Baule O’Brien had “A much too close experience of British bombing at 4am just after descending from the train for a five hour wait at Savenay...An excellent display of fireworks and anti-aircraft guns with tracer bullets.”

Finding somewhere to stay in Paris was difficult. The Nazis had requisitioned the best hotels: the Crillon, the Ritz, Majestic, Raphael and George-V. The American Embassy had made its base in the Hotel Bristol and the Foundation, as well as the American Red Cross and other US individuals and organisations, made it a regular meeting place.

In theory, German occupation of Paris was of little consequence to American citizens. Under international law, as a nation not at war, American people, their houses and businesses could not be touched if they had the red seal certifying American citizenship. But although they might be safe, life for O’Brien and Strode was certainly not easy. Getting money through from New York was one of the most pressing problems. For men used to having money and doors open to them, the situation in France came as a rude shock. Unable to move around as they pleased, without money, and without access to government and power, were not the Foundation’s usual working conditions.

The people of Paris were still shocked by the defeat. In a report for the office in

1 En route from Paris to La Baule, O’Brien officer’s diary, August 24, 1940: RG 12.2
2 Glass 2009:37
New York O’Brien noted the understandable desire of the French to blame someone else for the fall – notably the Belgians and the English – but the “Socialistic Blum Government...more than any one other factor is blamed for the fall of France.”\(^3\) There was little evidence of any plan from Vichy for rehabilitation of the nation but what was clear, O’Brien reported, was the “spontaneous and practically universal resistance by French against Germans: While the invaders are very numerous and well-nigh all-powerful, the invaded act as if the Germans were non-existent.”\(^4\)

Through August and early September, Strode, O’Brien and Sawyer criss-crossed Paris making contacts, assessing the situation, meeting people, getting passes to move around, and so on. The pressure on them to supply relief grew. Monsieur Doumerc from the Direction des Affaires Municipales, in charge of food matters in Paris, asked the Foundation to supply canned milk. Strode and O’Brien explained that they were interested in the effects of malnutrition on people whereas for Doumerc clearly “the more compelling

\(^3\) Conditions in France, December 30, 1940: p. 2, 1429, 202, 500, RG 1.1
\(^4\) Ibid: p. 2
interest centred about meeting the acute shortage.” Strode also explained that there were other organisations engaged in relief with which the Foundation did not wish to compete and suggested that Doumerc visit the American Red Cross and explain the exact situation.\(^5\)

Food in Paris was fast becoming a major issue. On September 23, 1940 ration cards were to be issued in the City of Paris and the Department of the Seine. Doumerc said he had enough flour and sugar to get through the winter, but only on very restricted allowances. The meat supply would be reduced and there would be no fresh vegetables at the end of the present growing season. The biggest shortage was of all fats and there was an acute shortage of milk for babies and the elderly. The problem was not just that of food but also the lack of freight cars to bring supplies into the city; without transport, food and fuel would be severely restricted. Doumerc was clearly a man on the edge:

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\textit{September 1949}

“D said he lives in his office 24 hours a day; pointed out one corner of the room which he called his bedroom, and another corner his cuisine. The responsibility of feeding three and a half million people, which probably will increase to over five million within the next two months, weighs extremely heavily on his conscience.”

\textit{Ibid: p. 156}

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\(^5\) George Strode officer’s diary: p. 156, op.cit
By September 1940 most essential goods were rationed. Food, searching for food, and queuing for food became an obsession, especially in the cities. Grilled acorns stood in for coffee, sunflower leaves for tobacco, and swedes were the mainstay of many a meal. Coal was increasingly hard to find and the winter of 1940 was exceptionally cold with 70 days of frost in Paris. Gazogènes (gas or woodburning cars) and vélo-taxis (bicycle rickshaws) were ways to get around without petrol. The more energetic used bicycles but these became scarce, hugely expensive and were also subject to German requisitioning; when the tyres wore out the shortage of rubber meant that they were impossible to replace.

As winter drew on, food and fuel were not the only problems in France. As O’Brien soon discovered all sorts of regulations made bringing in material help difficult, and there were squabbles between the various relief bodies.

The American Red Cross was in difficulties because of misunderstandings with the French Red Cross and German Red Cross concerning the distribution of milk. There were problems within the French Red Cross and “in many areas visited they were notable for their absence. Mayors and Prefects seemed to be interested only in moving refugees from their area to some other place.” One approach might have been to help to organise a model of active coordinated provision in one area. But every way the team turned work was hampered by the difficulty of communication both within France and between France and New York.

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6 O’Brien officer’s diary, Paris, September 9, 1940: 28, 4, 700, RG 1.1
One of the team’s main aims in France was to create an Institute of Hygiene (Public Health) to be run by the central government. The first step was discussion of needs and possible courses of action with various bodies already working in France, with the central government public health services and with the French Red Cross.

O’Brien wanted to look at conditions in the variety of camps for prisoners and refugees in France. The Comité Français de Service Social agreed to organise a trip for O’Brien and someone from the American Red Cross. The journey itself required careful planning. American and other high-powered cars were prohibited because of the shortage of gasoline so they travelled in a Peugeot and a Citroën. Finding food to buy en route could not be guaranteed so they set off with picnics.

From September 1939 to June 1940, nine million people in France were evacuated. That number alone would have caused problems but what made matters far worse was the speed of evacuation, the confusion and the crowding. Many roads were literally jammed to a standstill. When people did reach a town there was no food and nowhere to stay; that meant another night in the open without a bed and washing facilities. Parents became separated from their children, older people could not walk any further, people were sick, women gave birth by the road side. O’Brien feared that tuberculosis and other contagious diseases would take hold in the overcrowded, hastily erected camps, in addition to everyday illnesses and “mental upset and moral disturbances.”

Upon reaching Beauvais O’Brien was shocked. 2,000 of the 4,000 houses...
had been destroyed. Of the remaining 2,000, half were damaged and half habitable. Water, gas and plumbing were in ruins and there was no water supply or sewerage. There was no coal or other form of heat and there were few windows in the houses. There were cases of dysentery. These were conditions for the rapid spread of an epidemic if one started, but, O’Brien noted, the complete lack of contact with other towns might actually offer some protection. O’Brien concluded:

September 1940

“What is clearly needed is a strong hand and vigorous methods in allocating specific work of an emergency nature to the various charitable and other organisations which are occupied with these tasks. Practically everything in the field of hygiene must be built up, and this means first and foremost a strong central organisation under the State.”

A Visit to Refugees’ and Prisoners’ Camps and to Devastated Regions in the North of France: 29, 28, 4, 700, RG 1.1

But the need was not just for an emergency programme; the bigger problem was to establish a system of public health education in France, starting “with Marechal Petain and the members of the Vichy government.” The sort of institute the Foundation wanted to establish would include careful scientific research. In France, and elsewhere, the Germans had allowed certain scientific work to continue on the principle that science was international (as long as the research did not involve Jews or certain other groups). In some cases
research continued under “supervision”, even though in some instances this “supervision” was not very effective and scientists found ways to dupe the Nazis. But even though some research was allowed there were practical problems to do with lack of staff, lack of heating to keep the experimental mice and rats alive, as well as the difficulties of getting new animal stocks; furthermore, the Germans had confiscated supplies of radium, foreign research literature was banned, and many junior staff were prisoners of war.

Meanwhile the team faced the normal occupational hazards of foundation work. All foundations are magnets for people who believe they can solve the problems of the world - and the Rockefeller Foundation was no exception. Perhaps appropriately, on Friday September 13, 1940 Grace Gassette, an American artist living in Paris, visited Strode. Grace had no medical training, getting her medical knowledge “direct from God” to treat people with mineral salts. Gassette was hoping for funds from the Foundation, but hers was only one of many requests for help. Throughout 1940, and later, a steady stream of visitors sought help in leaving Europe, or to obtain materials to enable them to continue their scientific work. Every request was carefully investigated, and some were more time consuming than others. Help often went well beyond professional responsibilities with personal loans, and other support. Previous grant holders and friends of friends frequently approached the Foundation staff in Europe and New York with requests for help in getting news of family and friends.8

By mid September, Strode was feeling very discouraged. The Health Commission still could not get any money through to the bank in France, and, 8 Ibid: 1428, 500, 500, RG 2
on top of that, it was still “in that uncertain interval between the establishment of the general accord and the formulation of concrete projects.”

O’Brien was more upbeat. He complained of the problems involved in getting any scientific work done, not least because of the shortage of rats and mice, but he found time for a buffet supper with Dr and Madame P. Lecomte du Nouy.

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**September 15, 1940**

“A ride from the Hotel Bristol on the Foundation’s bicycle to Lecomte du Nouy’s apartment, and return in the dark with the usual bicycle light. This, by the way, is a satisfactory means of conveyance to places which are too far away to walk to and do not fall within an easy range of subway stations. Incidentally, on the way one can do his day’s or week’s shopping for items like cigarettes by going to three or four or more tobacconists and obtaining an occasional package of a smokeable brand of French cigarettes...

Lecomte du Nouy holds weekly reunions of his group of younger people who belong to the Philomatic Society. Informal, free, anyone can praise or damn to his
heart’s delight. On questions of future outlook for France the horizon was dark and almost invisible. Feelings of shame that France fell so quickly and hopelessness of a country divided in two with little/no communication, rising costs, decreasing salaries or loss of jobs; feeling of a lack of any plan but also desire of younger people to continue with scientific work despite any obstacles.

It was the sentiment of the group that in the past Foundation aid was of importance but never of critical value. Today the circumstances have so altered the conditions of the country that directed energies on the part of the Foundation with adequate aid in research and hygiene could mean a great deal in determining the destinies of science and education in the future. Aid given to France now would, in the opinion of most, render 20 fold the same aid under previous normal conditions. The whole group was particularly touché by the gesture of the RF Commission in coming to France at this time when aid was most needed.”

O’Brien officer’s diary: op.cit.
Maybe some excitement was added when:

“O’Brien and Strode were dining at the Cremaillere tonight and by chance Marshall Goering had chosen the same night to dine there. We therefore had a close up view of the Marshall and his entourage. The Marshall seems quite business-like and serious looking; his uniform was of a lighter hue than those of his companion officers and he carried his Marshall’s baton.”

Strode officer’s diary: p. 164, op.cit

The day after his supper with Lecomte du Nouy, O’Brien visited the American Embassy to receive confirmation of a cable notifying Strode of the transfer of funds from New York to the bank at Chateauneuf sur Cher. At Chase Bank in rue Cambon he met Mr Bailey the assistant manager, but: “Mr B impresses me as a person who is putting up all possible obstacles and mentioning all conceivable difficulties in connection with anything concerning the functioning of funds in the Paris area.”

10 O’Brien officer’s diary: op.cit
Creating the Institute of Hygiene was not going to be easy. The team needed contacts within the Vichy government to secure the necessary permissions, and to get the assurances they wanted that this investment of RF funds would be continued by government. Then there were problems finding staff, premises, scientific equipment and so on for the prospective Institute. Strode, O’Brien and Sawyer set about searching for a suitable building.

The Vichy government appeared to have little interest in helping the Foundation. O’Brien, having lived in France for some years, would almost certainly have known that Petain and his followers saw the US as a threat to French traditions; and he had probably read the book by Lucien Romier, one of Petain’s advisers, titled “Who Will Be Master, Europe or America?”. At the same time, however, Petainists must have known that America mattered – not least as a source of food.11

For the people of Paris life became harder each month. The 1,300 calorie diet introduced by rationing did not even meet the needs of someone doing nothing all-day; there was a serious lack of milk and cheese arising partly from the slaughter of cows by the German and French armies. But, as O’Brien and the team no doubt observed, experience varied. The rich could still afford to buy scarce food items on the black-market, and in the country rich and poor generally had food from the land and wood to burn for warmth.

In Washington a committee had been formed to consider the US position on providing aid to Europe, contrary to the wishes of the British government. On October 8, 1940 O’Brien and the team learned that this committee of

11 Vinen 2006: p. 70
“15 outstanding Americans” had “stated that in its judgment the American people should not feed the conquered territories of Europe unless the British government gives its free consent un-coerced by any external pressure.”¹² This meant that the team’s plans to obtain supplementary vitamins and minerals were going to be almost impossible. Two days later a cable arrived saying that the US government had ruled that payment of research grants was forbidden.¹³ Another few days later there was slightly better news: the Foundation had decided to offer temporary research grants for work in the US to European scholars unable to continue work where they were.

So what did the much-prized independence of the Rockefeller Foundation mean now? O’Brien was furious that a committee of men sitting in Washington could make decisions about who may and may not help the people of Europe.

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¹² Strode officer’s diary 1940: p. 195 -196, op.cit
¹³ Ibid: p. 197

October 21, 1940

"With this so-called sombre deliberate judgement I am in radical disagreement, as are practically all Americans and foreigners here with whom I have spoken. The decision is too god-like and sweeping and pontifical to meet the pressing and critical needs which I think have just claim to consideration, and this particularly in relation to the future of science in the countries over here."
The team’s plans were developing fast. They wanted to bring in four experts in nutrition and sanitation, who would need to be able to travel within Europe to assess conditions country by country. But by mid-October there were still no passes to bring the new Commission members into France, nor were there passes to travel around in Central Europe. Then, at last, there was hope on the horizon. Colonel Dr Walter, a German official, agreed to see them to discuss their requests for passes. Having stated “not once but several times, that we should realise a war is still going on in this zone”, the Colonel told them that the matter should be raised through the “proper channels.”

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14 Strode officer’s diary, October 21, 1940: 449, RG12
For many French citizens, food was becoming little short of an obsession. Food was especially hard to find in Paris partly because of the number of German soldiers living there and partly because the city was dependent on supplies from the surrounding areas. Queues for food became dangerously unruly: a moment when people in large numbers gathered with a shared grievance and short tempers. Those who could afford it sometimes paid others to queue for them — as O’Brien had in London when waiting for a passport. In June 1941 the Paris police tried to forbid queues for more than half an hour before the shop opened.

For Americans living on expense accounts life was not, yet, too hard. Strode noted:

October 21, 1940

“Today food cards for the second period of four weeks have come into effect...we are now allowed 90 grams of meat four times a week, whereas the old tickets allowed 60 grams six times a week. Those who are keeping house use their coupons for the purchase of spaghetti and potatoes.

They are allowed a kilo per week for the latter. Up until the present Strode personally has had no inconvenience respecting food. The restaurants always provide many plates which require no tickets whatever, such as fish, chicken, rabbit etc. so that restrictions are not felt.
The team may have been able to obtain food but the gregarious O’Brien, in particular, found the isolation difficult. He wrote to a colleague in New York: “For seven weeks, we have been to all intents and purposes prisoners, intellectual and otherwise, of the immediate region of Paris.”

At the end of October, O’Brien had a break from life in Paris when he visited Brussels to catch up with scientists there and to get an overview of conditions in Belgium. His first discovery was that five to six hundred Belgian university professors were on a list being investigated by the Germans; some were on the list because they had been absent since May 10 and some because they were Jewish, a Freemason or belonged to undesirable political parties.

Life in Brussels was very different from that in Paris. There was, O’Brien noted, more food, more bribery and more bootlegging:

A VISIT TO BRUSSELS

17 Letter O’Brien to Gregg, October 25, 1940: 1435, 203, 700, RG1.1
November 18, 1940

"With 880,000 German soldiers as an army of occupation in Belgium, one has the feeling that a very large percentage of those are right in the city of Brussels. At least the town is literally crowded with them – with madly rushing motorcars and motor transports and a well-nourished vigorous, healthy looking and efficient body of men. As elsewhere in France and other places, they are under the strictest of army discipline, are unusually well behaved, polite in their manners, and quiet in restaurants and in public life. They all seem to be on their very best company behaviour, but over and above this one finds a note of sincerity and righteousness insofar as they see the right through their own lights. Drunkenness and misbehaviour are practically absent.

What you do see, however, is a rather pathetic picture. The spoils of war for these young men seem to be nothing more or less than a bolt or two of men’s and women’s suitings, which they are allowed to carry back with them as their trophies of war after having paid for them out of their salary in the artificial marks of the army of occupation. These prizes are religiously tooted about in sacks on their backs, or in bundles or in suitcases, and brought back I suppose with gusto to their frau or sweetheart or other member of the family.
One is impressed with the pitiful character of the spoils of each individual and the curious and almost ant-like manner in which the purchased materials are carried back home. Next to the search for men’s and women’s suitings comes, I believe, the pursuit of good leather shoes. In other words, you do not find soldiers commonly in beer-halls; aside from gatherings at meals in restaurants they seem clustered in little clothing shops (where, from all appearances, the salesmen are mostly Jewish), then in shoe shops, and also I might say in trinket shops. It would be unfair if I did not include here the diligent and quantitative purchases of women’s underwear. I suppose that this pursuit of the spoils of war, with the pleasure it gives, may be accounted for in part by the undoubted hardships and the very difficult physical life as well as dangers which these soldiers face, although I must say the whole thing looks more like a large-size snare and delusion than anything with which I am acquainted.”

Visit to Belgium: 3, 28, 4, 700, RG 1.1

The soldiers’ “shopping” activities may have reminded O’Brien of a popular joke in Paris: Two men dress up as German soldiers – they are quickly unmasked because they don’t have suitcases.

Belgium had to feed the army of occupation of 800,000 soldiers. The Germans estimated that each German soldier ate three times the quantity of food
necessary for one Belgian civilian; so, in effect, Belgium had to supply meals for the equivalent of 2,400,000 people. To meet its many needs, Belgium had to raise 500 million Belgian francs. The German military government in Belgium invented Winter Help to raise the money. Leopold, King of the Belgians gave 1 million Belgian francs, and Queen Elizabeth 200,000 francs. O'Brien explained:

*November 18, 1940*

“While called Winter Help it is essentially almost a forced movement for aid to the poor throughout the year to cover food, shelter, clothing and other direct necessities. This means that all other charitable organisations are automatically wiped out and that all charities must be concentrated into one centralised uniform movement. The purpose of Winter Help is to help the poor but at the same time to give visible proof and demonstration that not only the rich and the people of means but likewise the poor and the suffering will be treated alike. It is considered that this work shall be as important in educating those who give help as it will be of significance in aid rendered to the people who receive help. All Belgian industrial concerns are to give one per cent of the value of their capital and reserves; in addition there will be a tax of one per cent on all income from property and from commerce, as well as rising taxes on salaries of workers and investment income.”

*Ibid*
The search for German contacts continued. One evening O'Brien invited two German medical officers - scientists he had met previously - to dinner at Brussels’ best restaurant, The Savoy.

**November 18, 1940**

“My guests lingered on till 11:30pm, which was beyond curfew (11) and beyond the last tramway. They kindly escorted me in the blackout to narrow passageways and to a street which they considered a short-cut back to town. There they left me to return to their own quarters at the Cancer Institute and gave me directions to go straight ahead till I ran into the Botanical Garden, then to the left and then ask someone about a half-hour further on where the Gare du Nord was. It is surprising how difficult it is to locate and ‘spot’ a large size botanical garden in a blackout on a foggy night. After finally arriving at a fenced-in garden, I spent a considerable amount of time wondering whether or not one could apply the term ‘botanical’ to it. So, from 11:45pm to 1:15am when I actually arrived at my hotel, the going was slow...My chief worry was whether I would be stopped by the German military police, as the curfew was at 11pm.”

