

# Roosevelt Hails University in Exile As Symbol of American Freedom

**Principles of Intellectual Liberty on Which It Is Founded Are  
Deeply Rooted in Our Tradition, He Says in Message  
on Its Second Anniversary.**

President Roosevelt expressed hope last night for a "brilliant future" for the "University in Exile," formally known as the Graduate Faculty of Political and Social Science. He characterized it as symbolic of American intellectual, religious and racial freedom.

The President's statement was contained in a letter to Dr. Alvin Johnson, chairman of the "University in Exile" and director of the New School for Social Research, 66 West Twelfth Street, with which the university is affiliated. The letter was read at a dinner at the Hotel Waldorf-Astoria, at which about 300 persons interested in the institution celebrated its founding two years ago, after the first expulsion of Jewish and liberal scholars from Nazi Germany, and the successful completion of its trial period.

## Called Only Free German Faculty.

Prominent educators who spoke at the dinner endorsed the establishment of the university as a permanent American institution and the inauguration of a five-year program of growth and creative work upon which it is now entering. They called it "the only free German faculty in the world." Support was asked for the financing of the five-year program on a basis of \$75,000 a year—a total of \$375,000, of which \$150,000 has been contributed or pledged.

Dr. Felix Frankfurter of the Harvard Law School was toastmaster. The speakers included Dr. Johnson, Dr. George E. Vincent, formerly head of the Rockefeller Foundation; Dr. Isaiah Bowman, president of Johns Hopkins University; Hamilton Fish Armstrong, editor of the quarterly Foreign Affairs; Ira A. Hirschmann, chairman of the board of trustees of the "University in Exile," and Professor Karl Brandt, a member of its faculty, who was formerly director of the Agricultural College in Berlin.

## The President's Letter.

President Roosevelt's message follows:

The White House,  
Washington.

Jan. 14, 1936.

My dear Doctor Johnson:

Public duties unfortunately prevent my attendance at the dinner to which you have kindly asked me. But I should like to congratulate you and the Graduate Faculty of Political and Social Science upon the successful completion of your first two-year period and to tender my best wishes for a brilliant future.

The principle which is symbolized by your Graduate Faculty, namely, freedom of scientific inquiry untrammelled by religious or racial restrictions, is deeply rooted in the American tradition. Ever since the beginning of our Republic, we have welcomed many men and women of ability and character from other countries, who had found their usefulness cut off by conditions which are alien to the American system. Some of our most famous patriots, scholars and scientists came to this country in 1848. The whole nation has been enriched, morally and materially, through the abilities which they placed at our service.

I am particularly gratified to learn that in your Graduate Faculty there are representatives of the three great religions, Protestant, Catholic and Jewish. It is one of the fundamental principles of true Americanism that all religions are entitled to equal respect. Freedom for every man to worship God according to the mandates of his conscience implies the political, social and intellectual freedom which is the very foundation of our national life.

Your Graduate Faculty represents American adherence to the principle of intellectual freedom. I wish it every success in carrying, as it does, the torch of truth-seeking for the good of mankind.

Very sincerely yours,

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT.

## Dr. Vincent Praises Its Aims.

Dr. Vincent urged widespread adherence to the principles exemplified by the "University in Exile" as a means of counteracting propaganda designed to interfere with intellectual freedom in the United States.

"One of the disquieting, even alarming, symptoms of the times," he said, "is to be found in the increasing pressure which is being exerted on scholars, investigators and teachers.

"Laws imposing special oaths upon university professors as well as upon teachers in the schools, sensational campaigns in newspaper chains, espionage and attacks by self-appointed guardians of patriotism are all too prevalent. All friends of true academic freedom will rally to the support of our leading institutions, in safeguarding

the liberty which has made American scholarship and scientific research a splendid national asset and a world contribution.

"In these days of chauvinistic nationalism it cannot be too emphatically urged that scientific and scholarly progress is an international task. Only as free investigators the world over are in constant communication and consciously cooperating in pushing forward the frontiers of knowledge can science and learning truly prosper. It is more than a commonplace to say that the commonwealth of scholarship knows no national boundaries."

## Dr. Bowman Speaks.

Dr. Bowman said the sponsors of the "University in Exile" had acted wisely in organizing the institution instead of trying to persuade American universities to absorb more exiled scholars than they could.

Mr. Armstrong attacked dictators as destructive of culture and civilization and welcomed the exiled scholars to America. He said they would "help us in our struggle to adapt our form of society to the changing needs of modern life without the sacrifice of essential liberties and without interrupting the stream of civilization."

As an expert on foreign affairs, Mr. Armstrong said he did not see how there could be good international relations "in a world that is half slave, half free."

"There is a great gulf fixed between the two conceptions of life," he continued, "and there is almost no way of bridging it with words, because words no longer have any commonly accepted meanings."

He cited as examples the different meanings attached by Americans and German Nazis to such words as art, law, sport, religion, philosophy and science. "How can we discuss art," he asked, "with people who say 'art' and mean 'propaganda'?"

"What communication can there be," Mr. Armstrong continued, "with scientists who think that the word 'Aryan' is a race term, that there is such a thing as race purity, that there is such a thing as fixed race superiority; who mistrust the pure sciences and favor applied science, and yet who think that discoveries in that field made by non-Aryan scientists are to be ignored because they must be devices to degrade superior peoples?"

"The fact is, of course, that the true scientist begins at the opposite end of a problem from where the dictator begins. The scientist is interested in truth for its own sake. He wants to build his chain of knowledge and invention and discovery, link by link, out into the void of the unknown. He doesn't care where the chain of reasoning and fact is going to lead him. But the dictator forbids that sort of adventure. He forbids curiosity. He assigns the scientist his conclusion in advance, and tells him to substantiate it by inventing supporting theories and by neglecting facts of a contrary nature."

## School "Here to Stay."

The "University in Exile" is here to stay as a permanent American institution dedicated to the right of free speech and to higher scholarship, Mr. Hirschmann declared.

"For this university to close its doors," he added, "would turn the school into a victory for Hitler and be an eternal disgrace which American liberals could never live down."

He said he was sure Americans would gladly make up the amount of money needed to guarantee the continued existence of the institution.

Professor Brandt expressed the gratitude of the members of the faculty for the welcome, sympathy and hospitality with which they had been received here after their expulsion from Germany, and the continued support for their institution.

"In this country," he said, "where science is not exclusively the possession of a professional caste but becomes more and more closely integrated in the central life of the nation, we believe that we have a fair chance of becoming a connecting link between two civilizations, one with a great past, the West European, and another with a great future, the American."

Professor Frankfurter criticized American universities for not absorbing more German scholars, and said he did not exclude his own university, Harvard, from this criticism. Every important American university, he added, should take at least one or two of these scholars who "have been turned adrift by this ruthless new scheme of society."

The audience rose and applauded Dr. Johnson when he was introduced as "the father" of the "University in Exile." Praising the German scholars on the faculty, he expressed astonishment that any nation "should be so mad as to expel so valuable an intellectual resource for the benefit of another nation."