

9/26/40

(rough draft)

To the Graduates and Former Students:

The College is maintaining its regular program of work. So far, at least, nothing in the national defense program suggests any alteration of the curriculum for women. As you know, the College contributed last summer in its faculty personnel to defense organization. Both Mr. Jones and Mr. Brockway were in Washington working on the defense problems, one in the national Advisory Defense Commission and the other with the inter-departmental committee dealing with Latin American and European trade policy. Mr. McCamy, who is on leave of absence, as Assistant to the Secretary of Agriculture is also dealing with defense problems. The College is using foreign scholars largely for its lecturers this year and, as you know, we are maintaining some refugee students on scholarships.

A direct opportunity to be of help to children in the War zones presented itself last summer and under the activities of the United States Committee for the Care of European Children, along with other colleges, Bennington offered its complete facilities to give temporary care to a maximum of two hundred children during its vacation periods. Furthermore, we offered to take charge of the reception of the children at the port of arrival (Montreal, Boston, or New York), transporting them to the College for temporary care. The United States Committee indicates that it may make use of this offer of facilities during a part of the winter period. The faculty and student body have agreed that such expense as this causes will, if possible, be taken out of the year's budget. In other words, the children coming from England, although not all English children, will be treated as guests of the College community. Members of the faculty and staff and the

medical service will be on call should children arrive during the winter period, to take immediate supervision of their care while they are with us. Temporary care means a matter of five to ten days or two weeks when the Vermont Children's Aid Society is sorting them out to place them in homes which have been offered in advance.

As you know, this offer of the College may never be used because of the inability to obtain facilities to bring children to this country. On the other hand, we want to be prepared to act immediately and efficiently if we are informed by the United States Committee that twenty, fifty, one hundred or even two hundred, children are to be sent to Bennington College after their arrival for this temporary care.

I am writing you now to get volunteers among the graduates and ex-students who have had some experience in supervision and care of children and who will agree to come to the College for a period while the children are here to take charge of their play and activities under the supervision of our medical and educational experts on the faculty and staff. All the children will be between five and sixteen years of age.

This whole offer--similar to one made by Swarthmore, Wellesley, and other colleges--is essentially one of free service and free facilities. None of us is getting paid for this task of receiving and taking care of these children who in this way will escape from the horrors of the War zone.

I am writing to find out whether you are interested in doing this volunteer work. When you can afford it, we are asking you to pay board at the usual rates while you are here, although there will be no cost or charge for room. If you cannot afford to pay for your meals, however, the rest of the community will attempt to pay for these meals out of its savings. We

will need one graduate or former student for approximately each five or six children who will be in our care. I am asking you to fill out the following blank spaces and mail this letter back to me within a week. We will choose from those who volunteer the people who have had the most training, and please remember that although you volunteer we may never have to call upon you because the children may never arrive. Isolated as we are from the War this has seemed to the College community the kind of decent act of helpfulness which we are especially equipped to give.

Sincerely yours,

Robert D. Leigh
President



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- (1) I can come to Bennington upon two days' notice any time between December 21st and February 22nd.
(If not for the whole period, please indicate the time when you would be available)
 - (2) I will drive my car to Bennington and use it along with others to transport the children from the water's edge to the College.
(Indicate number of seats in your car aside from the driver's seat.)
 - (3) I have had training as follows in the field of child psychology and child care (state what you did in college as well as what you did after college)
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 - (4) Include any kind of practical experience that would make you more or less qualified to take care of five or six youngsters.
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