Ibid: p. 4
Back in Paris at the end of October, there was a new decree transferring the Secours National to the authority of Petain. The organisation was to be in charge of all public aid, and was to coordinate private relief organisations and represent them to government. It was to be the only body able to receive government grants and make appeals to the public; any organisation that did not obey its instructions would be prohibited from working.\textsuperscript{18} Strode wrote to a colleague:

\begin{flushright}
\textit{October 26, 1940}
\end{flushright}

"Every two or three days we wander down to the Embassy and read the bulletin with which you are familiar. It is essentially a written record of the previous day’s broadcast from the US. This enables us to keep moderately well in touch with events back home. I am sure it must be rather exciting as election approaches - even over here everyone is becoming impatient to know the final verdict."

\textit{Strode officer’s diary: p. 217, op.cit}

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid
Perhaps Strode's depression was heightened by an event he records in his diary at the beginning of November: “For the first time saw in certain Paris shops the yellow placard bearing the words ‘Judisches Geschaeft - Entreprise Juive’.”

Communicating with New York had been particularly difficult. It seemed that the American Consul General and other US officers had offended the German authorities in some way and in retaliation the diplomatic pouch had been stopped for six weeks and telephone calls from the Consulate restricted to ten minutes a day. Without the pouch and the use of the Consulate telephone, the Foundation staff were almost totally cut off from New York. The to and fro on getting passes continued; then they were told that they must resubmit their request because the form had been changed.

Through November there were sporadic bombing alerts in Paris. At the end of the month all mail to the US was stopped. On the same day staff learned that the French police had called on their concierge to inquire what Foundation staff were doing. The Foundation was under investigation.

Working for a foundation is often a lonely job, calling for delicate decisions and constant, careful discretion in everyday social encounters. In France in 1940 the loneliness, frustration, pressure, uncertainty and actual physical danger must have been considerable. The curfew curtailed the working day and meant long evenings often at home, alone and without elaborate dinners. Strode wrote:

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19 Ibid
20 Letter from O’Brien: 37, 6, 700, RG 1.1
21 Strode officer’s diary 1940: p. 244, op.cit
October 26, 1940

“It has been a great help and real comfort to have Pat (O’Brien) here. We have been able to team up effectively and all actions and decisions are joint ones. For either of us to have attempted this job alone would have been hazardous and a great drain on the nervous system, but working together we get through the days quite well and keep our courage and optimism in the ascendancy. This isn’t so easy when the bulk of the colony is filled with anxiety and uncertainty and more and more of its members are leaving for the homeland.

We have been in Paris almost ten weeks and have little to show for it in accomplishments, yet during the whole period there has not been an idle day. The number of visitors has been considerable…Our major concern has been the Commission’s programme but we do not neglect the other things. I do wish I could tell you we are ready to go ahead with the Institute project, but it is still too early to do so.”

Ibid

The Institute was making slow progress. A building had been found and the team were pressing Dr Codvelle (the new Director of Health under Dr Huard as the Chief Executive of the Secrétariat Général à la Famille et à la Santé) to say what funds he would need to run the Institute - but he was busy reorganising the national health service. It was essential that Codvelle prepare a budget quickly because the permit the Foundation had secured from Washington for
transfer of funds had a time limit; the team wanted to ensure that enough money had been transferred to enable the Institute to carry on for the promised several years. In addition, of course, there were problems in getting money transferred from the US to France.

October 26, 1940

“If things go forward as we hope and the young Institute gets under way we shall still have plenty of difficulties. The problem of transport and laissez passer to move about the zone will be the hardest. However, there will be lots to do right in Paris or near by; we can surely study the nutritional state of the population and establish trends without moving outside of the metropolitan area. Epidemic work, however, may be very difficult unless we can get special permission to travel; possibly that will come in the face of an epidemic.

I regret that there is not more to report, but you know the circumstances. Pat and I feel that it has been a real service to Huard and to Codvelle, as well as many scientists who have come in to see us, that we have been here during that crucial period. Even if we are unable to do anything more, they will consider it, we believe, to have been worthwhile.”

Ibid
By the end of November 1940 Strode and his team still had no passes, and there were yet more problems with transfers of money. In addition, the State Department in Washington was unhappy about American citizens working in free France (with “collaborators”). In New York Fosdick was becoming ever more concerned about the work in France. He refused to allow any of the new members of the Commission to travel until the passes were finally obtained and, in accord with the US State Department ruling, he did not want people working in free France.

Furthermore, he was unwilling to transfer the money requested to the team “because the chances are that we might not ever see the money again…I would be willing to have $25,000 transferred, but to do it on any larger scale would be in effect to circumvent the ruling of the Treasury – quite apart from the risk involved as far as the security of the money is concerned.”

In New York, Christmas preparations continued as normal. The lights on the trees twinkled, the shop windows blazed with tempting luxuries, and people hurried from store to store to buy things they never knew they needed. In Paris life was more difficult by the week. But for the Foundation team it was not as difficult as it was for many others. And there were some compensations. Cultural and intellectual life continued. While the Nazis banned any work by Jews and any with anti-German tendencies, the overall attitude was ambiguous. The theatre was thriving (not least as a way of keeping warm): new plays by Sartre, Cocteau, Camus and others were produced. Cinema audiences had never been bigger. Picasso had returned to Paris and continued to work (Picasso is alleged to have said to Abetz when asked if he was the creator of Guernica “No you were”). Chevalier, Piaf and Trenet continued to sing. Gide, Mauriac, Sartre and de Beauvoir continued to write.

22 Note of Fosdick message to Sawyer, November 22, 1940: 37, 6, 700, RG 1.1
23 Jackson 2001: p. 301
Meanwhile in London General de Gaulle was attempting to establish himself as leader of the Free French and to form alliances with Churchill and Roosevelt. In June 1940 de Gaulle had been Under-Secretary of State for Civil Defence in Reynaud’s government. In London on June 16 de Gaulle had carved out an agreement with Churchill for a union between Britain and France and that night returned to France. When he arrived he learned that Pétain was now Premier and was seeking an armistice with the Germans. Hastily, de Gaulle returned to London to lead a rejection of the French armistice. On June 18 he made his first broadcast in a campaign to create what he saw as, in effect, a government in exile and to inspire French resistance. Few people heard the early speeches and the BBC did not even bother to record the first ones.” Initially, de Gaulle had hoped, and Churchill had expected, that he would attract the support of some more important French people already in London, or elsewhere, to create a French national committee. For a variety of reasons this did not happen and so Churchill, reluctantly, agreed to recognise de Gaulle as leader of the Free French.

1* Jackson 2009: p. 389

THE INSTITUTE TAKES SHAPE

At last there was a little good news. Strode and O’Brien met with Dr E. Thonnard-Neumann - Consultant of the Chamber of German Physicians in the Foreign Division - at the Grand Hotel in Paris. It turned out that he was familiar with the work of the Foundation, which he held in high regard, considering it “both neutral and international.” Thonnard-Neumann agreed to ask permission for Foundation visits to Germany but was unsure about requesting permits for Scandinavia. On the following day (November 26, 1940) another piece of good news: the restriction on work in the unoccupied zone had been lifted and work could now be undertaken there.

1940 ended with “the commission's work under way on a much more limited scale than we had planned.” The nutrition study was the only activity started and the RF experts were still in the Free Zone. Nothing else was beyond the stage of plans, but Strode was optimistic that the National Institute of Hygiene “has come to stay.” 24 Finally, on January 15, 1941 the first meeting was held of the Comité de Gestion de l’Institut d’Hygiène at the Direction de la Santé under Codvelle’s Presidency. 25

24 Strode officer’s diary 1940: p. 260, op.cit
25 Ibid: 38, 6, 700, RG 1.1
Chapter 9: The End of the Beginning?

With the Institute up and running, Strode, O’Brien and Sawyer were anxious to get on with other work. But the German Embassy was still not issuing permits to bring additional staff from the US into the occupied zone. More worryingly, relations between the US and Germany were beginning to deteriorate.

In September 1940 the United States destroyer Greer had been involved in a skirmish with a German submarine and Roosevelt told the American people: “I tell you the blunt fact that the German submarine fired first upon this American destroyer without warning...These Nazi submarines and raiders are the rattle snakes of the Atlantic.” In the next few months, as the Kearny and the USS Reuben James destroyers were attacked with loss of American life, Roosevelt stepped up the language with warnings that the US had “cleared our decks and taken our battle stations.” Congress, by narrow majorities, removed the Neutrality restrictions with the exceptions of clauses concerning loans to belligerents and prohibitions on travel for US citizens on belligerent ships. But still Roosevelt took care to maintain the neutrality of the US; US military preparations were far from complete.

By December 17, 1940 – with his re-election confirmed – Roosevelt told the American public that he now believed it was in the US’s interests to help Britain win the war. The US, he said, could not make loans to nations who had defaulted on their debts from the First World War – but it could lend Britain whatever supplies it needed with the understanding that “when the show was over, we would get repaid with something in kind; if a neighbour’s house was on fire and he needed your garden hose to put it out, you wouldn’t at that crucial moment argue about the price. You would lend him the hose which he would return when the fire was out.” At the end of December in his “fireside chat” to the nation he talked of the US, and more specifically Detroit, where much of the manufacturing of war material was happening, as “the arsenal of democracy.” This chat was widely seen as marking the end of US isolationism.

1* Traynor 2001: p. 154
2* Quoted in Kearns Goodwin 1994: p. 153
Strode decided to move from the occupied zone to Marseille in the ZNO (zone non-occupé) to set up a comparative nutrition study, and explore the possibility of a collaboration with local health agencies to run an experimental service in public health. There were also discussions about studies of typhoid fever and the water supply in the Marseille area, as well as work in Spain on both nutrition and typhus. Some work on nutrition was to continue in Paris but with French staff only. By the end of January 1941 the US Commission members were beginning to feel more at home in Marseille and adjusted themselves to working there rather than Paris, the city of their heart’s desire.

The reasons for the move to Marseille are not altogether clear. It may have been a combination of factors – the study in Marseille, the difficulties of life in the occupied zone and, perhaps, the fact that Marseille had become one of the most used escape routes from France.

The move to Marseille coincided with the team’s growing awareness of the uncertainties of what they were doing. Uncertainty is an occupational hazard of foundation funding. In a war, with infrastructure and future in doubt, and relations between the US and Germany deteriorating, uncertainty was all around. On the one hand, the Marseille work, and the whole Health Commission enterprise, was a long term project of five years at the very least; on the other hand, the team recognised that continuity might be impossible. To deal with this tension, Strode and O’Brien decided that their first steps should be some
short term projects: assessing nutritional health, a study of the distribution of typhoid fever and a sanitary engineering study of the water supply. Foundations often talk about how they will end a grant – their “exit strategies” – but these plans are often fairly frail and hypothetical. In France in 1941 it was becoming increasingly clear that exit was a real and near term possibility. Over the next six months the team planned to train French personnel to carry on “as and when our experts have to leave. The long-term plan is the complete reorganisation of the health service of the larger Marseilles Region.”

TIME TO GO AGAIN?

Given the rapidly deteriorating circumstances it was increasingly difficult to remain positive – but at least the team seem to have retained a sense of humour. Dr Wright (a Commission member) in Marseille wrote to a colleague in New York enclosing a harrowing account of visits to French refugee camps. The handwritten note says:

January 1941

“We are still grinding along but how much longer it will be possible I guess only Hitler knows and he won’t tell. If one were to believe rumour we will be seeing you soon, or possibly occupying one of these camps I have been inspecting.

1  Strode officer’s diary, January 30, 1941: p. 24, op.cit
Uncertainties multiplied through February 1941. People came and went within the Vichy government and it was increasingly unclear who was responsible for what in the health and other services. The political and international situation continued to deteriorate.

The American Embassy in Vichy was, by all accounts, a strange place where swimming, tennis and cocktails seemed to be the main activities. The US code name for Petain was Popeye and France was “the frog pond.” Ambassador William Leahy, a 64-year-old Admiral, spoke almost no French.²

At the end of February Strode went to the Embassy where Leahy advised him “to maintain ourselves in a liquid state.” However, in April Strode wrote from Marseille to Sawyer, now back in New York, reporting good progress in getting the various studies started. There had been an outbreak of

² Vinen 2006: p. 70
By the end of May the situation had deteriorated yet further. In March 1941 Congress had passed Roosevelt’s Lend-Lease proposals whereby the US lent materials to Britain and other combatants on the understanding that payment would come later. Following on from the “arsenal of democracy” speech in December this was widely seen as another signal that the US would not stay on the side-lines for ever. In May too, Roosevelt had become increasingly outspoken against the French government’s “cooperation” with Germany.

typhus in Madrid and this had prompted the Vichy government to make some effort to clean up the refugee camps. Strode was optimistic that, at last, some of the Health Commission recommendations on sanitation would be accepted.³

Cables continued to pass to and fro concerning scientific equipment needed, and the problems of getting it shipped and through customs at both ends. Staff faced a hundred and one minor but time consuming inconveniences: travel, permits, finding living and office accommodation, queuing, food stamps, the blackout, curfews, and so on. Hugh H. Smith – a member of the Health Commission – visiting London in May 1941 recorded “how quickly one becomes accustomed to seeing buildings in ruins”; he tried to buy a Guide Book to reorient himself but needed a police permit to do so.⁴

On May 26, 1941 Strode called a staff conference in Marseille to discuss the present situation and what to do in case events deteriorated further. The staff were hopeful that their existing activities could be continued if they left, but new activities would undoubtedly suffer. Above all, the team wanted to ensure that the projects had adequate funding to carry on over the longer term. On May 30, 1941, as staff were discussing when they should leave France, a cable arrived from New York ordering them to leave and setting a final date for their departure.

³ Wright to Warren: p. 2, 6, 38, 700, RG 1.1
⁴ Smith officer’s diary, May 16, 1941: 28, 4, 700, RG 1.1
From that moment on the days were a whirlwind of arrangements to get staff out of Europe and to ensure that their projects had the money and other resources to continue. Strode went to Portugal and Spain to make financial and other arrangements there; some staff in Madrid believed that their work might not continue and asked to stay on.

The exodus of US consular staff, and the reduction of sailings as American boats were withdrawn for military purposes, made travel arrangements difficult. Despite having different bookings, a series of chance events conspired to enable the staff to all leave together by boat on June 28, 1941. Yet again the Foundation was leaving France.

Dr Huard, Secrétariat d’État à la Famille et à la Santé, wrote to Strode on the day of their departure: “C’est avec un sentiment de grande melancolie que j’ai appris votre départ sans que j’ai pu venir vous serer affectueusement la main. J’aurais voulu vous dire combien nous avons été profondement touches de votre appui et de vos conseils éclairs dans un moment si difficile pour nous...” The letter continues in the same vein of gratitude.5

On July 2, on board ship en route to the US, Strode reported two American patrol planes circling overhead, and on July 4 the only reminder of Independence Day was a large American flag hung in the dining room. They soon dropped anchor in the outer harbour, Bermuda:

FROM 1774 TO 1941

5 Huard to Strode: 39, 6, RG 1.1
July 6, 1941

“Soon the British officers came aboard and began their examination of the passenger list; only a fraction of us called up for questioning and examination. Of the Commission members, FFS, DEW and GKS alone were selected. The quiz about our work in France was not very adroit but the examination of paper and personal effects was as thoroughgoing as could be. Strode felt very much as he imagines his forbears did about 1774 when they resisted search without warrant by the King’s agents.”

Strode officer’s diary: p. 139-140, op.cit

DEAR MR STRODE

After a holiday in Vermont, Strode returned to the office at 49 West 49th Street in New York. On his desk was a letter from a French colleague at the Institut de Recherche d’Hygiène in Marseille:

August 1941

“Since you left us, dear Dr Strode, we feel a big empty place, and we miss you so terribly much. We were so happy when you were among us, and we felt so much more confident, in ourselves as well as in the events…Believe me, our thoughts fly over to the United States very, very often and I look back with regret on these past months when I was granted the favour to be engaged by you to work for you, and among all the Members of the Rockefeller Foundation. It was a blessing, and I am very grateful indeed.”
Things have changed since you left us. When you were here, one could buy tobacco anytime, and one could buy wine, red or white, in any quantity. Now it is no more so, as there is no more tobacco than meat, and no more wine either. During the month of July there were terrible queues of men, three times a week, in front of the bureaux de tabacs, hundreds of men, waiting from two or three hours, to get a package of cigarettes. It was a very sad sight.

Now men are registered, and they have a ticket and a number, and they have their turn, every ten days, to buy a package of cigarettes. Women are not supposed to smoke. There is no ticket for them, and they are refused cigarettes if they want to go and get the package in place of their husband. It is the same thing for the wine. All of a sudden wine has become scarce. Nobody knows why...Now we have to make the 'queue' to get a litre of wine. Wine is not distributed every day either.
Fresh vegetables, which were abundant on the market only two weeks ago, have also disappeared completely, because the Prefet fixed a selling price which was rather reasonable...Now all the vegetables go to the ‘black-market’, and only two days ago, there were fights and trouble at the markets. Now there are the garde montée with their horses and their arms, to prevent fights; but just the same, tomatoes and beans, and salads do not come back. There are big meetings at the Prefecture, as the Prefet will have to arrange matters before people get too angry from the lack of food in town.

Well, we look forward to better days. As said the poet: ‘be still, sad heart, and cease repining...behind the clouds the sun is shining...’ But it takes much patience and sometimes it is hard.

Believe me, dear Dr Strode,

Yours very faithfully, M.J. Brun.”

Letter Brun to Strode: 39, 6, 700, RG 1.1
London, in particular, had changed dramatically in just a few months. Cecil Beaton, the photographer, captured the speed of events when he wrote in his diary on May 11, 1940: “It was a particularly idyllic early evening... London was looking defiantly beautiful, its parks with their vistas of Watteauesque trees – so different from the trees that grow in the country -- and its gardens behind the railing a mass of lilac and blossoming trees...the Gothic towers of the Victoria and Albert Museum at the end of the road and the peach blossom trees...were seen in an apricot haze.”1 That evening, “we went out to night clubs and danced all night. When we came back to our beds Germany had invaded Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg. Hell had broken loose.”2

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1   Beaton 1965: p. 19
2   Ibid: p. 20

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East London during the Blitz
Between September 7 and November 13, 1940 an average of 160 bombers attacked London every night. Then the bombers came back on December 29, 1940 (the same night that Roosevelt made his “arsenal of democracy” speech) to make one of the biggest ever raids on London. Nearly 1500 fires were started, most within the square mile of the City of London. The fires combined into two hideous conflagrations: “a continuous sheet of flame all around us.” Amazingly, the Bank of England and St Paul’s Cathedral survived, but 163 people died and 250 firemen were kept in hospital.

