

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE

THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF SCIENCE AND LEARNING

THE Academic Assistance Council was formed in May, 1933, to assist scholars and scientists who, on grounds of religion, race or opinion, were unable to continue their work in their own country. Its services have been needed chiefly to help the 1,300 university teachers displaced in Germany, but it has also assisted refugee scholars from Russia, Portugal and other countries.

In cooperation with other organizations, the council has assisted in permanently re-establishing 363 of the 700 displaced scholars who left Germany. A further 324 are still being temporarily maintained in universities and learned institutions while seeking more permanent positions. The council has directly received over £46,000 in donations which, with the exception of the small amount used for paying fares of displaced scholars to positions overseas, administrative expenses and other incidental purposes, have been employed in subsidizing research by our refugee guests. The council, as the international center for this work, has built up a place-finding organization and information service which are proving of increasing usefulness.

The council hoped that its work might be required for only a temporary period, but is now convinced that there is need for a permanent body to assist scholars who are victims of political and religious persecutions. The devastation of the German universities still continues; not only university teachers of Jewish descent, but many others who are regarded as "politically unreliable" are being prevented from making their contribution to the common cause of scholarship.

The council has decided to establish as its permanent successor a Society for the Protection of Science and Learning, which will continue the council's various forms of assistance to scholars of any country who, on grounds of religion, race or opinion, are unable to carry on the scientific work for which they are qualified. One function of the society will be to build up an Academic Assistance Fund to award research fellowships, tenable in the universities of Great Britain and other countries by the most distinguished of the refugee scholars.

This fund will be administered under the auspices of His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, the president of the Royal Society, the president of the British Academy, Lord Horder, the Hon. R. H. Brand and myself.

I appeal confidently and urgently to all those who wish to assist in the defence of free learning and science to join the society by paying a minimum annual subscription of one guinea. I hope that many will make a larger donation either to the society or to the

fund, or will undertake to covenant with the society for a seven-year contribution, thus allowing us to recover income tax on the donations. Gifts to the fund may be earmarked if desired for the establishment of particular fellowships or studentships bearing the name of the donor.

This appeal is made with the full cooperation of the organizers of the National Christian Appeal which is about to be made for the destitute non-Jewish refugees from Germany, since the society will be giving assistance to only one section, namely the scholars, among the German refugees, irrespective of their religious affiliations. It is therefore with confidence that I ask support from both the Christian and the Jewish world, and in particular from the university world, to place this most important part of the refugee work on a firm financial basis.

Contributions and subscriptions should be sent to me at the offices of the Academic Assistance Council, 12 Clement's Inn Passage, Clare Market, W.C.2, made payable to the "Academic Assistance Council."

RUTHERFORD,

RUTHERFORD OF NELSON,

President of the Academic Assistance Council.

THE FREEDOM OF LEARNING¹

Sir,—In your issue of March 18 you published an account of the new plans of the Academic Assistance Council for the reorganization of its work and the creation of a permanent body—the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning—with the general aim of safeguarding the freedom of learning. The undersigned, and with them their friends, collaborators and pupils, feel that they should not let this moment go by without publicly expressing their gratitude to the Academic Assistance Council, as the executor of the good will and friendship of their English friends.

Hundreds of scholars, faced with the necessity of abandoning their studies, have sought and found advice and help from this organization. It is due to the devotion and energy of the members of the council that difficulties which at first appeared insurmountable have been overcome, and that the council, in collaboration with other organizations, has succeeded in placing 363 out of 700 displaced scholars. In reality, far more has been achieved than these numbers indicate. It is in the very nature of the problem that even where no material assistance was possible, help could be given by satisfying spiritual needs. The warm sympathy extended to all who approached the Academic Assistance Council has helped in hundreds of cases—this part of its work can not be illustrated in figures.

¹ Letter addressed to the editor of the *London Times*.