In March and April 1941 the blitz was violently renewed. On Saturday April 19, 1941, Noel Coward wrote in his diary: “Had a few drinks then went to Savoy. Pretty bad blitz, but not so bad as Wednesday. A couple of bombs fell very near during dinner. Wall bulged a bit and door blew in. Orchestra went on playing, no one stopped eating or talking. Blitz continued. Caroll Gibbons played the piano, I sang, so did Judy Campbell and a couple of drunken Scots, Canadians...”

The same sort of “stiff upper lip” was recorded by Ed Murrow in his broadcasts from the East End: “In one window – or what used to be a window – was a sign. It read: ‘Shattered but Not Shuttered.’ Nearby was another shop, displaying a crudely lettered sign reading: ‘Knocked but Not Locked’.”

1* Quoted in Ziegler 2002: p. 144
2* Payn and Morley 1982: p. 6
3* Edwards 2004: p. 54

Several Foundation staff witnessed the Blitz first-hand and gave not just vivid accounts but also reflections on British society. Weaver, visiting London in 1941, recorded:
June 1941

“It’s a long, long time from 8:55pm until 5:15am under conditions when eternity may be the few seconds interval between a whistle and a blast. But 5:15am did come; and the spunky little Cockney girl attendant of the shelter came around with a cheerful smile, saying ‘All Clear, All Clear!’ She had had a bad night, feeling responsibility for her charges, dashing off to other parts of the basement when crashes were so near she feared direct injury, and soundly scolding (and silencing) some of the West End aristocrats who insisted on keeping up a nerve-racking account of bombing accidents.

We all took the elevator right up to the top floor to see how the fires were coming. The elevator man, calm and collected as if nothing at all had happened, remarked that it was beginning to get light and that this would ‘take the edge of the view.’ Perhaps it did but it was still wild and awful enough to satisfy us. The top floors of Selfridge’s block square were blazing high. In the distance was a whole ring of huge fires, over toward the City, the Cheapside area, and the East India Docks. It was a scene of terrifying and savage beauty — dawn and wounded London in flames. Wounded London, yes; but not disabled London, not terrified London. When we left the hotel for the office after three and a half hours of fitful sleep, everyone was back at work, grimly or even cheerfully repairing the damage. A land mine (which is a massive bomb floated down with a parachute) had fallen in Hyde Park, just across from our hotel, and had taken out the glass in the front of the building.
A building just two removed from us in the rear was completely demolished, this bomb having also taken out a lot of the glass in the rear of the hotel. There were estimated to be fifty bombs in our immediate vicinity. There were between 500 and 1000 German bombers overhead. Selfridge’s, Maple’s, Christie’s, the City Temple Church, Chelsea Old Church, Chelsea Royal Hospital, Guy’s Hospital, and many others less well known went that night. A bomb came through the centre of St Paul’s Cathedral. Westminster Hospital had a direct hit, and Pat O’Brien, who had volunteered for night service and was assisting with an operation, was blown across the room by the blast. The streets all around Mayfair were littered with glass and debris. Burlington House lost most of its windows. There was a huge crater between Burlington House and Piccadilly Circus.

The lovely old city was in an obscene and terrifying mess. But the fires were under control (which at least meant that they would not furnish directing targets for the next night); the clearing up squads were at work; owners were sticking gay Union Jacks up on the wreckage of buildings to show their spirit; and in the mews, back of our hotel, I saw a woman and her husband picking over the jumbled rubble of what had been their flat, finding the torn remnants of a sort of comforter, remarking ‘Well, that was in the corner of the dining room’ and throwing it, with a grin, in the rear seat of their little car — apparently the single object they could find worth taking away.
Perhaps, Weaver continued, the war is breaking down “old social categories”, observing that in all the hotels and pubs they visited “we were spoken to, and with, by people of all ranks and classes, and on the finest and simplest basis of natural friendliness.” There is a new understanding and appreciation coming out of “going through hell together” – but how that will play out he did not guess at. The passage ends:

It was bestial and terrifying, one must be honest enough to admit; but it is also a purifying experience to go through such a night, and see the courage that resides in simple people. It makes one very proud to belong to the English speaking race.

In the midst of war, the average Englishman has more individual freedom than Americans do. The newspapers carry criticisms of men and of ministries in terms which I hardly think we would tolerate during war. The average citizen dresses as he pleases and does what he pleases with less concern, it seems to me, for the possible opinion of his neighbours. They are, in spite of all the old traditions that all Englishmen dress for dinner and go out in the noonday sun, more individualistic than we are. They do not stampede at all easily. As far as I could sense, there is no slightest implied criticism, not even any curiosity, about a healthy young chap who is not in uniform. It seems to be assumed that he jolly well knows what he is doing, and what he is doing is his business.”

London and the Londoners Under Fire, Trustee Bulletin: p. 16 - 17
“The morning after our big blitz our little waiter came in, with our rolls and coffee, cheerful as ever; and when we inevitably turned to talking of the raid it developed that from twelve to three in the morning he had been up on the roof ‘spotting’, fully exposed to the whole direct terror of that flaming night. We later got out of him that his home had been bombed some months ago, that a shell splinter had gone right through the only suits he owned, and that the roof had caved in and it rained steadily for the three days which intervened before the authorities dared allow him to re-enter. But for all these things he had only a shrug and a smile…” Weaver and his colleagues gave the waiter clothes and shoes: “Such persons have, by conventional standards, no particular background of blood or breeding, little or no advantages of education, or of other broadening experiences. Society has done very little for them. Society has no special reason to expect them to have great resources of spiritual courage...Never again can society make the mistake of considering them something in any way inferior. At last they must have their fair chance.”

Sawyer did not need to read Weaver’s report or listen to Ed Murrow’s broadcasts; he was another eyewitness. On his very first night in London he had stood on a balcony with his daughter and journalist son-in-law who recorded the scene:
January 1941

“It was the first raid Pyle and Sawyer had seen and it may be hoped they never see another like it. We could hear the roar of flames several blocks away in the direction of the city. To the left there were six more fires. There had been three when we started counting. Beyond the fire we could see St Paul’s. I had never seen it looking so serenely beautiful. As the smoke and flames whirled around its dome, it seemed to rise higher above them.

Twenty or twenty-five incendiary bombs burst a few hundred yards down the street...More and more loads of bombs dropped and caught fire. Eight big fires could be seen. In the sky there was the bursting of shells - red like big fireflies in the clouds.

It got a little more quiet and we went over to the hotel to have dinner. In the basement the orchestra was playing Wagner’s Tannhauser just to show that there was no ill feeling toward him over the current spot of bother. We found when we stepped outside that there was no longer any blackout. The eight fires that we had counted had become countless fires and central London was brightly lighted.”

Dr Sawyer in London, Trustee Bulletin: p. 21
The renewed 1941 attacks coincided with worsening food shortages. Some foodstuffs were rationed to a fixed amount per person per week but some were on “points”; points at least meant that the shopper had some choice but it also meant that government could raise or lower the point value depending on supply and demand. In America the war generally brought food shortages, while in Britain some things ceased to exist including oranges and bananas.

Even the humble onion became a luxury item; a greengrocer placed one on a velvet cushion in his shop window with a sign reading: “Very rare specimen. Found in Earls Court 1940.” 3 A woman in wealthy St John’s Wood came home one day to find a note from her maid: “Madam, there is no honey, no sultanas, currants or raisins, no mixed fruits, no saccharine at present, no spaghetti, no sage, no herrings, kippers or sprats...no kindling wood, no fat or dripping, no tins of celery, tomato or salmon. I have bought three pounds of parsnips.” 4

Britain must have appeared to Sawyer as a land of restrictions. Food was not the only rationed item. In British hotels guests were asked not to use more than five inches of water in the bath (and in some hotels a line was drawn inside the bath as a reminder); in railway station buffets one teaspoon was tied to the counter and in some pubs a drinker had to bring her own glass. Restaurants were allowed to serve only one main course and from June 1942 a maximum charge of five shillings was imposed (some restaurants tried to evade this regulation with a higher cover charge). After the fall of France there was little wine and, due to sugar and grain shortages, the beer supply was erratic. Cigarettes were less of a problem – the Government regarded tobacco as an essential import for good morale.

The blackout in Britain was rigorously enforced from the very beginning of

3  Zeigler 2002: p. 158
4  Ibid: p. 159
PRIVATE BATTLES

the war. When blackout material ran out, people dyed sheets and blankets. There was pinprick lighting around lampposts and the headlights on cars were hooded and dimmed. Pillar boxes, lampposts and trees were striped white to aid navigation. Torches were allowed only if there were two layers of tissue paper over the light. Blackout jokes were popular. For example, in a raffle, the third prize was a radio, the second a bicycle and the first a torch battery.

London was a city of darkness, trenches in the parks, and sandbags piled around shop fronts and statues. There was little nightlife in the West End and what little there was took place at the Dorchester Hotel on Park Lane. The Dorchester’s popularity was not due to some new cocktail but rather to the fact that it was built from modern re-enforced concrete and had a gas proof shelter.5

Sawyer’s main task in England was to get the Health Commission's nutrition and sanitation studies underway. In January 1941 he made a tour to assess health conditions in the air raid shelters. Air raid shelters ranged from individual, and sometimes very makeshift, to the relatively luxurious in the major London hotels; other places including Tube stations were used as communal shelters. These communal shelters were often socially and psychologically very effective, but an increasingly serious public health hazard. As the raids continued and more and more houses

5 Edwards 2004: p. 56

BELOW GROUND

An air raid shelter in a London Underground station during the Blitz, 1940
were destroyed, people with nowhere else to live began to use the shelters as permanent homes. At Gillingham Street, Sawyer visited a shelter under a garage housing 500 people per night.

**February 1941**

"Many persons had already prepared for the night on the floor. In all the shelters people slept in their clothes, and I received the impression that many had little opportunity to change clothes or bathe without going to much trouble. There are public baths and some have homes to go to in the daytime when there are no raids, but the raids are so frequent that the people who use the shelters find it convenient or necessary to be in them all of the long winter nights.

At Eccleston Square the authorities have had the vaults cleared out and whitewashed but these shelters have not been popular: "The people prefer the larger aggregations...At Adelphi Arches... there were signs of social activity. Christmas decorations were still up; a radio was on in one section, and the Shelter Warden was active and cheerful. Here the latrines were not overflowing as in some other shelters."
At the Aldwych Station an unused branch of the tube has been set aside as a shelter. It was necessary to go down many long flights of stairs, and the station was obviously only useful to the able-bodied. Here there were metal bunks, three high, with wire springs. Normally 550 persons slept there, but the previous Sunday, during the great raid and fire, over 900 came. According to the Shelter Warden 95 per cent of the regular occupants have been bombed out of their homes and have nowhere else to go, or are suffering from bomb shock. Many people prefer the deep or larger shelter because they do not hear the raids so distinctly. In this shelter it is a rule that bedding must be kept clean, but it is not clear how that is done or how the general rule is enforced. It is planned later to take the bedding and ‘stove’ it and return it. This would dry it and kill any vermin. A piano has been secured and a concert advertised. All those coming were asked to bring chairs.

At Leicester Square tube station there were no bunks but at one end of the platform there was a first aid station; people slept on the platforms with white lines marking out spaces and suitcases used as barriers. The coming and going of the trains must have interrupted many dreams.”

Tickets were still issued for regular places.

In this and several other Tube shelters a British mosquito that normally hibernates in winter began to breed in standing water in shafts in the Tube when the “abnormally large amount of blood became available and body heat raised the temperature.” Flit, Sawyer noted, was being used. Sawyer’s account ended: “Blackout hours were officially 5:33pm to 8:37am – a long night in the shelters.”

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View along the River Thames during the Blitz, September 1940
By January 1942 almost everything had changed – for the Foundation and the world. In September 1941 the skeleton office left in Lisbon under Makinsky was finally closed and a Miss Izambard was left to handle refugee funds and telegrams from her apartment.

In early December Pearl Harbor was bombed and America entered the war. Meanwhile, one of the Health Commission members, Dr Meiklejohn, was in Accrington, England working on the nutrition survey. Meiklejohn had more mundane problems:

Through the summer of 1941 the Health Commission in London was busy with a range of matters. Contacts had to be made with all the major bodies responsible for health and scientific work (Ministry of Health, Medical Research Council, Wellcome Research Institute, London School of Hygiene, and so on) in order to assess ways in which the Commission could be of greatest assistance.

The Commission was also supplying 500,000 doses of vaccination against influenza; these were intended to be used for research purposes with careful monitoring of their effectiveness, but immediate need was such that it proved impossible to obtain data on reactions. The Commission also wanted to begin studies on the effects of food shortages on health and growth, and, in addition, had agreed to provide the Ministry of Health with 1,000 doses of typhus vaccine for use in case of need.7

7 Letter from Smith to Sawyer, July 16, 1941: 25, 4, 700, RG 1.1
The winter of 1941-1942 was again bitterly cold throughout Europe. The people of Accrington were not alone; in Paris, libraries and cinemas were popular ways of keeping warm and Colette is said to have advised that the best way to survive was to stay in bed.

The Commission was under pressure from the Ministry of Health to speed up the nutrition survey as a basis for recommendations regarding the best ways of distributing food to improve health. But Meiklejohn’s progress was slow – families were reluctant to use up precious energy getting to the surgery and, in addition, the heavy snow made travel difficult.
One postscript to the Blitz and the role of Murrow’s broadcasts in influencing American public opinion in favour of support for Britain: when Murrow returned to New York in November 1942, William Paley gave him a testimonial dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria. Over a thousand VIP’s rose in a standing ovation for Murrow after Archibald MacLeish had spoken of Murrow’s work: “You laid the dead of London at our doors and we knew that the dead were our dead...Without more emotion than needed be...you have destroyed the superstition that what is done beyond three thousand miles of water is not really done at all. There were some people in this country who did not want the people of America to hear the things you had to say.”

1* Quoted in Edwards 2004: p. 61
Chapter 11: pearl harbor and the Pressures of Patriotism

when US ships were sunk in the autumn of 1940 there was no major public outcry in the US. The public might be in favour of helping Britain – but they generally did not want to get involved in another European war. However, just as a precaution, in the summer of 1940 Congress had passed a Selective Services Act and by October 1940 over 16 million young Americans had registered. But still in October 1941 Roosevelt told the British ambassador that if he asked for a declaration of war he wouldn’t get it.

American opposition to involvement was fed by influential isolationists such as Charles Lindbergh and Ambassador Joseph P. Kennedy who made it clear that he saw Britain as a lost cause (and was recalled from London by Roosevelt as a result). Of course, Kennedy and Lindbergh were not alone in their views in the US or the UK. There were, for example, rumours of a pro-Hitler Cliveden set led by Nancy Astor and her husband Waldorf Astor; and the exiled Duke and Duchess of Windsor were also seen as being sympathetic.

Lack of support for involvement in a war in Europe was probably not entirely unwelcome to Roosevelt because the truth was that the US was hopelessly unprepared for war. Indeed in 1940-1941 Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff, acutely aware of America’s military weakness, was against Lend Lease on the grounds that it took scarce equipment away from the US.

In Britain, perhaps the greatest appreciation of America came with the arrival of the first Lend Lease shipment of bacon, beans, cheese, and canned meat at the end of May 1941. In the US Alistair Cooke wrote in December 1941: “The psychological relation of the United States to Europe’s war was still very much that of a charitable friend who leaves a hospital bouquet of lend-lease for the unhappy European psychopath having convulsions inside.”

1* Reynolds 2007: p. 13
2* Cooke 2006: p. 5
In early December 1941 the Rockefeller Foundation Trustees held their usual meeting. On December 7, 1941 the Japanese bombed the US fleet at Pearl Harbor with the loss of 2,402 American lives. The following day the US entered the war. Fosdick must have been enjoying the balmy, crystal clear morning “hardly recognizable as a December Sunday.”¹ No doubt, Fosdick, Strode and others spent the morning reading the newspapers in which the two main news items were the romantic marriage of the King of the Belgians to a commoner and reassurance from the Secretary of the Navy, Frank Knox, that the American people could feel fully confident in their Navy. Was Fosdick listening to the radio after lunch when the terrible news was announced at 26 minutes past two, just as the Philharmonic were tuning up for a broadcast of the Shostakovich First Symphony? Days later in New York, Fosdick reported to staff on the Trustees’ meeting just a week ago: “In the light of what happened at Pearl Harbor much of the discussion now seems far away and long ago.”²

At the staff meeting days later, Fosdick reminded staff that in 1939 when they agreed that they would not do relief work they had expected pressure and criticism. This had not happened, although, he noted, there had been other pressures from: “Federal agencies in Washington, FEC, Nelson Rockefeller’s organisation, War and Navy departments” and, he warned “that is a pressure which is going to increase and become more difficult to stave off.”

¹ Cooke 2006: p. 4
² Report of Staff Conference December 11, 1941: 33, 5, 904
At the Board meeting, Fosdick reported, the Trustees had agreed that the most significant role the Foundation could play would be to think of the future and “the task of reconstruction in the world after this catastrophe.” The Foundation, he reminded them, was “one of the last few private funds in the world that can keep detached from urgencies and immediacies and keep an eye on a long goal...The war will be long and bitter and there will be many pressures on the Foundation.” Fosdick was under no illusions: it would be difficult now to resist the pressure from all sides - from applicants and from “occasionally a Trustee who may reflect the pressure of immediate things.”

By February 1942, in his first fireside chat since Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt was in fighting spirit: “From Berlin, Rome and Tokyo we have been described as a nation of weakling playboys...Let them tell that to General MacArthur and his men...Let them tell that to the Marines.”

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1* Cooke 2006: p. 14
2* Quoted in Traynor 2001: p. 157
3* Ibid: p. 158

1* Cooke 2006: p. 14
2* Quoted in Traynor 2001: p. 157
3* Ibid: p. 158
The Foundation too was in fighting mode but now, more than ever, what to do, and how, and where the boundaries should be drawn, were pressing questions. The problem was not primarily one of money. In some areas one problem was lack of research staff to fund. In other divisions this was less of a problem. In social science there was no shortage of proposals – mainly around work related to the effects of war and its aftermath. But proposals or not, personnel or not, it was increasingly obvious that the Foundation would need to develop some criteria for selecting between demands. In general, staff were coming to the view that policy must be determined by three considerations: Is it possible for government to finance? Does it have long-range value? Is it a contribution that has to be made by an independent agency?\footnote{Report of Staff Conference, October 7, 1942: 34, 5, 904, RG 3}

The Foundation continued to maintain its usual schedule of meetings, making contacts, gathering and sharing knowledge, and advice. In particular, the Foundation wanted to bring together people who were already thinking about the post war world. In 1942 one such meeting was to have profound implications for future generations of American youth.

One of the many consequences of the previous war was that a whole generation of already trained, and potential, young doctors, teachers, government leaders, and so on, were killed in service. Britain had already decided to exempt young people at or with a university place from call up but this was not the policy of the US. In 1942 the Foundation invited two leading social scientists from the UK – Arnold Toynbee and Sir Hector Hetherington – to the US for an exchange of unofficial American and British views on problems arising out of the war.
Hetherington was President of the British National Institute of Economic and Social Research and an advisor on manpower issues. It so happened that Hetherington’s visit coincided with discussion in Congress of lowering the draft age to 18, during which a decision was made to exempt young people with a university place – a decision some university staff attributed to the “god-send” of Hetherington’s visit. Future generations, including those men and women who might have fought in the Vietnam War, may have Sir Hector to thank – and the Rockefeller Foundation that made possible his visit.

By October 1942 questions of policy and strategy were still up for debate. Fosdick’s memo for the Officers’ Conference that month identified the following questions for discussion:

October 1942

“1. Is our program framed many years ago in days of peace adapted to present conditions? Is extension of knowledge the best way of interpreting ‘the wellbeing of mankind throughout the world’?

2. How far is the present program of work dropping away as men are called up and institutions cramped – is there a danger of truncated research by 2nd and 3rd class people?

3. Is the divisional form too rigid for the new kinds of problems that face us?”

4. To what extent can officers avoid being drawn deeper and deeper into war work with less and less time for the Foundation?

5. It has been suggested by some that the Foundation should be ‘put on ice for the duration’ - but this (Fosdick suggested) seems like a counsel of despair. However, the burden of proof is undoubtedly on us to show that the expenditure of money to support our present program has a greater potential value than the conservation of funds for use in connection with the vast problem which will face us when the war is done. How much consideration have we given to preserving funds for the future?

6. Is there a mean between ‘shutting the doors’ and continuing expenditures in the region of $10 million per annum?

7. Should we give more support to strictly war projects or projects that are created and motivated by war, or should we try to maintain the long term view and keep alive the intellectual and cultural forces of the world? How can those two be combined?

8. Should we think concretely in terms of today’s special urgencies e.g. things in Russia and China?

9. Should we begin to broaden our plans for the post war problems e.g. social medicine; nutrition in an exhausted world; problems of population; what to do with surplus labour and surplus goods - problems of distribution; utilization of the tropics and polar regions for increased populations and production; the future of medicine in China; the vast chaos of international relations - political, social and cultural.”

At the meeting it was clear that staff views were divided. The questions rumbled on.

6  Officers Conference, October 7, 1942: 34, 5, 904, RG 3
At the end of March 1942 Strode in New York received a visit from a Mr Justin L. Green. Green had some experience working in French hospitals, wished to work there again, and believed that he could be of service to the Foundation in smoothing their relationships with the French government. Strode was clearly irritated and informed Green that the Foundation had no problems in its relations with the French government, only with the occupying forces in getting permission to enter the occupied zone. Green kept pressing his case.

After a long discussion Strode was still puzzled as to just why Green was so anxious to get to France. Then Green admitted:

March 30, 1942

“A tie-up with the State Department’, but said he was not free to discuss that matter. Before leaving he stated that he would report to the State Department people that he had been in touch with us and ‘thought they might drop a letter to WAS (Sawyer) in regard to the possibility of using him (Green) in France...(Strode) said that he would be glad to hear at any time, and also talk to anyone from the State Department, regarding the matter’.”

Strode officer’s diary: 70 ff, 82, RG12.2
Later in the year Strode met a Mr Joy from the Unitarian Service who had requested help with refugee camps in Europe. In the course of the conversation Mr Joy mentioned that Green would be going to France under the auspices of the Unitarian Service. So Mr Green and the State Department achieved their goal. This was the first of a number of pressures on the Foundation to “assist” the US government in intelligence and political matters. Fosdick was adamant that the Foundation could not participate in such activities.

But the State Department wanted other help. By early April 1942 there were discussions with the American Red Cross concerning recommencing work in Spain. The State Department had asked that something be done there “which might help in building up good will.” In another meeting he learned that “the government has suggested the need of doing something for Ireland”, and commented “this is getting to be a habit.”

Strode agreed to look at data available on Ireland in the Foundation files, and, if necessary, send O’Brien over from London to survey the situation. In May 1942 this offer was taken up. In May 1942 the American Red Cross asked Strode for suggestions of public health needs and initiatives to take to the conferences now going on in the State Department regarding plans for post war reconstruction in Europe. Rockefeller Foundation advice regarding Europe was much in demand in 1942.

Towards the end of 1942 there were more discussions with the State Department about re-establishing work in Free France and Spain. Strode agreed to visit Spain, but suggested that in view of the present unclear and unstable political

7 Strode officer’s diary, April 2, 1942: p. 77
8 Ibid, May 1942: p. 118
situation in Free France that the “matter be held in abeyance.”

Requests from the US Government that Foundation staff (and grantees) act as espionage agents continued through 1943. There was another request to sponsor someone to do some sort of work in Free France. Again Strode refused, saying that if the Foundation were sending anyone to France it would consider its own staff first, and to protect its good name would send someone with special competence in the field in question. The agent replied that the Foundation’s name was less important than winning the war.

Later, the staff and Trustees agreed that: every record in the Foundation was open to any agency of the government; and that it would bring to the attention of government anything it came across or that was reported that seemed of peculiar significance or to threaten the interests of the US. But that was the limit: “Further we cannot go.”

Espionage was only one pressure. Yet again, the Foundation was also under pressure to engage in relief work. In April 1943 the Trustees discussed the advisability of making a grant to the American Red Cross and the National War Fund. The argument was that all agencies were combining in the collection, and that as a matter of public relations the Foundation should make a contribution; there was also a suggestion that the $3 million the Foundation had carried forward unspent from its 1942 budget could be seen as evidence that the Foundation was not doing all it could. Perhaps surprisingly, the Trustees reaffirmed the previous policy of focusing on the longer-term, avoiding short-term relief work.

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9 Ibid: p. 82, 218, op. cit
10 Ibid: 217, 26, 900, RG 1.1
11 Staff Conference, April 9, 1943: 33, 5, 904, RG 3
Perhaps as a way of explaining its contribution to the war effort, in 1943 the Foundation published a pamphlet entitled: “The War Work of the Rockefeller Foundation Making the Present Serve the Future.” The Foundation, the pamphlet emphasised, was interested primarily in the extension and application of knowledge: “Its main concern is not with immediate things or with the emergencies of the moment, but with results in terms of human welfare which are gained from patience, tenacity, research and adequate and continuing support.” But “we are all of us in the war and it is idle to pretend that business can proceed as usual.” In responding to the emergency the Foundation “has endeavoured to make certain, in so far as it could, that its work had some constructive reference to the world after the war...to make the present serve the future.”

In November 1943 there was a new pressure. Karl T. Compton, President of MIT and Trustee of the Foundation, wrote to the Board on November 20 objecting to the Executive Committee’s decision that “it will help in the war effort only if such help fits into its own programs...” Compton suggested that, if widely known, this decision would “wreck the Foundation.” He asked: “Does it hold itself and its program above the allied nations and their cause?” In a subsequent letter Compton argued that the Foundation presented itself as committed to the future - but the most important task for the future was to win the war. Fosdick was furious and wrote back defending the Foundation’s position. Compton replied, and
letters flew to and fro, becoming increasingly heated.\textsuperscript{13}

Perhaps related to this exchange, Fosdick made a record of some of the many ways in which the Foundation had contributed to the war effort. The Foundation had: greatly expanded its holdings of government bonds; freely made available its scientific staff for war work and consultation; cooperated with the Army and Navy through the International Health Division; and financed a long list of emergency studies bearing on war problems - but because resources were limited these were restricted to studies of a nature “to conserve and advance the permanent scientific and scholarly values for which RF stood.” In addition, of course, Fosdick noted, much of the time and effort of grantees was devoted to war problems. Just to underline the point: “Foundation policy assumes that, unlike Nazi Germany, it is important in democratic countries, even in war time, to keep alive and vigorous the institutions and programs which nourish the values which Hitler fights and we defend.”\textsuperscript{14}

In the midst of all these difficulties there was some good news. At the Officers Conference in December 1943 Fosdick reported that the market value of the Foundation was up 100,000,000 to 196,000,000 US Dollars. The year’s spending was the lowest since 1915 and not all income had been spent. It was agreed that carry over income should be reserved for post-war spending.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid: 217, 26, 900, RG 1.1
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid
THE OBLIGATION TO BE INTELLIGENT

Like many people and organisations at the time, the Foundation had enormous faith in the power of knowledge and science — science would eventually discover the solution to every problem. In 1943 the Foundation was increasingly focused on the future and the demands of peace and reconstruction. It supported organisations such as the Council on Foreign Relations, the Foreign Policy Association and the Institute of Pacific Relations, and their counterparts in Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Switzerland, and Sweden. A continuing grant was made to the Economic, Financial and Transit Department of the League of Nations for working on the problems of restoring economies when war ended.

The Foundation also had great faith in the positive benefits of international exchange. In the 1940’s the interrelatedness of the world took on a new meaning as air travel became more common. Fosdick noted this and the return and spread of a particularly dangerous type of mosquito. What happens elsewhere, he wrote, becomes everyone’s business. He continued: “every country has an inescapable obligation to be intelligent about its newly found neighbours.

No intelligent man can ever again say about any political event or social process in any part of the world: “This is nothing that need interest me”

Without any definite intentions to build a world like this, we suddenly find ourselves living on each other’s doorsteps. We do not have to approve of everything our neighbours do, but we face the necessity of living close together in the same world with them; and if we remain ignorant about them – how they think and live and what social and cultural purposes motivate them – the distrust and suspicion which ignorance always creates will in the end inexorably lead to a new catastrophe. No intelligent man can ever again say about any political event or social process in any part of the world: ‘This is nothing that need interest me.’” Nearly thirty years earlier John Erskine
had written a book called “The Moral Obligation To Be Intelligent”; Fosdick suggested that this should be the motto for the next generation “as it faces the new propinquity of the modern world.” For Fosdick and the Foundation this was a time of horror but also one of wonderful optimism. Social science, democracy and reasonable discussion could solve world problems: “The war’s legacy of social and economic crises will be approached, we hope, by the democratic processes of understanding, discussion, and accommodation among free men.” The Foundation’s role was to contribute to those processes.
Chapter 12: “The Treasures of the Spirit”

On May 16, 1945 two Monuments Men arrived in the mining village of Altaussee in Austria searching for lost works of art. The entrance to the mine had been blasted to prevent the Allies entering. By the following day a gap at the top of the large tunnel had been cleared - just big enough for a man to crawl through. Once inside, their torchlight swinging into the gloom illuminated rack after rack of plain pine boxes filled with some of the world’s greatest artistic masterpieces before falling, finally, on the milky white surface of Michelangelo’s Bruges Madonna: “The light of our lamps played over the soft folds of the Madonna’s robes, the delicate modelling of her face. Her grave eyes looked down, seemed only half aware of the sturdy Child nestling close against her, one hand firmly held in hers.”

The Nazis’ fondness for art was widely known, but that was only part of the problem. The war would have other potentially devastating effects on art, history and literature. Bombing and battles would destroy or damage buildings, sculptures and paintings; armies and civilians would take “souvenirs” knowingly or through ignorance; buildings and their contents would suffer when troops made them home.

1 Edsel and Witter 2009: p. 383
2 Jackson 2007: p. 308
In the 1942 Annual Report Fosdick had written about the costs of war, and the role of independent foundations in standing up for the values that distinguish civilised society – the values for which this war was supposedly being fought. Fosdick wrote: “We must of necessity serve the war effort, for there is no future for what we most desire in a world dominated by fascism. But we have a responsibility equally compelling to preserve the treasures of the spirit which we hold in trust from the past for the benefit of the generations to come. There must be no broken link in the chain, no flaw in the title deeds by which what we most cherish is transferred to the future.”

Referring to a recent statement by the Corporation of Yale University concerning its feeling of responsibility as a “custodian of our cultural heritage”, Fosdick emphasised: “the danger of the impoverishment of the nation’s mind and soul, should the less tangible values of our culture be allowed to shrivel while our energies are devoted to the task of winning a war to maintain them...Unless they (educational institutions) keep the candles lit which have largely flickered out elsewhere around the world, we may reach the dim aftermath of war, with victory behind us, but with not enough light left to make it mean anything in terms of a brighter world.”

John Marshall was the man at the Foundation primarily responsible for making sure that “the treasures of the spirit” were protected. Marshall was 36 when war began in Europe. He had done his undergraduate and graduate studies at Harvard.

[1] President’s Review, Rockefeller Foundation Annual Report 1942
and then taught in the English department while also serving as Secretary of the Mediaeval Academy of America and as an editor of publications of the American Council of Learned Societies. In 1933, at the age of 30, he joined the Foundation as assistant director for the Humanities, serving also as an officer for the General Education Board. Marshall was a keen cook (he later wrote a book on cookery), a classicist and an enthusiast for the potential use of broadcast media. Later Marshall, with his wife Charlotte, was director of the Bellagio Centre.

Marshall, like many others, must have been pleased when in 1939 President Roosevelt issued an appeal to all of the countries then at war to restrict bombing to military targets. Later, General Eisenhower issued an instruction to Allied forces to avoid damage to non-military targets as far as possible. But Marshall may also have wondered how those involved in fighting the war, at all levels, would know what to avoid. Of course, there were catalogues and maps and guides to museums and galleries but they were patchy and generally only covered more popular destinations; most people might know that the Mona Lisa was a major work of art and where it was located, but how many knew where to find the oldest Church in Italy, or would recognise the work of Durer? This was a problem others were already thinking about.

IN THE BEGINNING: 1943

In January 1943 the American Council of Learned Societies formed a small committee under the chairmanship of WB Dinsmoor, a professor at Columbia University and president of the Archaeological Institute of America. The committee was a result of discussions between Dinsmoor, Francis Henry Taylor, Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and president of the Association of Art Museum Directors, and David E.
Finley (director of Museum ADD). Members of the American Defence Harvard Group were also thinking along the same lines.³

Dinsmoor and his committee wanted to make available to government “the great resources of scholarship in the country to help solve the many complicated problems relating to art and historical monuments that will grow out of the war in Europe.” They wanted to make the US Government aware of the dangers of the destruction of art and monuments in the fighting, the likely further destruction if the Allies were to invade Europe, as well as the problems of Nazi looting already known to be happening.

Dinsmoor and others started lobbying for something to be done and had fairly swift results. In May 1943 Dinsmoor received a letter from Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War, stating that he (Stimson) was “deeply interested in the preservation of the cultural heritage of Europe, and desire to promote all practicable steps looking toward the accomplishment of this purpose.”⁴ Stimson also noted that the School of Military Government in Charlottesville Virginia was “giving special attention to this problem.”

IN VolVING THE ROCKEFELlER Foundation

But the Committee needed funds if they were going to be able to gather even the basic information. The American Council of Learned Societies already had close links - and several projects – with the Rockefeller Foundation so a visit to Marshall was an obvious first step.

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³ Memo Leland to Stevens, June 4, 1943: 2279, 190, 200, RG 1.1
⁴ Letter Stimson to Dinsmoor, May 24, 1943: ibid
Marshall considered the Council’s request and talked to a contact in the government; surely, he asked, protecting cultural treasures from further destruction was an Allied responsibility? But that was precisely the problem – the US government was reluctant to take any action independently of its Allies. However, Marshall’s contact assured him, the government had been thinking about the issue and was planning to take five civilians qualified in art and archaeology to the School for Military Governors for training as “occupation officers.” This was later changed to plans to take men already in service.

But what would “occupation officers” be able to achieve without lists of art treasures and maps of their locations? Dinsmoor explained that the Committee intended to compile information to be “used as a basis for orders which will insure the protection of important cultural material as occupation proceeds. To be concrete, a regular occupation officer would be informed in advance that there exists such and such a monument which should be guarded from damage during occupation and any ensuing civil disorders.”

Marshall was clearly aware of a double sensitivity for the Foundation here: was this the responsibility of government, and was this a proper task for the US? He dealt with the second worry by arguing that: “The organisation of the Committee’s work on an American basis does not seem to collide with later work on a United Nations basis. It would merely be assembling such information which could be obtained in this country which might later stand

5 Record of interview by Marshall, June 8, 1943: ibid
6 Ibid
alongside such information as could be compiled in Great Britain or the USSR.”

The issue of Foundation versus government responsibility was not addressed – an omission Marshall came to regret.

Marshall told the American Council of Learned Societies that the Foundation understood the urgency of the organisation’s work and that a request for funds would be put to the Board just over a week later. Marshall’s willingness to fast-forward the Council’s request was almost certainly related to the fact that the Foundation had a relatively long history of making grants to the organisation. This particular request was only one of several American Council of Learned Societies projects the Foundation was funding. For example, one substantial grant was for an extensive programme of microfilming historical documents in England. One of the programme’s many problems was that it was a “race against the bombers” as “no one can predict where the next air raid will strike, and the imperative job of the present is to get the documents photographed before disaster makes photography impossible.”

Copying at least preserved the records even if the originals were destroyed, as happened in the case of the treasured books in the Royal College of Physicians Library in London.

The request for a grant of $16,500 towards the expenses of the Committee on the Protection of Cultural Treasures in War Areas was agreed by the Foundation Trustees on June 18, 1943.

This was the first of a number of pressures on the Foundation to “assist” the US government in intelligence and political matters.

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7 Ibid
8 A Race Against the Bombers, Trustee Bulletin, April 1941: p.12
9 To convert 1942 US Dollars into 2009 values based on relative share of GDP multiply by 88.10
A week later the Committee met formally for the first time at the Century Club in New York. Membership of the Committee was revised and its scope clarified. The Committee also discussed cooperation with other bodies, in particular the American Defense Harvard Group Committee with which it wanted to work to “present a united front to the Washington authorities.” This group was one of the other major contenders claiming ownership and initiation of the whole project; this is also the group more widely recognised in recent historical accounts.

The Committee agreed its function as protecting cultural treasures by “establishing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, a comprehensive file of information on cultural materials which are likely to be endangered during and after the war.” The minutes of the first meeting, held June 25, 1943, listed the purposes as including: influencing public opinion, assisting government, preparing lists of (art/conservation) trained personnel, formulating general principles for conservation, and listing endangered objects, sites etc. in war areas.

The Committee began by sending a questionnaire to people in the US personally familiar with cultural treasures in different geographical areas. These people included art scholars, museum and gallery staff, other academics, and European refugees in the US. In addition to general information, the Committee asked for maps, detailed information about treasures, and any catalogues or inventories and photographs.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art agreed to house the Committee (supplying

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10 Minutes of the First Full Meeting June 25, 1943: p. 4, FARL Helen Clay Frick correspondence PCTWA 1939-1944 5/13
11 Memo June 18, 1943: 2279, 190, RG 1.1
office space, supplies and services etc.), its secretary and clerical assistance. Two research assistants, based in Washington, would be employed to read the files of German newspapers since the outbreak of war for any notices of art sales or transfers of art objects.

The Committee also wanted to investigate what it could do to ensure that men already trained in art and conservation were attached to the Allied armed forces as they occupied Europe; even a lapse of a few days between military occupation and the establishment of military government might mean more damage to cultural treasures. Also on the agenda was the need to make contact with an array of government departments – Department of State, Bureau of Economic Warfare, Office of War Information, Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation, Division of Cultural Relations and so on, and with the Army and Navy Intelligence Departments.

THE FEISTY MISS FRICK - AND CHANGING PLANS

Enter Miss Helen C. Frick. Miss Frick was very beautiful and very rich; and she was the creator of the Frick Art Reference Library. The third child of coke and steel magnate Henry Clay Frick, Miss Frick inherited $38 million when her father died in 1919 making her the richest single woman in the United States.

After tea with a member of the American Council of Learned Societies in July 1943, Miss Frick invited the members and staff of the Committee to base their work at the Frick Art Reference Library, which would then be closed to the public until further notice.

This must have seemed like a heaven sent opportunity: the Committee could
coordinate its material in a fully appointed library and with the collaboration of “numerous research workers, and of a photographic laboratory.” Had the Committee thought about Miss Frick’s reputation as a sometimes “difficult” young woman, they might not have been quite so pleased.

In August 1943, when the Committee’s work was under way, President Roosevelt overcame his scruples about unilateral action and appointed The American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in Europe under the chairmanship of Mr Justice Roberts (known as the Roberts Commission). The Commission was the result of requests from various groups including Dinsmoor’s Committee and the Harvard group. To ensure easy contact with the Departments of War and State, the Commission was located in the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC (and from 1944-5 also had an office at the American Embassy in London). Several of the Dinsmoor Committee members were appointed to the Roberts Commission. Perhaps somewhat heroically, the Dinsmoor Committee agreed to channel all its official communications and services through the Commission, “and thus adopted a policy of anonymity which hardly detracts from the importance of the results accomplished.” In other words, the Committee would do most of the work.

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12 Report of the Chairman of the ACLS Committee August 14, 1944: p. 2, FARL Correspondence Files ACLS 1933, 1941-1950
13 Ibid
while the Commission enjoyed the limelight.

A letter from Dinsmoor to the Foundation on October 7, 1943 reported on activities undertaken with the June grant. Dinsmoor was undoubtedly aware that many people in all walks of life did not want the US involved in the costs of war in Europe, and others saw the cultural centre of gravity shifting from Europe to the US. Perhaps to head off any second thoughts about the grant from the Foundation, Dinsmoor cleverly tied European culture to the past, present and future of the US: “Our obligation to preserve the cultural monuments of Europe is a heavy commitment, weighted not alone by altruistic considerations, but by self-interest as well. The culture of Europe, manifest and recorded in its monuments, works of art, archives and libraries, is the fountain-head of civilization in the Western hemisphere, and what damage it suffers in this war will be felt in one way or another by ourselves, for generations to come. The time has passed when America was a mere cultural colony of Europe, but the traditions we have inherited from across the sea are still alive and working among us, crushed though they be by Nazi tyranny in Europe itself. They are alive and working not only by reason of the European origin of the founders of our Republic, but also because every immigrant family and refugee has brought and brings some reinforcement to the European heritage on which American civilization is built.”

Dinsmoor also dealt with the tricky issue of what counts as “cultural

14 Letter from Dinsmoor to Stevens, October 7, 1943: 2, 2281, 190, 200, RG1.1
“The rough classification so far followed by the Committee divides the ‘cultural treasures’ into (1) churches (2) palaces, chateaux and houses (3) monuments under which heading are included not only commemorative monuments, but remains of ancient structures, buildings of historic or artistic importance (other than churches and palaces), open air works of art such as fountains etc.; and (4) cultural institutions which include museums, university buildings, libraries, archives, scientific collections and laboratories and the like.”

The definition may have been “comprehensive”, but it was arguably unashamedly elitist and establishment.

One of the Committee’s first steps was to provide the military authorities with names of Americans suitable for field work in monument protection. These people and posts were the original Monuments Men.

15 Ibid
Chapter 13: Government Battles

**MAKING MAPS**

The Committee’s work included creating maps, handbooks, lists of art objects, and lists of objects known to have been moved, looted, damaged, and so on. Staff also prepared lectures and publicity, including a sample lecture for groups of officers in Schools of Military Government.

In August 1943 the Committee reported that its main activity of the last month had been the production of maps illustrating and tabulating the locations of cultural material in European cities, beginning with Italy. In addition to the 17 town maps of Sicily sent at the end of July, this month the committee had delivered 131 maps of cities on the Italian mainland, four on Sardinia and Corsica, and six on the Dalmatian coast. The ten remaining maps — making a total of 141 for Italy alone — would be shipped shortly. Maps of the Balkan Peninsula, France, Belgium and the Netherlands were well on the way, or already completed.

“In the basic maps on which the tracings are superposed have been compiled from the latest guide books and other publications, and from material acquired from members of the Committee and their colleagues while travelling, as well as from maps supplied by the Geological Library of Columbia University, the Library of Congress, the Army Map Service, the Military Intelligence Division and by the Army Air Force. From each map two negatives are made at the Frick Art Reference Library and five positives at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The number of copies of each to be delivered has varied from five to nine, but under the present arrangements five copies of each map are provided for the Civil
Affairs Division and one negative for the Army Air Force.”1 The maps complete with grids, compass directions, scales, and so on, were later forwarded by the Air Force to bomber commands abroad.

On October 21, 1943 Sumner Crosby - Executive Secretary to the Dinsmoor Committee - wrote to Marshall at the Foundation sending copies of appreciative letters from two “Monuments Officers” and an excerpt from a German radio broadcast reporting that an American Colonel had been captured at Salerno with a magnificent Titian wrapped around his body. Washington had asked the Committee to identify this Titian and the Committee were pleased to report that the only record of a Titian in Sicily was in a catalogue of 1826 and that nothing had been heard of it since then. “It was suggested that ‘Colonel Morrison’ be recommended for his extraordinary perception in rediscovering this lost masterpiece.” Furthermore, there was no record of any US Colonel Morrison at this location.2

Another tribute from a Monuments Officer came in late October: “They (the maps) have all come through, happily, and have been placed just where they belong and in the right hands. How rarely does this happen in wartime. The maps are so good they have been used for other purposes for which they were not designed...You have done a superb job!”3

1 FARL Correspondence Files ACLS: 1933, 1941-50
2 To Protect Europe’s Cultural Treasures, Trustee Bulletin, December 1943: p. 1-6
3 Ibid: p. 4
The exact sequence of events is difficult to piece together, as is who did what. The Committee’s record of successes seemed to coincide very neatly with its requests for more money. On October 22, 1943 – just three months after the first grant – the Committee asked for another $7,500 which was also granted.

The American Council of Learned Societies noted that the Robert’s Commission’s budget of $15,000 was needed for administrative expenses so “essential research will be maintained through the Committee, which thus becomes an operating agency for the governmental Commission.” The Rockefeller Foundation was already spending more than the Government funded Roberts Commission.

Marshall was becoming annoyed and had already written to MacLeish, the Librarian of Congress and a member of both the Commission and the Committee, to ask if the Government was going to finance work through the Commission, or if the Foundation would have to continue to pay for what should be the government’s responsibility? He noted that the Committee appeared to be doing the bulk of the Commission’s job (while, he may have privately added to himself, the Commission got all the praise).

The issue of government responsibility continued to rumble on. On October 25, 1943 – after another grant had been agreed – Marshall wrote to MacLeish again saying that it seems “strange to everyone that so important a job as that which Dinsmoor’s Committee has in hand is not receiving government support” and suggested that the Foundation has

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4 Memo, October 22, 1943: 2281, 190, 200, RG 1.1
5 Marshall letter to MacLeish October 11, 943: ibid
“reached the limit of its support.” MacLeish replied on October 28: “It seems strange to me also.”

The Committee explained its need for yet more funds in terms of the “progress of the war since July” and the consequent need to accelerate and expand the work. The war had “progressed” but so too, the Committee stressed, had the work of the Committee: “By the end of September maps locating cultural materials in 168 Italian towns had been delivered to the Civil Affairs Division of the War Department, together with 43 maps of France and 22 of Greece. Other maps for France and Greece are now being completed and those for Bulgaria, Albania, Belgium, Netherlands and Denmark are well advanced.

The map for Rome was being flown to Europe within an hour of its arrival in Washington. At the request of the Military Government Division of the Provost Marshal’s office, maps and lists of materials for the 85 most important towns of Italy, together with lists for the less important towns, were prepared for reprinting as an atlas to accompany the section of the Civil Affairs Handbook on Italy dealing with cultural materials.

The Committee has also outlined a text for this section, and expects to be asked to prepare similar materials for other countries. Work is also progressing rapidly on lists of art objects known to have been moved or damaged. Finally, the Committee has been asked to prepare a lecture on cultural materials to be given in schools of military government.”

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6 Marshall to MacLeish, October 25, 1943: ibid
7 Ibid
In November 1943 there were worries that the Germans would take advantage of knowledge that the Allies were attempting to protect treasures; it was finally decided that the Allies' intentions should be made known and the onus for destruction placed on the Germans if they used any cultural or religious building for war purposes. But an equally important problem was how to get knowledge of the locations of treasures to the men who did the bombing and shooting.\textsuperscript{8}

By September 1943 there were already signs of strain in the Committee's relationship with Miss Frick and her staff. Miss Frick emphasised that the negatives made by the Committee must remain in the Library's possession. The War Department may request a copy but she wanted it understood that outside institutions could reproduce only with the consent of the Library. Then Miss Frick refused to take some of the French books requested by the Committee out of storage.\textsuperscript{9}

In mid-March 1944 Dinsmoor was again writing to Miss Frick. He had been told by Miss Manning (the head librarian) to vacate the fourth table in the main room of the Library by the following day. He wished he had been consulted earlier because they had just taken on more staff to get the job done and needed “elbow room for the maps.” A note on file at the Frick Library records:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid
\textsuperscript{9} FARL records, op.cit, November 26, 1943
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In January 1945 Dinsmoor wrote to Miss Frick yet again. He noted the progress of the work and thanked her yet again for all she had done. But there was one matter that threatened to become a major obstacle. Miss Manning had told Mr Lee that Miss Frick wished the Committee to use the telephone on the first floor: “We quite understand that the Committee’s calls have not only formed an added expense to the Frick Library but also, from time to time, have interfered with the use of the upstairs telephone extension #4 by members of the Library staff. We naturally regret any inconvenience we have caused the staff, and are eager to cooperate in every possible way so that we may not deprive them of their much needed use of the telephone.”

During the short remaining time required to complete the programme, Dinsmoor said, they would be exceptionally busy. To be deprived of the use of the upstairs telephone would cause the staff to lose valuable time and slow down the work for the Army and Air Force, which must be finished at the earliest possible moment. Yesterday, being without the upstairs telephone had “meant many trips downstairs and lost time, and in one case a call was lost altogether because the person calling could not wait while a secretary reached the downstairs telephone.” It would be “absurd” if the Committee had to move offices for the short time left merely in order to make telephone calls to government agencies – an essential part of their work.

March 1944

“Miss Frick is very much upset that Mr Dinsmoor is upset, as she doesn’t wish to do anything to upset the Committee. This thing is all up to Miss Manning...Miss Frick says that she does not want to be bothered with this business and that Miss Manning will have to settle it.”

FARL admin correspondence file ACLS 1933, 1941-1950
Miss Frick agreed to the use of the upstairs telephone but by the time Miss Manning informed the Committee they had already completed plans to move to Blumenthal House.

By the end of January 1945 relations appear to have deteriorated further. A file at the Frick notes that the Committee had borrowed one of the paper cutters, and taken the Three by five card file case purchased for them, and the wooden case made to hold their maps; and the Library needed to make sure that the Committee provided negative photostats of maps made in the Library, and of booklets made.\textsuperscript{10}

THE END IN SIGHT?

On May 5, 1944 a New York Times headline reported: “Allies to Spare treasures in Europe during invasion.” A military mission headed by a “high Army staff officer” was about to leave for the Mediterranean and England with authority to give the necessary orders and with “thorough documentation” prepared by the commissions there in the US. It was hoped that this would silence criticism that not enough had been done to “save for posterity works whose value far transcends any question of nationality or religion.” The criteria for protection were to remain the same as those set out by Eisenhower on December 29, 1943: military necessity and saving of Allied soldiers’ lives. But within these limits “fresh and determined efforts” were going to be made to ensure that every officer and soldier knew what must be saved if it was humanly possible, and “they are going to be indoctrinated with a better understanding of the reasons for saving what is left of the cultural heritage of Europe.”

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid
On May 18, 1944 Marshall had a talk with MacLeish who had just returned from London. MacLeish told Marshall that although information had reached senior officers, he was not convinced that it was getting to lower ranks, and he feared that: “There will eventually be some extremely unhappy stories of destruction in Italy, as a result of failure to get such orders to field officers.” MacLeish was also unhappy about the work of the Roberts Commission, which he saw as marked by “inertia and complacency.” All in all, MacLeish concluded that the best work of the Dinsmoor Committee might now have been done. There may be some work to do on looting, but this would come so close to legal work on reparations that the Committee may not have the expertise. The Foundation already felt uneasy about this grant; it definitely did not want to become involved in reparations, which was even more clearly an Allied responsibility, and a legal, moral and diplomatic quagmire.

So what had been achieved? “All maps for Europe will be completed this summer. As rapidly as produced, this material has been multiplied for distribution to the Army. It has also been put into atlases for individual countries. These atlases and special handbooks for use of the civil affairs officers have been prepared in quantities by the government and are being distributed throughout the British and American forces. A subsidiary activity has been to prepare a file of information on objects taken from museums, libraries, archives, and private collections.” The files were in the Frick Art Reference Library in New York where it was recommended they should stay until the work was taken over by the government Commission.

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11 Marshall record of interview with MacLeish, May 18, 1944: 2280, 190, 200, RG 1.1
12 Ibid
On June 9, 1944 the Foundation received a request for a further $15,000 to complete the European maps and to start preparing maps for the Pacific war areas. Unwisely perhaps, given the Foundation’s discomfort around the issue of reparation, the proposal continued: “Part of the funds would also be used for continuing the file of information with respect to looted cultural property. This is an exceedingly important activity that the Committee has undertaken, and will be essential to American participation in efforts by the United Nations to secure the restitution of looted property or some sort of compensation thereof. In the opinion of scholars most concerned, this aspect of the Committee’s work is of great importance, and it is not likely that it can be carried on by any other agency in this country.” The letter ended on a congratulatory note: “The Committee has rendered a great public service, which under existing circumstances would not have been rendered by any other agency among the Allies. The value of the service has been recognised by the military authorities of both the United States and Great Britain. If we had waited for the work to be done by public organisations and with public funds it certainly would not have been done.”

Some days later the Foundation received a report on the Committee’s work: its map making for Europe, its creation of Civil Affairs Handbooks for wide distribution alerting officers to cultural institutions, map making for the Pacific, and information on looted cultural objects. In addition, the Committee had given lectures on cultural monuments to groups of Civil Affairs Officers, prepared radio scripts for the OWI to be broadcast to Europe, and assisted in preparing magazine and newspaper articles.

The Foundation wrote to Leland (at the American Council of Learned Societies)

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13 Letter from Leland to Stevens, June 9, 1944: 2280, 190, RG 1.1
14 Tentative report on the activities of the committee of the ACLS on Protection of Cultural Treasures in War Areas, June 10, 1944
“your request for a third grant...within a 12 month period is unusual but understandable.” Again, the point was made that surely government should be taking greater responsibility.\textsuperscript{15}

The line between the responsibility of government and the Foundation was increasingly tied up with the distinction between protection and reparation. But it was also related to the Foundation’s feeling that it was bearing an undue share of the real costs of the (Government sponsored) Roberts Commission. The suggestion that this work would not have happened had the Committee waited for government to act was perhaps not altogether convincing given that the Government had acted (setting up the Roberts Commission) but had apparently considered it unnecessary to spend very much.

The Foundation officers were aware that, for the Trustees, “the end in view is to limit the concern of the Foundation to preparation of basic records and information calling for the participation of scholars in the first stage of the work. It is not intended that the Foundation be called on to support preliminary work for plans of this government and of the Allies for reparations and recovery of objects.” The situation was complicated by the fact that the Committee’s plans were not altogether clear because it was waiting for decisions by the Roberts Commission regarding its budget, which in turn was waiting for news of funding from the government. To complicate matters further, Dinsmoor was in London, but it was important to make a decision now because staff needed to know if their contracts were to be renewed.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{15} Letter from Stevens to Leland, June 12, 1944
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid
By the end of June it was clear to the Foundation that a number of people were very unhappy about the work of the Roberts Commission; the Commission had only been granted $40,000 of the requested $59,000 by the government and had “not faced up to the complexities of the reparation problem.”

A month later it had been agreed that all information for European cultural treasures should be centralised in London. To achieve this transfer, Dinsmoor asked for one last grant from the Foundation. Marshall wanted to know what support the Committee would get from the Roberts Commission. Dinsmoor wanted to have an assurance of funds from the Foundation before he went to negotiate with the Commission. Marshall then suggested that funds from the Foundation would weaken Dinsmoor’s position in securing funds from the Commission. He also stated that he could only discuss the matter further after the Commission had fixed its budget; the Foundation would consider doing “only what the government could not or should not do.”

In an effort to put pressure on the Roberts Commission, Fosdick wrote to Justice Roberts seeking clarification on who was doing what on reparations and whether there was any continuing role for the Dinsmoor Committee. David Finley, Vice Chairman of the Commission, replied saying that the work of protecting cultural objects was not yet complete, especially in the Far East, and in relation to the salvage and restitution of looted objects. Finley agreed that this phase of the work was “a matter for the concern of the various Allied Governments.” He continued: “I can understand your reluctance to contribute funds for a function which is primarily governmental in its nature. I entirely agree that funds to carry on such a function should be contributed by the government...” He noted that the Commission would give the Dinsmoor Committee $4,000 (of the $40,000 allocated by Congress) but then, despite

17 Marshall notes of an interview with Leland, June 28-29, 1944
18 Marshall record of an interview with Dinsmoor and Crosby, July 20, 1944
his remarks above, stated that a further $6,000 would be needed which he hoped the Foundation would provide.

Clearly, the Foundation was becoming exasperated by these repeated requests for aid and refusal to address the role and responsibility of government(s). Dinsmoor replied with detailed information concerning what had been done and the arrangements for centralising information with the Vaucher Commission in London. He then addressed the tricky issue of protection versus restitution, which was clearly continuing to trouble the Foundation. Arguing that it was impossible at that stage to separate protection and restitution, he then proposed that the Foundation meet the costs of that part of the work concerned with salvage for one more year. The plan was then to wind down the Committee with the transfer of material to London.19 But staff at the Foundation did not give up and requested further clarification of the “Commission’s interests with relation to reparations.”20 The grant was finally agreed – but it was not the last.

In September 1944 a further $2,700 was requested – and granted – to allow Dr Ernst Posner of the American Council of Learned Societies to continue his work with the National Archives. Posner was working on a Manual of Information on German Records for use by the Allied forces in Europe. This small grant would have large consequences in the years ahead.

Perhaps to assure the Foundation of the value of its work, Dinsmoor wrote to Stevens on December 18, 1944 quoting from a release by the Ministry of Information in Paris regarding the lack of damage in Paris: “Les cartes historiées

19  Letter from Dinsmoor to Stevens, August 21, 1944
20  Stevens to Dinsmoor, August 23, 1944
remises aux bombardiers libérateurs eurent une éfficacité remarquable.” On January 23, 1945 Dinsmoor was writing yet again to the Foundation requesting a further grant of $1,500 “with respect to unforeseen developments with the China maps.” This was granted. Again it was to be the last.

DE GAULLE’S INSULT

Some months later Stevens at the Foundation received an angry letter from Dinsmoor referring to the grant made by the Foundation for the support of Posner at the National Archives. In a handwritten addition to a formal letter politely setting out his surprise and displeasure, Dinsmoor added:

March 14, 1945

“It looks as though this little transaction of placing Posner on the American Council of Learned Societies payroll with funds drawn from the unallotted balance which had been set aside for the ACLS Committee on Protection has resulted in terminating the work of the Commission...It looks as if an explanation may be necessary if we are to save our skins - otherwise our whole effort is sabotaged.

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21 Ibid
22 Dinsmoor to Stevens, January 23, 1945: 2281
I wish I had known of the transaction before it was carried through - Posner has apparently been maintaining his position in the National Archive by the subterfuge that he was employed by our Committee, a matter of which we knew nothing until Posner’s letter of Nov 11.”

Letter Dinsmoor to Stevens

Some days later, in another letter to the Foundation, Dinsmoor told the whole story. The Senate Appropriations Committee had held meetings in late February 1945 regarding the future of the Commission and its protection work. In the first meeting Chairman Keller opposed the Commission “because he did not like de Gaulle’s insult to our beloved President! In the second meeting, which was devoted to the National Archives, the Chairman again opposed an appropriation because he does not like Dr Posner.” The National Archives disclaimed any responsibility for Posner suggesting that he was employed by Dinsmoor’s Committee.23 Senator McKellar then “inserted his vitriolic reply of January 26, wondering, since Dr Posner was apparently so closely associated with the War Department through our Committee, if he also maintained offices in the Navy Department and the Air Force. The net result of all this was a refusal on the part of the Senate Appropriations Committee to continue the work of the Commission.”

In June 1945 the Committee applied to the Foundation for one last grant of

23 Letter March 16, 1945
$3,000 to analyse and select from the masses of photographs of monuments and historic sites accumulated by the US Army Signal Corps and by the Army Air Forces Library. In addition, the Committee wanted to save material from aerial surveys of sites of archaeological importance, some of which suggested new unexcavated areas. At last, this really does seem to have been the final grant for this project. By August 1945 the Commission has ended its work and planning for restitution has been transferred to Gordon Bowles in charge of Allied planning for restitution.

24 Letter Dinsmoor to Marshall, June 27, 1945
Chapter 14:
Thinking About Peace

As early as 1939, staff at the Foundation had been thinking and talking about post-war reconstruction.¹ In the short-term, in all of the countries involved, government resources would inevitably be focused on winning the war, but as Kittredge and other staff recognised, winning the war would “be only a prelude to the greater problem of achieving stable and satisfactory international order in the post-war period.”²

The potential importance of the Foundation’s freedom to think about reconstruction was underlined when in 1939 both Chamberlain in Britain and Daladier in France stated that there could be no public discussion of peace aims at the present time.³ Then, and at various meetings later on, some staff argued that the Foundation should save the vast majority of its resources to focus on reconstruction – that, they suggested, was where and when it would be able to play its most valuable role. So there was a general view that reconstruction would inevitably become an issue and that the Foundation was in a special position to do something – but what? From the office in Europe, Gunn saw a bewildering array of groups springing up with “peace aims”, and was “confused and alarmed” by the “multitudinous” activities.

In the following months and years, Foundation staff met with a range of leading figures in British social science to talk about post-war reconstruction, and maintained close relationships organisations such as the Council on Foreign Relations, the League of Nations, and the United Nations.

¹ O’Brien memo, October 5, 1939: 9, 53, 4, 401
² Kittredge letter to Willitts, December 12, 1939: 5, 53, 4, 401
³ Memo Kittredge to Willitts, December 2, 1939: ibid
In July 1940 Kittredge tried to impose some order on the “multitudinous” activities by listing the variety and state of existing research programmes on problems of war and reconstruction. In October 1940 Kittredge reported on The British Informal Coordinating Committee bringing together various key organisations including Chatham House, The National Institute of Economic and Social Research, London School of Economics, and the Oxford Group, among others, all interested in issues to do with post-war problems and reconstruction. Kittredge was concerned that the group’s purposes were somewhat muddled; it seemed to exist partly to exchange information and partly to submit new proposals to the Rockefeller Foundation for studies of war and post-war problems in Britain.

Now the Committee was trying to get out of being responsible for advising the Foundation on grants (because the members were actually in competition with each other), and at the same time was asking for more money. The problem for the Foundation, as Kittredge noted, was that without the Committee’s guidance it was extremely difficult for the Foundation in war to obtain reliable information and advice. At the same time, he questioned the Committee’s need for more money given both the amounts already agreed upon and the shortage of staff (many were now employed by government).

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4 Memo re. studies active from September 1, 1939 to April 15, 1940, July 19, 1940: ibid
5 Kittredge interview notes, September 10, 1940: 53, 4, 401
By 1941 the problem of reliable information was even more acute. The Foundation foresaw more and more urgent problems and it needed to make decisions. Kittredge confessed to a feeling of playing “blind man’s buff” trying to decide at such long range.

The staff urged Fosdick to ask Sumner Welles, the US Secretary of State, whether the US government had any plans for appointment of a joint US/British economic committee on post-war reconstruction; it would, they suggested, assist the Foundation in making grants “to know what projects would be clearly helpful to government agency or agencies centrally responsible for advising in regard to post-war international problems.” Fosdick went to Washington. Unable to see Welles, he saw “nearly everyone else in the State Department.” He reported that: “A Council on Foreign Relations proposition was popular; there was a feeling in government that any joint government committee would be premature; and, the first thing to do is to make sure that the democracies win the war” – which was not certain. Fosdick noted some haziness regarding the responsibilities of various departments and “this overlapping of governmental agencies is one thing that stands out startlingly on the Washington landscape.”

Apart from “the confusion of agencies”, Fosdick was also struck by “the vast strain and weariness of the officials, and the lack of optimism with which many of them look at the future...’This is a revolution not a war’ said one of them, ‘and nobody can possibly foresee what the end will be. Plans that we make today will be washed out tomorrow’.” In light of this uncertainty Fosdick suggested that the Foundation wait for developments in Washington before funding any further work on post-war reconstruction.

6 Fosdick report on a visit to Washington, October 16, 1941: 3, 205, 26, 100, RG 1.3
LESS THAN CORDIAL RELATIONS

The Foundation was trying to work in a context layered with uncertainty. When might the war end, and how? How to obtain reliable information? What will governments do, and not do? And who will be in power?

The future of France was only one part of this unfathomable equation - but it was, in many ways, the most immediate and obviously problematic. In the early 1940’s the Foundation’s problem was in part the same as that of Churchill and Roosevelt: de Gaulle claimed to be “France” but that was a highly contested claim. De Gaulle had, in effect, elected himself as leader of the Free French, but there were a number of other contestants for that position. Even in London the French community was rife with factions. De Gaulle did not get on with Roosevelt or, often, with Churchill. Afraid of appearing in France as a British stooge he constantly tested the limits of his allies’ tolerance.

Roosevelt doubted de Gaulle’s use, preferring instead to maintain contact with Vichy in the hope of bringing Petain round to an anti-German position. In December 1941 Roosevelt’s relationship with de Gaulle deteriorated further when de Gaulle sent a force to recover two tiny French islands off the Newfoundland coast. Roosevelt, not wanting to alienate the Vichy government, opposed the action.7

7 Jackson 2001: p. 394
With peace in Europe in sight the dilemmas became more immediate. Who will gain power and with whom should the Foundation be talking and working? In early 1944 the officers of the Foundation were given an informal talk on the Free French movement, its origin, development and present status. “It was somewhat disquieting to learn of French anxiety regarding the American position in French politics but happily Dennery feels that the relationship between the French Committee and the American Government is clearing up satisfactorily.”

Discussions concerning work in Europe, including France, continued but at the end of June 1944 Fosdick and Strode agreed to let the “French prospect rest for the time being at least until de Gaulle reaches Washington and relations between France and the US are improved.”

Makinsky was about to go on a fact-finding trip to Europe. Interestingly, staff reaction to this news was cool and there were reference to “Makinsky’s hunches.” The future of the Paris office was back on the agenda. Strode argued strongly in favour of reopening but Fosdick refused to be pinned down. Perhaps Fosdick was influenced by Willitts diary records of a 1944 visit to England. Willitts recorded the sense of destruction all around and put the Foundation contribution into perspective when he described watching battleships leaving Clydebank perhaps to be blown up – those ships, he noted, were worth more than the total of the Foundation’s funds.

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8  Strode officer’s diary, February 10, 1944: p. 29, op.cit
9  Ibid: p. 122
10 Willitts note, September 13, 1944: 36, 5, 904, RG 3
In early 1944 as D-Day approached, the people of France were more than ever tired and disappointed: “The population is feeling the effects of four years of nervous tension, emotion and hopes raised then dashed...People believed in the landings in January, then February...and this will go on until it arrives. It is no longer the long awaited miracle but a mathematical certainty, and it has in the process lost its wondrous quality.”

In March and April over 1,000 people died in Allied bombing raids on Paris, and then on May 26 – 27 approaching 6,000 people died in raids on ten major cities. The British and the Americans seemed to be doing more to destroy than to liberate France. France became even more chaotic as the Germans imposed random reprisals, the Milice became yet more vicious, and the Maquis retaliated. The Communists were in dispute with the Socialists – and so on. Petain’s popularity made a surprising recovery in early 1944. Petain may have appeared as a stronger, older, wiser figure above all the factional in fighting. Certainly, he used the Allied bombing raids as the justification for his first visit to Paris since the start of the Occupation, sharing the city’s grief for the dead.

It was perhaps not surprising that Roosevelt believed at one stage that the only hope for social order in France after liberation would be administration by a military government. A team of Americans was trained at Charlottesville, Virginia for that purpose.

De Gaulle continued to infuriate Roosevelt – not least by announcing that the Comité Français de Libération Nationale was now to be known as the Provisional Government of the French Republic. Eisenhower, who was now in London as Supreme Allied Commander, was keen to maintain de Gaulle’s cooperation after the Allied landings in France. Eisenhower persuaded Roosevelt that de Gaulle could be invited to London on the eve of D-Day. De Gaulle then had a furious row with Eisenhower when he learned that Eisenhower’s planned speech on D-Day asked the French people to execute his orders and made no mention of any French authority. To make matters worse, de Gaulle’s message was to be broadcast last, after those of Eisenhower and the heads of state of other European countries. De Gaulle said that he would broadcast at an entirely different time from everyone else and he would not allow Free French liaison officers to land with the Allied troops. As one British minister commented at the time: “we always start by putting ourselves in the wrong and then de Gaulle puts himself more in the wrong.”

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1* Morandot quoted in Jackson 2009: p. 533
2* Quoted in Jackson: p. 543
Following the Allied invasion of Northern France in summer 1944 there were no immediate plans for the liberation of Paris. Paris was of no strategic military significance, and the Allies were generally reluctant to fight in densely populated cities because of the high casualty rate. In this case there was the added complication that the Allies did not wish to appear to be supporting/“imposing” de Gaulle on the French people. “Maybe some subservient government would emerge — a modified Vichy ministry or some old hack from the Third Republic, anything in fact except de Gaulle.”

But the people of Paris did not wait. On August 15, 1944 the metro workers went on strike, followed by the police. The Resistance went into action joined by the people of Paris. As Sylvia Beach, owner of the bookshop Shakespeare and Company, recorded: “The children engaged in our defence piled up furniture, stoves, dustbins, and so on at the foot of the rue de Odeon, and behind these barricades youths with FFI armbands and a strange assortment of old fashioned weapons aimed at the Germans stationed on the steps of the theatre at the top of the street.” Days later Beach joined “a jolly crowd...walking down the Boulevard Saint Michel singing and waving w.c. brushes. We were feeling very joyful and liberated.” They were celebrating too soon; the happy crowd were gunned down, and Paris remained a German fortress. De Gaulle demanded that a French armoured division be sent to Paris and Eisenhower reluctantly agreed. Paris was liberated on August 25 by a combination of the French Forces of the Interior, the Free French Army of Liberation and the US Third Army.

1* Taylor 1975: p. 204
2* Quoted in Glass 2009: p. 387-388
In the last months of 1944 spirits in Britain rose. The war in Europe would surely be over very soon. France was liberated, the Allied armies were on the frontiers of Germany, and the Russians were sweeping across Eastern Europe. But still the war dragged on. The weather got colder, and food and fuel seemed to be even harder to find. Christmas came and went with little to celebrate, and little to celebrate with. “Among the half a million inhabitants of Kensington, Hammersmith, Fulham and Chelsea only one was arrested for drunkenness over the Christmas period - a woman who was fined 2/6d.”* People were above all weary. And then in April 1945 another tragedy: President Roosevelt died. Britain had lost its best friend.

* Zeigler 2002: p. 309

By the end of January 1945 Fosdick’s “wait and see” approach seemed to have been sensible. Allen from the American Red Cross told Strode that the French were interested in advice but less so in material aid: “In general they are not asking for assistance – not that some is not needed – but on general principles and apparently as a national policy. Politically France is not yet on a sound foundation; present feeling is to give the de Gaulle government a chance but what it will succeed in accomplishing is uncertain and there is considerable scepticism respecting it.”\(^1\)

Through the summer of 1945 there were meetings concerning a possible American Red Cross programme of public health work in France, and requests continued to flow in from organisations in New York working to support France. Strode was clearly becoming anxious about the demands on the Foundation and questioned whether “the facilities in the US will be adequate to meet all of the demands which the rest of the world seems in a disposition to make upon them.”\(^2\)

\(^1\) Strode officer’s diary, February, 1945: p. 22-25, op.cit.
\(^2\) Ibid: p. 192, op.cit.
PRIVATE BATTLES

Staff had other worries about work in Europe: the danger of offering help to collaborationists; the difficulties of identifying collaborationists; and the risk of inadvertently giving “dangerous” kinds of aid. Staff pressed Fosdick to consult Under Secretary of State Aitcheson when next in Washington. Other items on the staff conference agenda in September 1945 were Saturday closing of the Foundation’s office, and a Foundation supported conference in Chicago on the Social Implications of the Atomic Bomb.¹³

A few months later, Gregg reported on his visits to England, Holland, Belgium, France and Czechoslovakia. In every country, he observed, the Foundation is one of the few fixed points:

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**December 3, 1945**

“In a spinning, whirling, universe where their future is uncertain politically, economically, and in terms of values (and second) time is relatively important. The countries are likened to someone set upon and thrown down, unable to rise without help. These countries are greatly concerned with the role of their universities, asking, how shall it be modified?”

*Gregg officer’s diary*

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¹³ Notes of a staff conference, September 26, 1945: 37, 5, 904, RG3
By 1946 there was yet another problem. Work was moving ahead again but in June Fosdick called a meeting to point out that half way through the year expenditure was already way ahead of income, at about $2.7 million. Spending at this rate would require a big dip into principal. Would the Board accept that? The officers were unrepentant - that level of spending, they argued, was only to be expected after the lean years; and there were big opportunities after the war and really first class proposals. They reassured Fosdick that they did not expect this level of expenditure to continue the following year.\(^{14}\)

A VISIT TO BERLIN

Strode visited Paris in April 1947 in part to attend a conference and in part as a stepping-stone to Germany, about which he felt “uncertain.” He was disturbed by the gulf separating the views of Foundation officers on aid to Germany, and disappointed by Professor Mann’s report, commissioned by the Foundation, which ignored public health completely.\(^{15}\)

After personal intervention by the US Ambassador’s office, Strode received a permit to visit Berlin, and via visits to various public health projects in Holland, he arrived in Berlin on April 24, 1947. First stop was the Military Government Headquarters for a briefing on public health arrangements in the US zone where operations had been handed over to the Germans.

Each state had its own public health organisation and although there was no central authority there was a zone committee for common action when

\(^{14}\) Ibid, June 3, 1946: p. 73
\(^{15}\) Ibid
required. The health laws were as they had been during the war, minus those on racial purification. The big difficulty was finding competent German health officers; the shortage was partly a result of the purging of Nazis (the medical profession contained a large number of Nazis) and partly one of low salaries. One need was for a postgraduate school of public health to train doctors and nurses. While medical care had been provided largely through Social Insurance, public health had never been well developed in Germany.

A later conference on the need for a graduate school of public health led to new proposals. Again, one problem was to find scholars in public health and social medicine — a couple were suggested but it was not known if they had “clean” records.

There were also problems about a home for any such school; it could not be associated with the University of Berlin because that was in the Soviet Sector and the Technische Hochschule in the British sector had a “British Commander (who) is ‘pink’ (so) the Russians have great influence in the institution.”

After meeting with Ambassador Murphy and General Clay, Strode visited the centre of Berlin. He was horrified: “The destruction is simply unbelievable. No picture or description can adequately reproduce what the eye sees. Rehabilitation and reconstruction will take a generation or two, if it is ever done.” Strode later suggested sending a member of staff to Germany for four to six weeks to assess what could be done.

16 Ibid: p. 83-84
17 Ibid: p. 85
In addition to the problems of France and Germany, there was the issue of aid to Greece. Like any potential work in Germany this would require working in very close cooperation with the State Department – something about which Fosdick felt uncomfortable. Post-war work seemed almost as difficult as war work.

By 1948 the Health Division seemed to be backpedalling on developing medical education in Germany. First, there was the Foundation’s programme on reconstruction in Europe and the commitment to the Havighurst study. Second, there was a feeling that “the Foundation should certainly not undertake activities there to such an extent that our expenditures would exceed those for other important European countries. If, due to Mr Havighurst’s program, the other divisions do engage in extensive

GERMANY - A STEP TOO FAR?

Three refugees sitting in a bomb crater in central Berlin, 1945
programs, this could easily come about.” Third, the Foundation now seemed
daunted by the enormity of the need: “The tasks proposed for development in Germany are so big and complicated that it is going to take a great deal of time, money and personnel to make them succeed. RF should not undertake more than it can surely do.”
Chapter 15: Peace and the Problem of Germany

Once the liberation of Europe began, questions about which groups would come to power became more and more pressing. As fears of Hitler receded the old fears of Bolshevists and Communists were uppermost again. By August 1944 Lord Moran recorded that Churchill “never talks of Hitler these days; he is always harping on the dangers of Communism.”

It had already been agreed between Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin in 1943 that the whole of Germany would be occupied and split into three zones with Britain in the Northwest, America in the South and Southwest, and the Russians in the East. Berlin would be a separate zone occupied by all three powers.

Stalin had always been suspicious of Churchill and Roosevelt ganging up on him; but despite Churchill’s request to Roosevelt that they try to seize Berlin ahead of the Russians, Roosevelt insisted on sticking to the original agreement. Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945, and on April 16 Russia began the offensive that led to the encirclement of Berlin nine days later. On April 30 Hitler and Eva Braun committed suicide in the Chancellery in Berlin. The Russian offensive into Germany had met with little resistance and the Red Army quickly moved into Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia.

On May 8, 1945 Churchill announced that hostilities in Europe would end at 1am the next day. But already Churchill feared for the fate of Russian liberated/occupied territories. On May 12, just days after the armistice, Churchill wrote to President Truman saying that an “Iron Curtain” had come down to conceal everything going on in the Russian sphere. Churchill’s alarm was increased by Truman’s proposal to withdraw American troops from Western Europe as soon as possible.

1*  Pelling 1977: p. 259
2*  Churchill 1954: p. 443
CHAPTER 15: PEACE AND THE PROBLEM OF GERMANY

For many people in Europe the first years after the war were some of the most difficult of all. The war was over — although some doubted whether that would be true for long — but the misery and despair continued. In France there were real fears of civil war alongside lack of food and fuel. Restaurants were closed or charging outrageous black market prices; electricity was cut off in the depth of winter sometimes for five hours at a stretch. The situation in Britain was much the same, with the added problem of extensive bomb damage; the winter was again bitterly cold, food and fuel were in short supply, and people were exhausted.

In Germany cities such as Berlin, Hamburg and Dresden (among others) had been reduced to little more than rubble. By 1945 in Berlin “the stench of death hung in the air, the canals, polluted by ruptured sewers, were teeming with insects. The German civilians scratched a living amongst the ruins. Berlin citizens had been allocated 1,240 calories a day, but due to chaos and inefficiency they were receiving only 60 per cent of this amount.” Another (anonymous) writer recorded an attitude of exhausted resignation: “there comes a time when you are so mortally tired that you stop being afraid. That’s probably how soldiers sleep on the front amid all the filth.”

In Germany the problems were on every level. Not only was there little food or fuel, not only were many cities little more than piles of rubble, not only were the people despondent — but, for Germany, the entire economic, political and social structure of the last ten years was in ruins. For the Allies the problem was nothing less than recreating a society in every detail — its education system, its health services, its housing, its government, its policing, industry, agriculture, and so on. As the Foundation had always anticipated, peace was going to be difficult.

In addition to possible resentments against the Allies, their destruction and their victory, in Germany, as in France, there was a potent mix of political groups. Was Nazism really dead? Were socialism and Communism likely substitutes? Had Hitler’s rise to power been one of the consequences of what some saw as an over-harsh settlement imposed on Germany at the end of the First World War?

1* Ziegler 1990: p. 509
2* Sutherland and Canwell 2007: p. 13
3* Anonymous 1945: p. 45
The Foundation was aware of the likely difficulties, but getting hard information was not easy. In July 1944 Marshall and Makinsky had been visited by Ernst Kris. Marshall was keen to get Kris’s views on what the Foundation was likely to encounter in different parts of Europe “in view of his close studies of German propaganda and his access to intelligence material.” Kris was an Austrian Jewish psychoanalyst and art historian. He had escaped from Austria in 1938, going first to London where he took up a post at the London Institute of Psychoanalysis as well as working for the BBC analysing Nazi radio broadcasts. In 1940 Kris and his family had moved to New York where he was appointed a professor at the New School for Social Research. Marshall recorded Kris’s view that:

*July 5, 1944*

“Occupying troops will find it difficult to locate anyone who will admit to having been a Nazi. Thus, through personal relations, the effort will be to win sympathy by professing opposition to the Nazi regime and thereby soften the harshness of occupation.

There were virtually no Germans who have not been Nazis. The most honest statement on that score that he has heard from a refugee who privately is frank that he left Germany because he knew that if he stayed he would have been offered inducements to have a part in the Nazi regime so strong that he feared his inability to resist them...
So yet again the Foundation was all too aware of huge need but uncertain about the quality of its intelligence, and about the chances of political and social stability. But there were other problems. Some were to do with principles and emotions; some with practicality and politics.
What to Do?

One of the Foundation’s first steps was to commission a study of needs in Germany. In early 1947 staff received a preliminary intelligence report from the commissioned study, and a letter from General Clay supporting the idea of the Foundation becoming involved. But the idea of working in Germany was still contentious.

Willitts listed the considerations against aid to Germany: the prior claims of others; that working under the Military Government might lead to lack of understanding and freedom; and, the possibility that going into the American zone might lead the Russians to see the Foundation as an arm of the State Department. On the other hand, Willitts argued, there were human considerations and the fact that the recovery of Germany, including its intellectual recovery, was essential to world peace.

But it was not an entirely rational matter. Some staff objected that Germany had brought this state upon itself, and the behaviour of some older scientists “left a bad flavor.” Any support the Foundation gave “is potentially support to military strength and therefore it is essential to look beyond the immediate object to determine that the thing is on the side of good.” Furthermore, it was argued, there were questions about what it would be feasible to do, given the current level of destruction and restrictions on dollar movements, etc.

And, of course, there were the feelings of staff, Trustees, and the American public, about what they now knew had happened in Hitler’s Germany.

1 Officers’ Conference, April 7, 1947: 39, 5, 904, RG3
In April 1945 (tragically the same day as the death of President Roosevelt) Ed Murrow had been covering General Patton’s Third Army in Germany and was present when the Third Army entered Buchenwald. Murrow was too shocked to broadcast immediately but three days later his listeners in the US heard:

“Permit me to tell you what you would have seen, and heard, had you been with me on Thursday. It will not be pleasant listening. If you are at lunch, or if you have no appetite to hear what Germans have done, now is a good time to switch off the radio for I propose to tell you of Buchenwald. It is on a small hill about four miles outside Weimar, and it was one of the largest concentration camps in Germany, and it was built to last...There surged around me an evil-smelling horde. Men and boys reached out to touch me; they were in rags and the remnants of uniform. Death had already marked many of them, but they were smiling with their eyes...” In another part of the camp: “Men crowded around, tried to lift me to their shoulders. They were too weak. Many of them could not get out of bed. I was told that this building had once stabled eighty horses. There were twelve hundred men in it, five to a bunk. The stink was beyond all description...In another part of the camp they showed me the children, hundreds of them. Some were only six...An elderly man standing next to me said, ‘The children, enemies of the state.’ I could see their ribs through their thin shirts. The old man said, ‘I am Professor Charles Richer of the Sorbonne.’ Men kept coming up to speak to me and to touch me, professors from Poland, doctors from Vienna, men from all over Europe. Men from the countries that made America.”

NEW PRESSURES

By November 1947 staff had in front of them a more detailed and up-to-date report by Professor Havighurst, who had taken over Mann's original study. Havighurst, from the University of Chicago, had been asked to focus on the state of German universities, primary and secondary schools, libraries, youth problems and policies, teacher training, contacts with the outside world, and so on. With help from the Department of State and the American Army authorities, Havighurst surveyed the American, British and French zones, and made one trip to Leipzig in the Russian zone.
Havighurst’s findings were shocking. It is difficult, Havighurst said, for an American to imagine the lives of ordinary German people. Americans live a life of plenty; to a German, “hunger is a constant companion.” Until the standard of living is raised again to a decent level, he argued, German people couldn’t possibly contribute to the creation of a peaceful, democratic society.

“Equally difficult for an American to grasp is the sense of utter isolation which affects many men of goodwill in Germany – men who suffered but survived in Nazi concentration camps, and others who were passively resistant to fascism. These people now are taking the lead in the attempt to bring Germany back into the family of nations. Since 1933, however, they have been so completely divorced not only from the rest of the world but also from their fellow men in Germany, that they have come to wonder whether there is any reality outside of the terror and the ruin they have known in their own country.”

Havighurst went on, young people, who grew up under Hitler, know no other way of thinking – and those young people are the future. If democracy is to be restored in Germany, Havighurst argued, the first task was to restore communication between Germany and other countries. “The wall of isolation which has tended to make Germany one vast prison must be thrown down, and ways must be opened for the free flow of ideas, through books and journals, films, radio and works of art, and through the interchange of personnel in various types of activities.” The second task was to develop younger leaders who knew the world outside of Germany. Similar steps, he added, were needed in Austria and Italy.

3 Ibid
But Havighurst’s powerful and passionate points were not enough. Staff were still divided. Some questioned whether “Germany will ever be in a condition to sustain a stable society...That Germany will make future contributions to the well-being of mankind.” Some staff did not want to help Germany as a matter of principle; some just wanted to get back to the old way of working in their specialist divisions: natural science, social science, humanities and so on. One view was that before anything else Germany must be ready to function as a “democratic state in a society of nations.”

A few staff argued that the Foundation should do nothing in Germany “without being ready to undertake programs of equal size or larger in other needy countries that had been ‘on the side of the angels’.” Another argued that the Foundation was like a doctor who is morally obliged to accept a patient and do all he can for him, whether or not he thinks him worth saving – the only question was the best thing to be done for the patient.

The debate became even more heated. Would rebuilding science and scientists just recreate a privileged elite, and in any case, would such support be wasted if the social system completely broke down in Germany, and/or if there was another European war? Might US aid be seen as an admission of a US obligation to make amends for the destruction caused by Allied bombing of Germany?

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4 Officers Conference November 19, 1947: 39. 5, 904, RG3
5 Ibid
6 Ibid: 83, 10, 700, RG 1.1
Those against aid to Germany were accused of adopting an “Old Testament punitive attitude.” The “accused” answered that this was not about punishment but about the best first steps: can “projects in the upper reaches of advanced scholarship sensibly be aided in a setting of starving people, homes without heat, school boys without pencils, libraries without books?”

Furthermore, some argued, it was only worth investing in rebuilding German science and scholarship if that knowledge were going to be used for good. But Germany was in such an unstable political, social and economic state that any such judgement was impossible. It was suggested that it might be better to concentrate on more basic needs as a first step.

After all the debate – and acrimony – at the Trustees Meeting in December 1947 it was agreed that the European programme should be extended by $200,000 for “new projects in European rehabilitation”, and additional sums not to exceed $300,000 were allocated for use by officers as they saw fit.

7 Ibid
8 Ibid
9 Trustees Meeting, December 2-3, 1947
CHAPTER 15: PEACE AND THE PROBLEM OF GERMANY
Chapter 16: A Cultural Marshall Plan

In June 1947 General George C. Marshall, now US Secretary of State, made a speech at Harvard outlining a plan for US help in European reconstruction. Marshall’s general view was that: “The United States government does not want a piece of vengeance and it is convinced that the economic recovery of Germany, along peaceful lines, is necessary to the economic revival of Europe. It desires the de-Nazification of Germany, which will encourage democratic forces who otherwise may feel they cannot exert themselves with a fair chance.”

This Plan, known as the Marshall Plan, was designed to assist the war ravaged countries of Europe to engage in self-directed economic reconstruction; the US would not tell them what to do, this was not the US “rescuing” Europe, countries had to come up with a plan and make it work for themselves. The US government would provide the money. The Marshall Plan was put to a conference of nations held in Paris in 1947; only Russia chose not to attend, establishing its own Communist International, presenting the world as now divided into “two camps: imperialist and anti-imperialist.”

The Foundation described its European Rehabilitation Program not as relief but as helping Europe to help itself: “a cultural Marshall Plan. The idea is to help the stricken countries to help themselves. In these defeated lands where stable government does not exist, the Foundation cannot operate in its accustomed way. It cannot follow its usual procedures, making grants to finance programs of research, to provide supplies and equipment, to build
libraries, laboratories, and other construction. If for no other reason, the unsettled economies of our former enemies would rule out many such projects as impracticable. Moreover, the depleted staffs and lost morale make most of the universities unsuitable candidates for research grants. The problem is one of restoring morale to the intellectual and moral forces of the country, and of acquainting them with democratic standards, methods, and accomplishments, and of providing the youth with sane and balanced leadership. In these ways, it is believed, Europe may be helped to a measure of self-sufficiency in the hoped-for fraternity of civilized peoples.\footnote{1} This passage, perhaps more than any other, highlights the Foundation’s dependence on functioning and effective governments.

In the past, the note continued, the US had borrowed from Europe; now the US was beginning to pay back some of its cultural debt to Europe. “This then is the philosophical foundation of the European Rehabilitation Program. America can teach Europe. The United States has something to contribute beyond the dollars of the Marshall Plan.”\footnote{2} After many hours of discussion, and perhaps with some misgivings about possible public criticism, staff agreed to a major programme

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Officers Conference, December 15, 1947: 89, 10, 700, RG 1.1
\item The Foundation’s Program to Help Europe, Trustee Bulletin, November 1948: p. 13
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
in Germany and Austria, with a focus on the problems of intellectual and cultural isolation and the lack of younger leaders familiar with democratic ways of life. In other countries in Europe the Foundation would try to resume its old divisional programmes. The Foundation also engaged in a large programme of work in Japan.

At their meeting on December 15, 1947 staff agreed that the additional money would be spent largely in enemy countries. They noted that it would be important to ensure that expenditure in Germany did not get out of line with that in other countries. In practice, however, this was unlikely to happen because any work in Germany would be enormously difficult and the programme would be able to move only very slowly.³

Some programmes could get going more quickly. One early grant, of $69,000, was given for subscriptions to scholarly journals and periodicals for 15 German and three Austrian university libraries; another $9,000 was given for medical literature in the same institutions. These grants were seen as an important start because throughout the war universities under the Nazi regime had no contact with the wider scientific world and little idea of recent discoveries.

Another grant on which they were able to move quickly was for a summer school at Heidelberg University, bringing German and foreign university students together with ten foreign professors designed to introduce young students to the scientific world.

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³ Officers Conference, December 15, 1947: 83, 10, 700, RG 1.1
Germans to other ways of thinking.4

But before any real work could begin, the programme had to be cleared with the War and State Departments. If Roosevelt’s Depression New Deal created what some described as an alphabet soup of programmes, the post-war administration of Germany required an entire dictionary to get through the maze of acronyms and agencies: SHAEF, OMG, OMGH, OMGWB, OMGUS, and so on. In 1948 the Foundation entered a period in which its work was encouraged at the very highest levels of government – and persistently constrained by an obfuscating maze of bureaucracy and practical problems.

1948: BATTLING THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT

1948 started well with a discussion in early January with the Civil Affairs Division at the War Department in Washington. General Noce, Chief of Division, was “very pleased” that the Foundation was resuming activities in Germany and Austria and emphasised the importance of education and reorientation work.5

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4 Ibid: 85, 10, 700, RG 1.1
5 Ibid: 84, 10, 700, RG 1.1
Apart from requiring permissions of every imaginable type, the Foundation depended on the various military government offices to make proposals for work and funds (under a broad rubric provided by the Foundation).

In the midst of this military bureaucratic maze, the Foundation must have been pleased to receive a letter from General Clay, the US Military Governor in Germany. Clay, commenting on the news that the Foundation was going to support German education, wrote: “I know of no more encouraging act to all of us here who see the need for an educational program so badly. Your assistance will mean far more than any which could be provided directly by Military Government. It will do much to restore courage among the new liberal groups in Germany.”

But this was quickly followed by more needs and demands for information and permits. The Foundation had found US academics who were willing to spend some time in Germany but everyone going to Germany required military clearance, and there were additional issues about obtaining food and lodging for Americans in Germany on Foundation projects. Another complication was that most of the American scholars wishing to visit Germany appeared to be of foreign origin, and about half were Jewish refugees.7 There were yet more problems with the selection and preparation of organisations in the US to receive German scholars.

The mechanics of spending money in Germany was another problem. The

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6 Ibid
7 Ibid
Foundation was not allowed to make grants to the US government; so it needed to find a private agency which could receive dollars and pay out grants in Germany.

The Department of Education and Religious Affairs of OMGUS (Office of the Military Government, United States) agreed to make proposals to the Foundation for suitable projects, under the broad headings supplied by the Foundation. Edward D’Arms was the man at the Foundation with the, perhaps unenviable, task of receiving these proposals.

When the proposals came in they were not of the standard required by the Foundation. D’Arms wrote back: “The Foundation desires a proposal in concrete form; that is to say with specific details not only of costs, but of sponsoring agencies, personnel involved, and sufficient operational detail that the plan can go into effect as soon as the Foundation reaches a decision.”

Applications must also have contained an assessment of the interest of the German authorities and the likelihood that they will “cooperate sincerely in their accomplishment.”

Again the Foundation’s problem was its dependence on information supplied by others, and in this case it was an agent at a distance that the Foundation did not select but which had been thrust upon it by the structure of authority.

These, the letter from D’Arms at the Foundation to OMGUS noted, were things which the Foundation could not easily assess at a distance.

Again the Foundation’s problem was its dependence on information supplied by others, and in this case it was an agent at a distance that the Foundation did not select but which had been thrust upon it by the structure of authority.

D’Arms continued: “I must confess my disappointment that the proposals you
submitted appear to be separate and distinct and not part of a stated integral plan. It would be easier for us to know to what extent the accomplishment of your overall objectives would be facilitated or hindered by our action on any specific proposals.” For example, he asked, how does one proposal equate in importance with another? “Why is teacher training in one place more important than another, etc.” This might have been the military government but the Foundation was not going to accept second-rate proposals.

8 Letter from D’Arms to Alexander, March 2, 1948: 86, 10, 700, RG1.1
Chef der deutschen Wehrmacht

Ein Erlass des Führers zur einheimischen Ausgabe im diplomatischen Dienst.
Chapter 17: Ideas for Democracy

At last, at the beginning of April 1948, the Foundation had a list of grants approved under the European Rehabilitation Program. One of these grants was to the University of Chicago to set up an American faculty at the University of Frankfurt. Six to ten university professors from Chicago would be constantly in residence at Frankfurt, each professor serving for at least six months. They were mostly professors specialising in American culture and history, English language and literature, the social sciences, law, international law and philosophy. Their main aim was to work with young Germans intending to follow academic careers, but they also gave general courses and were available for lectures at other German universities. Other grants were given to an array of US and other universities to enable staff to visit German and Austrian universities.

The Salzburg Seminar series was another attempt to reach young people in Germany and Austria. The Seminar had been started by a group of students at Harvard, and the Foundation provided funding for it to continue. 90 students from 14 countries met with university staff and ten academics from the US for a six-week seminar on the study of American civilisation.

Professor Smith, from the University of Minnesota, later gave a firsthand account of the seminar. “Where else,” he said “could one find 80 or 90 economists, historians, political scientists, sociologists and students of literature, from
“With all allowance for the grim predicament of contemporary Europe, the Seminar was an approximation of the Abbey of Theleme envisioned by Rabelais as an institution for the release of the human spirit through perfect freedom in intellectual expression and shared cultural endeavour.”

Some students, Smith reported, were suspicious of “American propaganda” but “gradually relaxed when they found that all problems were open to free discussion in an atmosphere of academic integrity and that the Americans were perfectly willing to examine criticism of the United States.” According to Smith, students learned as much about American democracy from observing interaction between students and staff as from the seminar itself. Rather than the “almost military feeling of caste...in Austria and Germany, they saw in the attitude of American students towards their teachers as a feeling of comradeship.” Smith went on to report that: “one German suffered an almost traumatic shock when he saw an American professor come into a dormitory

1  The Foundation’s Program to Help Europe, Trustees Bulletin, November 1948: p. 8-9
2  Ibid
room to speak to his student assistant, and the assistant answered without even taking his feet off the table.”³ It is not clear whether the shock related to the informality or the fact that the student had his feet on the table.

REACHING THE PEOPLE

Other grants included a programme of visits by various American artists, musicians, actors and ballet dancers. The Foundation paid fares and travel, while living expenses came from occupation funds. This programme was seen as “rounding out” Foundation activities which were otherwise very much focused on the exchange of academics.

Like many foundations, the Rockefeller Foundation found it easier and safer, especially in these conditions, to work with fairly well established organisations with recognisable structures and names. The problem was that these were, arguably, not the organisations with the deepest and widest reach to those who were most disadvantaged, or most creative.

³ Ibid
⁴ Notes on a meeting in Fosdick’s office, April 15, 1948: 86, 10, 700, RG 1.1
Broadcasting and newspapers in Germany had been little more than channels for Nazi propaganda. If Germany were to become a fully functioning democracy again the Foundation was convinced that a free press was vitally important. From the War Department’s standpoint journalism in Germany was both enormously important and somewhat difficult. It was important to ensure the political suitability of journalists but this meant that “the individuals selected fell into two categories: those who have been unable to follow their profession under the Nazis for many years and hence were both out of practice and elderly, and second, those who had no previous experience or training and required training on the job.”5

While making no attempt to model German Newspapers after the American there were some practices CAD officers insisted on, such as separation of fact and opinion, a political balance, an editorial page, and so on.

In an attempt to break through this circle of disadvantage, the Foundation gave a grant of $25,000 to Columbia University to bring to Great Britain, the United States and Canada leading German radio station staff. The idea was that establishing German radio as a public service, free from political control, would be much encouraged if broadcasters could see how British, American and Canadian radio worked to provide education, information and entertainment.

5 Letter CAD to D’Arms, January 12, 1948: 114, 11, 717
A similar scheme operated for print journalists with the Foundation supporting the Graduate School of Journalism of Colombia University and the American Press Institute to put on a training programme for German journalists. The proposal was for the Institute to bring to the US for around six weeks, a group of 15 German journalists from the daily press, the news associations, the more important weekly magazines and the leading women’s magazines in the occupied German zones. The CAD had agreed that it would be responsible for selection of the group and for arranging their transport.

For the first two weeks the group attended a special seminar arranged by the American Press Institute at which qualified American journalists led discussions on topics such as: the function of the newspaper in a democratic society; the history of the freedom of the press; the effect of newspapers in a democratic government; the separation of news and opinion in news columns; balance and the presentation of local, national and international news; techniques of news coverage, and so on. Visits and work “placements” were also arranged with leading American newspapers. The visit ended with a follow-up seminar at the Institute (in the event, an extra grant was given to enable the visitors to travel more widely in the US).

The scheme was supported by the Military Government whose Director of the Information Control Division wrote: “German publishers here are now engaged in a fight with German government officials and political party leaders to force acceptance in Germany of the well-established American principle that what officials do is the business of the public and news and information about
government must never be channelled through a censorship. We hope that German journalists can be encouraged in their demand that German officials subject themselves to the same open questioning that is well established American practice.”6 This was just one of a series of projects centred around media training for Germany that was repeated over several years.

The problem of the lack of trained people and models that prompted the radio and print journalists study tour to the US was also the rationale for the programme for youth leaders. The original plan had been to support “worthwhile projects for strengthening wholesome youth movements.”7 But it soon became clear that there were few, if any, good projects within Germany and so the Foundation supported three projects to enable German youth leaders to go to the UK, Elsinore and the US for training for several months. In addition, three “adequate training schools” for youth leaders were developed in various places in Germany and Austria.

**ENDING THE SPECIAL PROGRAMME**

In May 1948 Fosdick suggested putting aside for future use $100,000 out of the $500,000 the Trustees had already agreed for cultural rehabilitation in central Europe. He noted the “enthusiastic response we have had from the State department and the military authorities... What we did that apparently made an impression was to jump right in and start things going without delay, and it obviously is having an effect.”8

The Foundation had used its freedom from public and diplomatic

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6 Ibid
7 The Foundation's Program to Help Europe: p. 10, op.cit
8 Fosdick memo, May 18, 1948: 86, 10, 700, RG 1.1
accountability to wade in and do what governments found it very difficult to do in such situations. It had acted quickly, without worrying overmuch about public reactions, and had taken some risks. But its lack of official status and position - the very characteristics that enabled it to wade in - had also created administrative problems and continued to do so. To ensure that the programme was maintained, the Foundation needed a receiving/administering agency to handle future grants. The matter rumbled on through 1948, finally settling on UNESCO.

Towards the end of 1949 Havighurst returned from his second trip to Germany and recommended that the Foundation resume its old way of working with officers from each division specialising in a particular area (e.g. Health, Social Science etc.). The officers met to discuss Havighurst’s visit to Germany and Austria and his recommendations for the programme. Havighurst reported a general improvement in conditions in Central Europe, he suggested that the relief phase was almost over, but that made the problem of what to do more complex.9

They finally agreed that the general programme should continue for a few months and that divisions should begin to operate as they saw fit. The Trustees would be asked to release the remaining $200,000 in the existing authorisation, and authorise an additional $100,000. At the December 1948 meeting, the Trustees agreed to end the general programme by April 30, 1949.

9 Officers’ Conference, November 17, 1948: 89, 10, 700, RG 1.1
NA PAMĚŤ O DENÍKU
CHVÍLÍCH NA
ŽÍŠKY A
JEN
JE ČÍN!
Chapter 18: Lowering the Iron Curtain

THE RED SCARE

Throughout the second half of the 1940’s the Foundation grappled with the issue of relations with Eastern Europe and Russia against the background of rising “Red” hysteria fed by a variety of events.

In February 1946 the story of Igor Gouzenko, a cipher clerk at the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa who defected to Canada, revealed the fact that the Soviet Union had an extensive network of spies in Canada. In 1947 the Federal Employee Loyalty Program to determine the “Americanism” of Federal government employees was created. In 1948 the media were full of stories of Elisabeth Bentley, “the beautiful young blonde”, who had exposed a ring of Soviet spies at the heart of power including, she alleged, prominent figures in two Democratic administrations.

Perhaps most important was the compilation of the Attorney General’s List. This was originally intended to be an internal document to be used as a way of assessing the loyalty of Federal government employees. Membership of, and later almost any sort of contact with, organisations linked to communism, fascism, totalitarianism, or “subversive” views was enough to get your name on the List. Then later in 1947 the List was published and “now any private citizen, armed with the List, could impugn another citizen’s loyalty with what looked like the authorization of the United States Government.”

Now “everyone must henceforth watch his or her contacts, where one went, whom one saw – a gregarious misstep into the wrong meeting, a check signed for some charitable cause, a more than casual acquaintance with radicals, could put you on the list and forbid you a job.” What Wills graphically refers to as “the cobwebby stringing of ‘ties’ from shadow to shadow” was in operation.

1* Wills in Hellman 1976: p. 9
2* Ibid: p. 10
The implications for the Foundation were potentially profound. The Foundation was independent — but just how independent would it, and could it afford to, be? Would the Board and staff get caught up in the Red Scare?

The Foundation worked with Russian scientists, it valued its freedom to travel and its welcome in Russia. The Foundation believed in rational men and women talking, listening and understanding each other. Many at the Foundation no doubt agreed with Fosdick’s 1945 comments that “our relations with Russia are too immediately important, too freighted with all sorts of possibilities, to be left to the mercy of uninformed emotion, whether ecstatic or denunciatory. What is required is a determination to be accurately informed, to see things as they are. It may not be possible to bridge the ideological chasm, but certainly a wider and deeper knowledge on our part of Russian ideas and motivations, and a reciprocal attitude on the part of the Soviet government, will afford a basis of mutual understanding on which the two nations can live together in the same world.” But as Appleget, the Foundation’s Vice-President, was also careful to emphasise: “The Foundation is trying to do its part in America.”

By March 1948 the situation had become infinitely more difficult. Fosdick wrote to Gregg in Paris about the “catastrophe” (i.e. communist coup) in Czechoslovakia and the “doom of Finland”, which he said raised questions the Foundation in New York “don’t know how to answer.” Yet again the Foundation was coping with lack of information and uncertainty.

These events raised wider question about relations in Eastern Europe – should the Foundation try to maintain its contacts as long as possible or, by doing so, would it put at risk the safety and positions of people it was trying to help. In addition, “the rising feeling of fright and hysteria in this country is presenting us with a public relations problem...” Requests from Eastern European scholars

1 Letter from Fosdick to Gregg, March 11, 1948: 18,9,700, RG 1.1
wanting to come to the US were leading to questions about the need for another refugee scholars programme. Referring to the “shocking world we are living in”, Fosdick urged Gregg to get back to New York for a two-day Board meeting in April.²

NEW DILEMMAS

The March 1948 Officers’ Conference discussed Foundation policy in Europe as a result of the coup in Czechoslovakia and the “lowering of the ‘Iron Curtain’” in other European countries where the Foundation had programmes. Fosdick wanted to stay in and maintain contacts until forced out. The Foundation, he argued, “has a uniquely favorable position for maintaining such contacts because it has worked without regard to national boundaries and should take advantage of it.” This was agreed as the general policy except where it would “risk the necks” of those the Foundation wishes to help.³

The Foundation was now facing a whole new set of dilemmas: it believed in the power of dialogue, it believed that knowledge was above politics, it wanted to support the “angels”, it did not want to penalise people for the politics of their governments, but did the very fact of receiving US support endanger some people? And, on top of all this, the Foundation knew the importance at this time of being, and being seen to be, a “good American.”

On the same day as the Officers’ Conference, Gregg responded to Fosdick’s request that he return from Europe for the Board meeting in April. Gregg

² Ibid: 79, 9,700, RG 1.1
³ Officers’ Conference Minutes, March 18, 1948: ibid
wrote that he had changed his sailing to an earlier passage on the Queen Mary. “The reason for doing this is mainly that I am a bit disturbed to find that your letter suggests a frame of mind in New York which I would hate to see fanning itself into any extreme position and if I can be of any use by bringing matters into a better perspective I ought to do so.” He continued: “It is not that I don’t think the situation in Europe is serious. I do. But we must all realize more clearly the tremendous influence the Foundation possesses as perhaps the most admired group (with the possible exception of the Quakers) representing the United States which is working in Europe. The European university people look to us for guidance and opinion.” Gregg then used an analogy of the importance of a mother showing no alarm when a bomb falls to prevent her children from becoming afraid. The Foundation was cast in the role of the reassuring, unflappable mother.4

An untitled extract from the April 1948 Board meeting recorded: “It was agreed that the Foundation, because of its history and its general acceptance in Europe as a disinterested, non-political organization, is in a uniquely favorable position to promote good will and understanding among the peoples of Europe and the United States. Since the need for this good will and understanding is growing increasingly urgent, the Foundation cannot afford a policy of over caution, but must continue to move ahead with programs wherever there are good opportunities.”

Staff were also conscious of the need to avoid conversations and actions that might jeopardise individuals living in countries behind the Iron Curtain; the

4 Letter from Paris from Gregg to Fosdick, March 18, 1948: ibid
possibility of public reaction in the US that might jeopardise the favourable position of the Foundation; and the importance of avoiding projects that might be used to injure the United States and countries friendly to it. “No attempt was made to provide officers with a formula for work in Europe; rather an attitude was expressed with a view to giving them guidance in a very uncertain changing situation.”

The extract above possibly conveys a more united position than existed. Various letters suggest that the Trustees were not unanimous regarding policy in relation to Iron Curtain countries. Subsequently, officers requested clarification on various points. A letter from Weaver to Fosdick on April 13, 1948 asked for definition of “border countries” to the Iron Curtain; did it, for example, include Finland but not Sweden or Norway? Weaver continued: “And what specifically do you think about assistance to very distinguished British or French scientists who are known to be either definitely communistic (members of the party) or, at least, Leftist, even from the point of view of the British Labour Government?”

Another memo in June 1948, regarding a proposal for a grant to a scientist at Birkbeck College for a project directed by a known communist, included notes from Weaver’s conversations with leading British scientists in May 1948 about their views on Foundation funding for known left wing scientists. All agreed, Weaver noted, that what matters is the quality of the science not the politics of the person. Weaver quoted Sir Howard Florey as saying the British are “fed up” with the pinks and the reds “in the same sense they are tired of other irritating things – bad food, criticism over doing their best in Palestine, etc.”, but that the quality of the science is what matters. Farrer-Brown, Secretary of the Nuffield Foundation, suggested that not paying attention to the politics

5 Extract from Board meeting minutes, April 1948: ibid
of the scientist may mean they lose something, but to choose on the basis of political views "there is a danger of losing something even more important." Farrer-Brown also noted: "We are closer to Communism than you are, both geographically and in our governmental system but we do not seem to be as nervous about it as you are."

The policy debate continued. One consideration was that the Foundation did not wish to invest in countries that were so unstable that the future usefulness of the investment was uncertain. But reputation was also an issue. On August 18, 1949 a memo from Barnard (now President) to division directors emphasised: "Our willingness and desire to exclude those of bad character - members of subversive organizations being so regarded; and finally, the disclaimer of responsibility where candidates have been passed by the State Department and the Department of Justice." Great importance was attached to State Department clearance because the Foundation did not want to be put in the position of guaranteeing the character of the people it helped – something it did not have the resources to do. Barnard stated that he avoided the conclusion that the only 100% safeguard would be to drop the fellowship and grants in aid programme altogether because one of his greatest fears was that "the whole trend of security and loyalty criteria is in the direction of a destructive restriction of scientific and scholarly activity."

But the Foundation and Cold War politics is another story. In the following years the Foundation took up interests in South America and spent less time and money in Europe. From 1946 to 1948 the Foundation had dipped into its Principal Fund to the tune of $30 million in excess of income. In 1949 that was stopped – belts had to be tightened and choices made. South America, for various reasons, appears to have been a more appealing choice than Europe.

7 Memo, June 3, 1948: ibid
8 Ibid
Reflections

The work of the Rockefeller Foundation in Europe during the Second World War and its immediate aftermath is an important, little recognised slice of history which has left an enduring mark. It is also a tale with important contemporary relevance. It is a story of the unique roles of philanthropic foundations and their negotiated, shifting, contested relationships with governments. It is a story of the very real moral and political dilemmas foundations face even as they emphasise their political independence. It is a story of how foundations as institutions on the borders of democracy may be the defenders, even saviours, of democracy.

It is also a tale about the importance to foundations of networks, contacts, tenacity and perhaps, above all, knowledge – of so much more than money. It was when it was starved of knowledge, or when the reliability of information was in question, that the Foundation became most anxious and cautious.

It is a story that illustrates how few truly new debates there are in philanthropy: what to do, where and how, for greatest long term impact; how small is too small a grant; what are the limits of independence; can you, and should you, be truly ‘value free’; where are the borders of proper accountability?

Finally, it is a story that illustrates how right foundations are to treasure their independence – and a reminder that they need to recognise their dependence on a functioning infrastructure of education, people, training, institutions, financial systems, law and order and so on provided by others.
Cast list

Aldrich, W. - chair of the Rockefeller Foundation Board from 1939 – 1940

Anatole - temporary chauffeur to French office staff

Appleget, T. - vice-president of the Rockefeller Foundation in the war years

Barnard, C.I. - became president of the Rockefeller Foundation on July 1, 1948

Benoit-Levy, J. - French filmmaker helped by the Foundation to leave France during the war

Blandin, Mr and Mrs - husband and wife on the Foundation’s staff

Bohr, N. - renowned physicist helped by the Foundation to leave France during the war

Crowell, E. - member of the Paris office staff who left in 1940

Compton, K.T. - president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and board member of the Foundation

D’Arms, E. - assistant director in the Rockefeller Foundation Humanities Division

Dinsmoor, W.B. - professor at Columbia University and president of the Archaeological Institute of America

Fosdick, R.B. - president of the Foundation from 1936 – 1948

Frick, H.C. - heiress, art collector and creator of two art reference libraries

Gregg, A. - director of the Rockefeller Foundation Medical Science Division

Groll, Mr and Mrs - husband and wife on the Foundation’s staff in France

Gunn, S.M. (Mike) - chairman of the Foundation’s Paris Office from 1939 - 1940

Kittredge, T.B. - member of the Social Sciences Division staff

Laugier, H. - Foundation grantee; appointed Directeur de Cabinet to the Minister of National Education in the French government in 1939

Leach, C.N. - member of the Foundation Health Commission staff in Europe

Letort, R. - bookkeeper and accountant in the Foundation’s French office

Lindbergh, C. - American aviator and outspoken opponent of America entering the war

McComas, C. - American film actress and second wife of Mike Gunn
Makinsky, A. - member of the Foundation staff in France, Lisbon and New York

Marshall, J. - associate director of the Rockefeller Foundation Humanities Division

Meiklejohn, A.P. - member of the Foundation Health Commission in Europe working on nutrition studies

Meyerhof, O. - renowned physiologist

Meyerhof, W. - son of Otto Meyerhof who later became a professor of nuclear physics at Stanford University.

Miller, H.M. - assistant director of Rockefeller Foundation Natural Sciences Division

Montagnon - member of staff in the Paris office

Murrow, E. - American radio journalist broadcasting from London during the war; friend of the Foundation

O’Brien, D.P. (Pat) - assistant director with the Foundation’s Medical Sciences Division

Rockefeller, J.D. - the Foundation’s founder

Rockefeller, J.D. Jr. - son of the founder and chair of the Foundation’s board to 1940

Rockefeller, N. - son of J.D. Rockefeller Jr.

Sawyer, W.A. - director of the International Health Division

Stewart, W. - chair of the Foundation from 1940

Stevens, D.H. - director of the Rockefeller Foundation Humanities Division

Strode, G.K. - director of the Rockefeller Foundation International Health Division

Willitts, J. - director of the Rockefeller Foundation Social Sciences Division in Europe
References

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Imperial War Museums, BU8608

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Heinz-Josef Lücking, by-sa-3.0de
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She is the author of over 100 articles and books on the non-profit sector and social policy. Her most recent publications include an analysis of risk in grant-making, commissioned by the Big Lottery Fund UK; a study of creative philanthropy in action published by Routledge, and a study of UK foundations’ roles and visions undertaken by the London School of Economics (LSC) Centre for Civil Society. Until it’s closure in December 2012, Leat was also a trustee of The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund.