

Frankfurter - 2

These papers are reproductions of some handed to me by Justice Felix Frankfurter during an interview I had with him November 25, 1955. He gave me permission to reproduce them, but asked that he be consulted what would be made of them before publication.

The correspondence was loaned Mrs. Stern by Felix Frankfurter and was with practically no omissions discovered in the following files:

D - Felix Frankfurter

*all in 9A 5 files marked with x 1*

D - Weed, Lewis H.

X ✓

September 21, 1951.

Dear Abe:

I wish ever so much that there were opportunity of talking over your memorandum - the reciprocal exploration of mind instead of the necessary brevity and seeming bluntness of a one-sided letter. So please regard what follows as merely the opening of what I hope will in some form or another turn into an extended conversation.

1. I hope you will not publish this pamphlet. I hope you will publish nothing further until you are ready to discharge a.75. A memorandum serving as a basis for discussion among the members of your Board is one thing; thinking aloud in public is quite another. I have forgotten the critic who remarked that Joyce occasionally forgets that one does not grow up in public. I think the advice is applicable to the Institute for Advanced Study and to you as its Director. You have made your rhetorical bow to the public and have aroused certain expectations. The next announcement should be one of action - news that the School of Mathematics and the School of Economics are established. A prospectus becomes attenuated in its significance if it is repeated, and publication of what for you are merely tentative views is likely to give them a rigidity and a fixity which do them an injustice and may involve you in futile controversy.

2. In any event, your memorandum ought to be free of all criticisms - except by necessary implications - of universities. You have done your job as a critic so far as explicit attack goes. You ought to leave your book to continue to work its ferment. As Director of the I.A.S. your rôle is a very different one - that of architect of a new enterprise, and everything you say and you write concerning the Institute should be that of an architect of a new construction, completely abjuring your past critical function. I urge this not only as matter of

policy. You ought to free your own mind completely of further preoccupation with the defects and inadequacies of other institutions.

3. I venture to suggest that you ought not to speak publicly until you are ready to announce the establishment of a School of Mathematics and a School of Economics. For I am entirely persuaded by what you say in support of making those beginnings. Only two minor statements jar me a bit. I know it is often said that the foundation of modern knowledge is mathematics and I think I know what is meant by it, but it doesn't seem to me a truly critical or scientific observation. It is certainly not the foundation of the modern humanities, and I even wonder whether as to the physical and biological sciences mathematics is the foundation, rather than one of the fruits. In any event, it seems to me a futile piece of dogmatism and needless hierarchical designation. Doesn't it suffice that mathematics is profoundly important? Also it seems to me needless to say that mathematics is not a subject in which at present many American universities are eminent. At least four institutions are eminent therein, to my meager knowledge, and I dare say more. I should omit this superfluous bit of invidiousness.

4. I have strong views against giving graduate degrees. And I am very sorry to see you assuming that you must go in for them. I set forth my views in a memorandum which did not find favor with my colleagues in May 1927. I enclose you a copy of that memorandum. (It is the only one I have, so be good enough to return it.)

5. I think you ought to keep much more fluid than your memorandum indicates the scheme of government for your Institute. I do not even think you ought to commit yourself now to the permanent retention of a lay Board of Trustees, however constituted. If you are going to get the scholars whom you ought to have for your School, they ought to have a very important share in working out your

form of government.

6. I agree with the tenor of your views in regard to the economic principles which should govern. But certainly in anything that you may publish I should deprecate the personal reference. You can convey the same idea by more felicitous indirection.

7. I do not think you can much longer delay the vital decision of location. I do not believe you will find it practicable to enlist your scholars without definiteness on that point.

These observations are the ones that immediately occur to me, so I send them off in view of your request for a prompt reply.

With all good wishes,

Very sincerely yours,

+

Dr. Abraham Flexner

X ✓ *D. M. H. H.*

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September 22, 1931

Dear Felix:

You are a great brick to have complied so promptly with my appeal.

Don't worry. We shall have many opportunities of talking over the various topics in this memorandum. Perhaps you can give me a chance some day when you are in New York. I shall certainly ask for the opportunity when I am in Boston or in Cambridge, as I shall have to be in the course of the late fall or early winter, but I can comment on some of your points without waiting.

1. This is a report to a meeting of the Board of Trustees and, though it may form the basis of a bulletin to be issued sometime or other, it will never be printed in its present form. I agree with you that the next time the Institute speaks some specific announcement should be made respecting the first members chosen for such schools as may be established at the outset.

memoranda and the

2. In general, I agree with you that the publications of the Institute should not be critical of other institutions. I have recapitulated in the present memorandum because only by contrast can I hope to make any but a very few persons see just what it is I am proposing to do. I have, as you say, had my fling in my book, and yet almost every reader of this memorandum has betrayed by his comments the fact that he failed to take in some of the salient things in the book. When Dr. Welch started to put medicine on its feet in this country, he could not content himself either with the founding of the Johns Hopkins Medical School or with a vigorous statement of its purposes and character. He had, as a matter of fact, practically to withdraw from his laboratories and for forty years sacrifice his career, and his views are not yet thoroughly understood in this country, as they are in Germany. My job is unquestionably that of organizing the Institute, and I have absolutely no personal interest in criticism, But I shall have to do more than organize,

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September 22, 1937

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✓ especially in view of the slow process of growth which is contemplated. There are abundant precedents for the need of experimentation and even criticism of a kind in the careers of President Gilman and President Eliot, and they had a lifetime to do what I must hope to accomplish in a brief period.

3. Mathematics is not the foundation of modern knowledge and in the revision I have changed the word, "knowledge", to "science". Historically, it was not even the foundation of modern science, but it has become absolutely indispensable and has worked its way under physics, chemistry, biology, and economics. However, as a matter of tactics the hierarchical designation may and should be abandoned.

✓ Outside the United States, that is to say, in Italy, Germany, France, Scandinavia, and Great Britain, I found general agreement that, whereas we possess probably one mathematical genius and one or two strong mathematical groups, American mathematics is not eminent. It used to be eminent at both the Hopkins and Chicago. It is no longer so. On the other hand, here and there I heard repeatedly of young men of great promise. However, you are certainly right that in a published document this comparative statement should be omitted. In dealing with trustees I need it.

4. Theoretically I agree with you absolutely about graduate degrees, but there are practical difficulties. If we give no degree at all, our students will have to run the gamut of all American education, as it now stands, to get their degrees if they expect to teach. I believe that the best of men can save two or three years. As a practical measure, therefore, for the present it seems to me probably better to throw, as I do, the best of students completely into the hands of the several scholars without any requirements as to previous degrees and then safeguard a young fellow's career by giving him a degree if he deserves it. It ought to be a very rare degree awarded on the basis of examination by outside examiners, as rare as or rarer than the Degree of Doctor Juris at Berlin, which is very carefully safeguarded.

5. I don't see how the scheme of government can be much more fluid without disappearing altogether and making me a Mussolini who will run the Institute in his own way and then later set up some form of machinery for carrying it on. I have throughout the report said that everything that we do ought to be regarded as experimental. There is no lay board of trustees. The trustees consist of some laymen, some outside scholars, some members of the faculty. There is also a committee on education, the majority of which is composed of the faculty. I have pointed out that this memorandum is not to be accepted as final and that experience should be consulted in changing anything that we may begin with. I want the Institute to be different in pretty nearly every important respect from any American institution that I know anything about, and I have tried to keep even these experimental features to the minimum required to set up something and to get the consent of the New Jersey Board of Education.

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Professor Frankfurter

September 22, 1931

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6. Personal references should be eliminated.

7. I have had no time to think about a location. I began work on this job on December 1, 1930. In February I went to Europe. I returned at the end of May and in a few weeks went to Canada. The memorandum states that I shall ask for the appointment of a committee on site. We shall have to make a careful inventory of what we need, on the one hand, and where we can get most of it, on the other.

Since I sent you the copy which you commented on, I have already revised the report in a way that meets in advance some of your criticism. I have also made one or two insertions that may provoke others. If you are willing, I should like to send you the report in the form in which it will probably have to go to the Board, but it will not be adopted - merely received and filed.

Let me thank you again for your extremely helpful and concrete comments. A dozen men have read the manuscript. No one has given me more aid. About no points have I any pride of opinion. I am feeling my way, trying to tap the best brains I can lay hold of to help me to do something that will be better.

Give my greetings to Marion, and believe me

Ever yours,

*A. F.*

P.S.

Let me reread what you have to say on the subject of graduate degrees and I shall return it to you in a few days. A.F.

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
Law School of Harvard University  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

AF:ESB

X ✓ D, Frankfurter

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September 25, 1931

Dear Felix:

I am returning herewith your Observations on Graduate Work. The argument is, I think, perfectly sound, but I have to read it in the light of our own problem. It seems to me - though I may be proved wrong - that if we want to shortcircuit the usual college degrees, we shall have to be in position to give a degree if it is needed and deserved. Bear in mind that the number of students whom we expect will be very, very small. I should suppose on the basis of my interviews that professors of mathematics would want to choose for themselves from three to six or eight students. Inasmuch as they pick them for themselves and do not find them forced on them through an admission office, and inasmuch as, further, the examinations for degrees will, I think, be given by outsiders - in whole or in part - the danger of degree-hunters should disappear. I do not believe that a degree-hunter would be tolerated on the premises, certainly not if the thing works.

Your contention that graduate work should imply personal relation between two students, one of whom is a professor, and that this should be regarded as a common intellectual enterprise is the foundation stone, on which the Institute for Advanced Study ought to be built up.

Thank you once more for letting me see your memorandum.



F.F.

September 25, 1931

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I am happy to learn that you are better.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely yours,

*A. F.*

P.S.

Two fine young foreigners are at Harvard this year - Mitrany (International Relations) and Haberler (Economics). I hope you may see them.

A.F.

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
Law School of Harvard University  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

AF:ESB

XV

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LEWIS H. WEED

December 17, 1931

Dear Felix;

Many thanks for your review. I now remember it quite clearly. I like your part of it just as well as I do Keynes'.

Alfred Cohn has sent me some suggested revisions of the Institute. They strike me as somewhat doctrinaire, that is, as based upon an inadequate knowledge of what really does take place and might take place in universities not only in America but elsewhere. History and experience are after all very important guides, though they must not fetter us, but they throw a good deal of light upon the value of suggestions evolved more or less a priori.

Don't bother about your silence and still less about the reasons therefor. I am in no hurry, but I am always happy to hear from you, for it gives me something to think about.

Ever affectionately,

*A. J.*

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
Harvard University Law School  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

AF:ESB

X ✓

January 7, 1932

Dear Abe:

(By May 31, 1931)

I am returning herewith Schumpeter's letter, which I have retained for an unconscionably long time. I know of course a good deal about him and am well aware of his brilliant powers and his important achievements in his "Fach". But Schumpeter is no pet of mine. I distrust him as a personality - I think he is a crafty fellow and that his spiritual clarity is not a little muddled by calculation. He can of course be very charming and sweet. But he can also be very <sup>Savage</sup> grob - underneath his skin, as underneath that of the rest of us, there is a good deal of the primitive, and perhaps more so under his skin. Personally I distrust as much flattery as he had handed out in his letter.

As to his judgments, I am of course not competent to express an opinion except as to very few of the men canvassed. I don't share his admiration for Hawtrey. His is a narrow mind and truly bureaucratic, able though he be within the framework within which he works. I should think Taussig would be of no use at all "for shaping Dept. policy". I know this sounds rough, but shorthand expression is bound to sound rough if it conveys a critical sentiment. I am in agreement with Schumpeter in putting Viner first. I have tested Viner by encountering his mind on economic matters in which law was implicated and as to which for years I had done a good deal of worrying. I found that I was up against a tougher and acuter mind than that of most of my colleagues whose job it is to deal with the legal questions that Viner was canvassing. Above all, I value in Viner an intellectual rectitude that allows him to go wherever his mind carries him, undeflected

Viner

by those considerations of optimism and prudence which subtly corrode the hardy thinking of so many scholars in America in social economics these days. Viner is like Keynes in his intellectual ruthlessness, in not mixing his insight with his desires or his hopes or the shrinking from the disagreeable.

I should long before this have writ'en you about your memorandum to your Trustees had I anything to add to my notes some months ago. I still feel that you ought to eliminate all references to the inadequacies of American universities. Leave them be. You've had your critical say, and now your criticism should be merely implicit in what you yourself do. Even if the universities were not subject to your strictures, there would be reason for your Institute. That has a justification all its own and ought not to be reduced to a debating point even though the point may be as pervasive - if I may mix my figures - as your critique of American university tendencies.

The more I think about it, the more sure I am that you ought to have the faith which lies behind your effort to create a new society of scholars. And a society of scholars, like other societies, must learn by the exercise of responsibility, to govern itself. I know, though of course not as much as you, about the experience in the government of educational institutions both here and abroad, and I am wholly unimpressed by the arguments against evolving a government of a society of scholars by the scholars themselves. As in all human affairs, there are debits and credits, and a price to be paid for a result aimed at. I think the price of a self-governed community of scholars is amply worth a real try at the gains to be achieved. Of course it's a hazardous enterprise. Of course it's a departure, and a drastic departure, from that <sup>with</sup> which we are familiar. But then your whole effort is to create something very different from what we have, and must be

*Fac  
proceeding*

predicated upon a group of people who are adequate for working out the confidence and resources necessary for a small, self-governing scholarly community. [If they cannot do that, I distrust strongly the durable quality of their effort to pursue the life of reason. Your whole aim, as I understand it, is to get not narrowly-equipped specialists, but men whose specialty is merely an intensified aspect of the whole of life. And the whole of life can hardly preclude the conduct of their own lives in their professional pursuits.] In the management of an educational enterprise like that which you are fostering, I have no confidence in the intermittent contributions of very busy men, preoccupied with their own worries and concerns, even though they be Adeyloottes and Carrells and Hardins and Strausses, diluted or straitened - whichever way you look at it - by faculty representation. I need not labor the theme, for Alfred Cohn has said all that can be said, howsoever differently I might phrase it. Fundamentally, I am unimpressed by the practical objectives. To put it affirmatively, in the world of intellectual endeavor nothing seems to me now more needed than more confidence in the academic by us academicians.

The one thing I do want you to derive from this letter, as from my previous observations, is my very, very deep eagerness about the triumph of the hope to which your Institute is dedicated.

With the best of wishes,

Faithfully yours,

Dr. Abraham Flexner  
Enclosures.

XV

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January 11, 1932

Dear Felix:

I don't know how to thank you sufficiently for the latest - not, I hope, the last - of your extraordinarily thoughtful, helpful, and candid letters which I shall of course regard as strictly confidential.

I came into contact with Schumpeter on his charming side, and he was indeed charming. Viner told me further that he regarded him as probably the ablest economist on the continent, and I have had similar opinions from one or two others, but within the economic field I can get nothing approximating the unanimity of opinion respecting ability and soundness that I have gotten in, let us say, mathematics. You, Laski, Schumpeter, and Taussig have all spoken in very high terms of Viner - you giving me distinctly the most definite insight into his intellectual quality. I have seen him twice, and I am going to see him again, for I am leaving this week to go out to Pasadena for the purpose of seeing what it is that has suddenly raised Pasadena to perhaps the first place in this country on the scientific side. Is it only persons or organization or spirit or what? I want to know before I come to a final conclusion on the matters that you and I have been discussing.

Viner

Don't worry about my memorandum to the Trustees; but, by the way, I should like to have it returned if you have not already destroyed it. I find that

F.F.

Jan. 11, 1932

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not only trustees but faculties need criticising, and I have been urged by scores of them to keep this pot boiling. I do not mean to be distracted from the Institute job, but I do not see that my position is really any different from Dr. Welch's, for example, who not only made the Hopkins Medical School what it ought to be, but from time to time throughout his long career preached the dream of what a real medical school is and what it isn't. Ditto, his associates, particularly Professor Mall.

I have declined a thousand invitations to speak and write and have accepted one or two. I am somewhat amazed at my own moderation - like Nero or Caligula, who originated the phrase.

You have fully grasped my intention to endeavor to create a society of scholars. In view of the history of universities in this country and particularly in Europe, I am not yet persuaded that the best way to do it is to devolve upon the scholars all the minutiae of administration or to deprive them of the necessity of defending and explaining what they want to a balanced group consisting of plain men, outside scholars, and finally their own associates. To be sure, they will all be pre-occupied with their own worries and concerns, but that applies to the members of the faculty itself precisely as it does to outsiders. A considerable proportion of the scholars to whom I have appealed for advice based on their own experience begin by saying that they do not want the kind of responsibility which seems to you important, if not essential. They don't want to have anything to do with administration or with committees or with budgets beyond the most general look-out for their own proper support. Every member of a board of trustees necessarily gives "intermittent contributions" - what sort of scholar or scientist would he be if he gave any other kind of contribution? I wonder if you really know either Aydelotte or Carrel. Different as they are, they have made absolutely invaluable

F.F.

Jan. 11, 1932

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concrete contributions to my own much vaguer and more general conceptions. Thus far I am not persuaded that any single group, whether men of affairs, outside scientists and scholars, or inside faculty members, represents the sum total of the problems and interests of a seat of learning, for everyone of these groups has been tried somewhere or other and has failed. What has happened in the past will therefore doubtless happen in the future. The one thing that I can think of that has not been tried is the sort of combination we are experimenting with. History is against presidential government, trustee government, and exclusive faculty government. The best results over a long period, say, since the founding of the University of Berlin, have been obtained in Germany where a lay ministry has fought things out with highly intelligent faculties. We in America cannot have two separate organizations. It occurred to me to combine them. This device may fail. If so, we shall have to invent something else.

I write you thus fully upon the eve of my departure for Pasadena by way of showing you how deeply grateful I am for the interest, eagerness, and suggestiveness characteristic of your letters.

Always sincerely,

*A. J.*

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
Harvard University Law School  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

AF:ESB



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LEWIS H. WEED

March 5, 1932

Dear Felix:

Many thanks for yours of the fourth, which I think is quite conclusive. I shall notify Beard, who I think will be really relieved.

Barring Anne's attack of grippe, we have nothing to complain of.

I had a most interesting visit to Pasadena, the graduate part of which seems to me nearer the thing I have in mind than anything I have seen in the United States. There is a small, but happy group, every member of which is doing what he wants in his own way. The Institute is governed by an executive council of five faculty members and five trustees, which has worked perfectly both from a worldly and academic standpoint. I met a number of the trustees and found them really interested in their Institute, and Millikan, Morgan and others all testified to their helpfulness. They had not thought of adding to their own academic group outside academic persons, but they liked the idea and thought it well worth trying. I hope that I can get something crystallized by the end of this year in the way of an appointment or two, which will show the standard which I am trying to set up and also make perfectly definite the conditions which the Institute pledges itself to maintain for its scholars and scientists.

F.F.

March 5, 1932

2

For they are the Institute.

With all good wishes,

Always affectionately,

G. J.

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
Harvard Law School  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

AF:ESB

March 11, 1932.

Dear Abe:

I am not at all surprised that you found Pasadena so hopeful a place. Even the surface impression that I had of it made me feel that there was a society of scholars. But of course you must remember it is relatively much easier to run a show dedicated, at least fundamentally, to the natural sciences than to create a centre in which the humanities are to find a happy and fructifying home.

Your thought about "adding to their own academic group outside academic persons" makes me wonder if the experience with such a device affords any cheerful promise. I should suppose that it was pretty clear that such "outside academic persons" would turn out to be either supernumeraries or nuisances. I do not believe that such outside intervention has either the knowledge, the continuity of knowledge, or the responsibility that would bring good rather than bad to the endemic group.

I just wonder whether the Board of Scientific Directors at the Rockefeller Institute is such a howling success that you would want to imitate that example. I just wonder what men like Loev and Noguchi and Levene and Alfred Cohn really felt about these outside academic persons. It strikes me that the function of such outsiders is about as relevant to the work in hand as would be a board of outside presidents guiding and controlling the head of another institution. How would you like to have an academic board consisting of, say, Lowell, Angell and Wilbur - or any other three presidents that you might pick - serve as a board of supervision, or something, over you?

But I like your statement that the "scholars and scientists . . . are the Institute." If you really carry that out in detail, you will have attained your goal. More than that, you will have set a shining example for what we most need.

Always yours,

Dr. Abraham Flexner

X ✓

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March 12, 1932

Dear Felix:

Many thanks for your kind letter. I really don't believe that it is easier to do the trick in the natural sciences than in the humanities. One of the ablest of our younger physicists said to me the other day that it was impossible for an outsider to realize the unconscious pressure under which scientists are placed to do the things that are useful. Of course, this pressure exists in economics and law, but certainly not in mediaeval studies or philosophy or mathematics. The truth is that in America the job is hard enough in any direction. The replies which I have gotten from the forty or fifty scholars to whom the Committee on Site appealed for suggestions all emphasize practically without exception the same points: freedom of thought, speech, and action, absence of pressure to produce results, full-time salaries with retiring allowances which free the professor from the need of changing his mode of living on retirement, etc.

As to organization, I am proposing a unified group consisting of the three elements which I have mentioned. It may not work. If it does not, nothing will be simpler than to change. Meanwhile, if the outside academic persons should be a Mr. Eliot and a Mr. Gilman, I should consider the Institute <sup>extraordinarily</sup> fortunate, for,

F.F.

March 12, 1932

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while they may not and need not know all the details, they do know ideals and  
they ought to help <sup>both</sup> in/preserving and valuing them. Such at any rate I judge  
from my experience with men of this type on the General Education Board.

If we cannot make good on the statement that the scholars and  
scientists are the Institute, we shall have failed no matter what else we do.  
I hope in my few years of tenure to make that so plain that my successor will  
never lose sight of that.

Always yours,

G. J.

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
Law School of Harvard University  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

AF:ESB

March 15, 1972.

Dear Abe:

1. Of course "the job is hard enough in any direction." But I think you are a little romantic in thinking that it's more hard in America than elsewhere. But the essence of the matter is that it is hard enough in any direction. ~~But~~ I still think you underestimate the added pressures in the active so-called social sciences (of course I excluded "mediaeval studies or philosophy or mathematics"). I have observed the show rather intimately in that aspect for seventeen years, and I am surely not unduly biased in Lowell's favor when I say that no place is probably more free from pressure than this.

2. I think you are also too optimistic if you think that "nothing will be simpler than to change" an organization with which you start. And to talk about Eliot and Gilman is again to talk romance. Please name them; where are they? The workability of an institution must be judged by the persons most likely to work it. That's a truth we constantly forget in statescraft. If the Eliots or the Gilmans are to be had for the asking or could perpetuate themselves, pray why didn't they on the General Education Board?

3. I had hoped you would say something about the Board of Academic Advisors at the Rockefeller. You remember the Japanese Will Rogers, Foshimuro Togo, who "asked for to know".

Always yours,

Dr. Abraham Flexner

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March 17, 1932

Dear Felix:

I don't honestly believe that I am romancing in respect to either of your first and second points, but neither of them can be settled by discussion. Financial conditions however being the same or equivalent, distinguished foreigners do not accept calls to the United States - not even when the financial inducement is larger over here than over there.

You are quite right that the workability of an institution must be judged by the persons most likely to work it. Now suspend judgment, and see for yourself whether the steps we take show that what we are doing is sound and that we are competent to do it.

I have no opinion about the Rockefeller Institute for the simple reason that I have never studied it. It is a different problem from mine, but quite aside from that nobody has ever caught me expressing opinions upon subjects which I have not deliberately investigated for myself.

Ever affectionately,

G. F.

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
Law School of Harvard University  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

AF:ESB

D Adams

THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

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October 27, 1932

Dear Felix:

I understand that you were present in Boston yesterday at a meeting at which M. Serruys spoke. Will you confidentially give me your opinion as to the impression he made upon you as an economist and as a man of affairs? I shall not divulge anything that you say to anyone.

With love to you and Marion,

Always sincerely,

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
Harvard Law School  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

*A. D.*

AF:ESB



New Release - October 11, 1932

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Institute for Advanced Study, founded by Mr. Lewis Bushner and Mrs. Felix Puld, was held yesterday. Mr. Alanson B. Houghton presided. It has been decided to locate the institution in the vicinity of Princeton, New Jersey, and to begin active work in the autumn of 1933. The Institute will consist of a series of schools, the first of which will be the School of Mathematics, the second, it is hoped, a School of Economics and History. Appointments were made as follows:

Professor Albert Einstein of Berlin was appointed Professor of Mathematical or Theoretical Physics. Professor Einstein will go to Princeton in the autumn of 1933 and will be in residence at the Institute annually from October 1 to April 15.

Professor Oswald Veblen, with new Professor of Mathematics at Princeton University, was also appointed a Professor in the School of Mathematics. Professor Veblen's connection with the Institute began October 1, 1932.

Dr. Walter Mayer of Berlin was made Associate in Mathematics, and Dr. J. I. Vanderlinden was appointed Assistant to Professor Veblen.

Through the courtesy of the authorities of Princeton University the mathematical group will be temporarily accommodated in the new Fine Hall, which is peculiarly adapted to the purposes of an Institute. On the other hand, the Institute will be in every respect a separate organization and, while it will cultivate cooperative and friendly relations with members of the Princeton Faculty, it is hoped that equally cordial relations may be established with all similar groups throughout the country.

No definite site has yet been selected, nor have any steps been taken in respect to buildings. The students admitted will be few in number and will be limited to persons who give promise of unusual development in their respective subjects.

October 29, 1932

Dear Abe:

I have your inquiry about M. Sarruys, and of course I am glad to tell you the impression he left on my mind.

Based of course merely on the evidence of one long session with him - to be sure covering five or six hours - I felt I was listening to a singularly capacious, well-stocked and finely-tempered mind. There was about him that unmistakable air of first-handedness that I get from very, very few so-called economic authorities. And all his facts - unlike Mr. Hoover's - were related to significances. He sees the implications and the inter-relations of things as I always feel I see significances when Brandeis deals with economic data. They are glimpses into understanding and not statistical tabulation. Withal, he's a man of charm and winning persuasiveness. In a word, he's a nimble, hard-headed, learned, high-spirited, internationally-minded Frenchman - mein Liebchen was willst du noch mehr.

I rejoice that your show is under way. Feeling as you do about mathematics in relation to a new community of scholars, of course you have bagged big game. But I hope - and it's too late in the day for me to learn the art of dissembling - that you will cease to become front-page news. Precisely the opposite, I take it, is the real objective of your enterprise, and certainly its greatest need, namely, subtly and powerfully to permeate the atmosphere of America with a realization that there may be matters of great importance, of the highest importance, that do not "make the first page."

And of course as you also know, your real test, from my point of view, will come in the establishment of your sociological group. As to them pre-eminently universities are largely in a state of intellectual and moral bankruptcy.

With best of good wishes and warm regards,

Dr. Abraham Flexner

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November 1, 1932

Dear Felix:

Many thanks for your letter of October 29. I value very highly your opinion of M. Serruys. It coincides with my own impression, which, however, I am too ignorant in these matters to trust.

Do you really think that I am any more responsible for being front-page news than you are for appearing in yesterday's Times on the front page? The only announcement we gave forth was the barest statement of fact, the least we could do, since it was my only way of answering a steady stream of inquiries all over the country. I gave nothing more to anyone, but since it appeared I have been waging an unceasing fight against newspaper reporters, lecture bureaus, etc., etc., who want to make copy or capital. I have not opened my mouth or seen a soul, leaving Mrs. Bailey to handle these people in her own way. The front page has about as much interest for me as it has for St. Peter - or for you.

You are right, when you say that the real test will come when I tackle sociology. That is why I asked you what you thought of M. Serruys. I began with mathematics because I wanted to have a standard, up to which the rest of the Institute would have to live in respect to fearlessness, thoroughness, dignity. Incidentally I have been doing everything in my power to

F.F.

Nov. 1, 1932


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locate economists who belong in such company. I cannot say that I am certain  
that I have yet found one.

Let me continue to have the benefit of your reflections, but don't  
permit yourself to entertain for a moment the thought that I am playing to the  
galleries. If I was ever in such a stage, it is so far behind me that it is  
a subject for geologists or paleontologists.

With love to both you and Marion,

Always yours,

*A. J.*  


Professor Felix Frankfurter  
Harvard University School of Law  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

AF:ESB

*Under  
Sterns*

X✓

November 5, 1932

Dear Abe:

Your letter greatly humbles me, for it makes me realize how inept is my English. My recent letter evidently expressed something ~~that~~ I did not mean to convey and left unconveyed what I meant to express.

My point was not concern that you are making the front page, but that the Institute was. You, more than anyone else, are sponsoring an almost cloistered austerity in scholarship and learning. Of course you cannot effectuate that purpose if you are seeking Einsteins for your society of scholars. You may be the most shrinking violet in the world and barricade yourself behind Mrs. Bailey against the onslaughts of the gentlemen of the press. But you cannot keep Einsteins off the front page. The very significance of your enterprise is the promotion of silent, ephemerally unrecognized radiations of thought and standards which will command the future.

This attitude, in which you doubtless concur, is, I believe, very relevant to the selection of your sociological people. You must not be in search of headliners, academic pontiffs. Two, three, or four rather unknown younger men would be my ideal for your economics and social science group.

With all good wishes,

Always yours,

Dr. Abraham Flexner

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LEWIS H. WEED

November 7, 1932

Dear Felix:

Don't be too "umble" for you know darn well that there are few persons in this bloomin' country who can sling the King's English with the vigor and clarity characteristic of you.

You are quite right, I am sponsoring austerity and I am going to a village rather than a city in order that we may get quiet without a total lack of human and intellectual contacts. I have not the slightest interest in Einstein because he commands the first page. My one interest in him is, as Charlie Beard wrote me, that in him I have secured a really great man and a really pure spirit. Of course I am, myself, no judge of his intellectual achievements, but when I was assured in Oxford, Cambridge, Paris, Rome, and every Germany university that I have visited that he is perhaps the greatest intellect that has appeared in mathematical physics since Sir Isaac Newton, I cannot refrain from taking him, even though the newspapers are a nuisance to him and to me.

When it comes to the sociological people, I am frankly up a tree. No one is eminent, so I need not bother about that. I am seeking young men, though if I can find an older one, I should not hesitate to take him any more than Gilman hesitated to take Sylvester, already past sixty.

Professor Felix Frankfurter

November 7, 1932

-2-

Last night Sir Ernest Simon and his wife dined with us. Simon spoke very warmly of his conference with you and our whole evening was devoted to the discussion of "How can we put social studies in this country and in England on a scientific basis?" At your leisure, apply your mind to that question. Put me in touch with some really first rate intelligence, regardless of age, sex, race or previous condition of servitude. You, yourself, may be the fellow!

With all good wishes,

Sincerely yours,

*G. J.*

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
The Law School of Harvard University  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

AF/D

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LEWIS H. WEED

November 30, 1932

Dear Felix:

Many thanks for sending me Howland's final address. No man could have gone out of life with a more noble utterance. In tone and spirit it recalls the speech of Pericles at the end of the first year of the Peloponnesian War and Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. I have written Virginia and asked whether I may not take some steps to see that it is published more widely in this country and in England.

These last days I have had talks with Beard and Jameson about economics, history, and law. I am finding great difficulty in discovering a really first-rate person who will undertake the development of those subjects fearlessly and ably. Is there anyone in the Law School of actually first-rate ability who could be diverted into this channel? Simon has found that one way to start a new department is to get <sup>young</sup> a man of first-rate ability, rounded in the relevant sciences, and then give him a few years of special preparation for the particular task he has in mind.

With all good wishes,

Ever sincerely,

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
Harvard Law School  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

*A. F.*

AF:ESB



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LEWIS H. WEED

December 6, 1932

Dear Felix;

Two things. I do not know how to thank you sufficiently for communicating with Stimson. It was a lovely thing to do, and I have no doubt it was the effective factor. Please send me a complete account of any expense you incurred for telephones or telegrams, for the money comes out of the Institute and not out of my depleted pocketbook. It is a great thing to have a friend to whom you may turn in an emergency like this in which I did not want to be involved myself.

I am sorry that you could not reach me by telephone. I simply had to cut the telephone off last night, for I was bombarded by every newspaper in Christendom and the various associated presses, so that my only recourse was to say that I was out - which was a fib. The telephone kept ringing until midnight, but I paid no attention to it.

I received your telegram only this morning, for I had also told the doorman not to admit anybody. I am of course greatly relieved. As a matter of fact, Einstein's coming this year does not apply to me since he goes to Pasadena, but I felt humiliated, as I felt you would be humiliated by the stupidity which seemed possible. "All's well that ends well."

F.F.

Dec. 6, 1932

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Do I hear that you have been a little under the weather? Take care  
of yourself. You cannot be spared.

With love to you and Marion and grateful and infinite appreciation  
for all that you have done for me,

Affectionately,

A. F.

P.S.

Your promised letter has not come but will doubtless reach me in the course  
of the day or tomorrow morning. A.F.

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
Harvard University Law School  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

AF:ESB

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LEWIS H. WEED

December 8, 1932

Dear Felix:

Thank you very much for yours of the seventh. I shall be grateful to you if you will mull over the possibilities and let me know the result. Meanwhile, I realize quite well that this is the kind of thing that one cannot correspond about. I wanted to set you thinking so that when I came to Cambridge I might have the advantage of your previous reflection.

Herbert Feis I knew of through Howland. I shall be going down to Washington in the next week or ten days, and I shall see him. I have been talking with Beard and Jameson, but neither of them knows the younger generation to whom we must look.

I have been a bit crippled in these last few weeks with a sharp attack of neuritis in my right arm; but for that I would post off to Washington at once.

Thank you many times for your intervention with Stimson. The prompt action of the State Department, for which you were doubtless mainly responsible, has done something to make us less ridiculous in the eyes of the world.

With all good wishes,

Ever sincerely,

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
Law School of Harvard University  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

A. F.

AF:ESB

Mitrany  
February 13, 1933

Dear Abe:

Responsive to your wish, I have done my level best to exclude my feelings from my judgment about Mitrany, with what success, of course, I cannot tell. But on the whole, habit has not made it too difficult for me to divorce professional judgment from affection. In any event, what follows is what I think I think about Mitrany as a political scientist.

First and foremost, he has to an unusual degree among those whose field of exploration is politics, the scientific temper, meaning by that, a passionate desire to pursue the truth antiseptised as much as humanly may be, against the forces of bias and vested intellectual and emotional interests. DeTocqueville, you will recall, warned us to be constantly on our guard lest we confuse the familiar with the necessary. It is amazing how few political thinkers are free of this tendency and how few are ready relentlessly to go wherever their minds may lead them. I know no one who is more wedded to truth-seeking than Mitrany and more critical of the validity of his own predispositions or even of the findings of his own inquiry. That seems to me of prime importance, especially in the sociological field; for here we know so little, we are still so much in the rudimentary stages of scientific effort, that a passionate desire for new illumination and rigorous self-scrutiny are themselves agencies for insight and knowledge. Mitrany surely possesses these.

Next I should put Mitrany's eye for essentials. That is of course requisite for fruitful investigation in any field. But especially in sociological inquiry are we badly in need of people who set crucial problems in their perspective. For years I have been impressed with the sterility of the preoccupations of our political scientists - the old lifeless straw

which they thresh, the futile "quantitative" demonstration of the obvious or the insignificant, the failure, in Holmes' phrase, "to put the knife into the jugular." Now Mitrany's mind has, ever since I have known him, lived with real problems, the exigent and emerging problems of our society.

Which brings me to the third consideration. I have talked about "politics" and "sociological inquiry". These seem to me key words. But the meanings behind them have been lost in the departmentalization of courses, the tight separation of courses in "government" and "political science" and "economics" and "sociology" one from another. Of course human society is so vast and enveloping and elusive a domain for inquiry and understanding as to be beyond the capacity of any man or even any group of men. And yet we shall get nowhere unless we see the particular problems raised by human society in the perspective of human society itself. Mitrany has that understanding, that universal outlook, partly by temperament, I suppose, partly by the cross-fertilization of a Roumanian educated in Germany and France and England, with a professional life spent in England and the United States, partly also by the impingements upon his sensitized education of the diversified experience which has come to him <sup>in</sup> government, in journalism, in academic life. Not only has he read widely in many languages, but he has actually observed in many lands, among diverse peoples and from many points of vantage for judgment and understanding, the operations of society.

He is thus a very rare blend - the scholar seasoned by practical affairs, who, when in active life sought to inform practicalities with the learning and the spirit of the scholar rather than compromising scholarship with the so-called prudences of practical life. Looking over the field of political science so far as I am familiar with its personnel and with its products, at least in the English-speaking world, I should certainly feel confident that Mitrany would bring a rich and distinctive contribution to a group possessed of common aims in explor-

ing the problems of society, society, that is, as an instrument for furthering the best potentialities of people rather than as a fixed structure of political and legal rights and duties.

Always yours,

Dr. Abraham Flexner

X

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PERCY S. STRAUS  
LEWIS H. WEED

February 14, 1933

Dear Felix:

Your letter about Mitrany is quite wonderful and has done me a world of good. I am to see Mitrany Friday night or Saturday morning. Meanwhile I shall be seeing you, as I wired, Friday afternoon at the Harvard Club here.

I have had a feeling for years that our social sciences were on the wrong tack, and that we should have to get together a group of men, all first-rate in point of intelligence, to work at different aspects of the problem in entire independence and yet in the hope and expectation that their results would bear upon one another. I imagine that I got my analogy from medicine, where the bacteriologists and the pathologists and the chemists and the physicists and the clinicians do precisely this sort of thing. I do not feel that any of the social science work with which I am familiar quite meets what I have in mind. It runs into what Dr. Rose used to call "rabbit tracks", and is either obsolete or trivial. The world needs ideas, a very different thing.

With deep gratitude,

Sincerely yours,

Prof. Felix Frankfurter  
Harvard Law School  
Cambridge, Mass.

AF:GB

A. J.

X

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February 23, 1933

Dear Felix:

I was about to write you today on another matter, when on reaching the office I found your letter of February 21. I should be delighted to see Professor Ranke and to entertain him at luncheon if he can find an open date.

"The enclosed" somehow was not enclosed, so that I do not know precisely what you have in mind as to Mr. Ogden's project.

I am very hopeful that both you and Stewart will join the Board. It will be a grand thing for American education when boards in control of universities include in their membership not only fearless men, but persons competent to advise in matters of policy. I shall try to see Stewart again within the next few days.

Mitrany is evidently very happy, as is Ena also. Your advice to him about being candid with the Yale people was sound, as I perceived the moment I reflected upon it. It would seem to me that he will have to be equally candid with the Harvard people in order that they may not hear of the arrangement via Yale. As a matter of fact I have had him in mind for several years, but I acted at this time because I did not want him to make any rapid changes.

-----



Prof. Felix Frankfurter - 2

February 23, 1933

The matter regarding which I intended to write you is as follows. I am not sure whether you know that, in consequence of a request of Mr. Rosenwald, I joined the Board of Howard University a couple of years ago, and was promptly made Chairman very much against my wishes. The institution has not been well managed because it has been in weak hands. The former Chairman, General Sherburne of Boston, allowed things to pass unquestioned, some of which were in my judgment of doubtful character. Since I took office the by-laws have been completely revised, and in appointing committees I made practically a clean sweep. As one of the results the following transaction has been unearthed.

Mr. C. H. Pope of Washington is a Vice President and practically manager of the Munsey Trust Company, a trustee of Howard University, up to the clean sweep a member of the finance committee, and also a member of a committee on investment which has been abolished. The Munsey Trust Company loaned \$18,000 to a negro country club on a mortgage note. The head of the club was the Treasurer of Howard University and also a member of the investment committee. A brief period after the Munsey Trust Company lent this money, the Trust Company recommended to Mr. Pope (its own Vice President; and Howard Trustee and member of the finance committee) that Howard University purchase this note. The recommendation was endorsed by the investment committee consisting of Pope, Mr. Dyber (President of the Second National Bank) and Mr. Scott (President of the club and Treasurer of the University). The new finance committee discovered that the terms of the note had been altered without the knowledge of the Howard Board, and also that the interest was \$1350 in default. I may add that

Prof. Felix Frankfurter - 3

February 23, 1933

payment of principal and interest was guaranteed by the club members, some of whom, I am told, are well-to-do.

I was authorized yesterday by the Executive Committee, before whom I laid these facts, to employ counsel in Washington to take steps to recover the capital and interest involved. I want you to name a lawyer who will throw himself into this matter with the spirit of Senator Walsh of Montana. Kindly direct me to a person of this character. I do not know whether the procedure was illegal or not, but it was certainly grossly improper.

At even this stage the story shrinks before this morning's revelation of the doings of Charley Mitchell and his gang with the funds of the National City Bank. It will be interesting to see what the Bank, or the stockholders, or Wall Street, does in reference to this infamous transaction.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

A. J.

Prof. Felix Frankfurter  
Harvard Law School  
Cambridge, Mass.  
AF:GB

February 24, 1933

Dear Abe:

1. I am sorry the Ogden memorandum and my correspondence with Cardozo failed to have been included. Here they are. I think it would be a great thing for your Institute to have sponsored this undertaking.

2. I suggest Dean Acheson of the Union Trust Co. for your lawyer for the shabby Washington transaction. If he is free to take the case - i.e. if his firm is not entangled in the dramatic personae - I have no doubt that he would pursue the matter with vigor and high intelligence.

3. When I think of all the pother made over the miserable, sordid, little Tammany Hall crookedness and how high class silence is accorded the gambling joint of Charles Mitchell and the National City Bank, I just wonder if capitalism isn't too corroded to be saved.

4. You may be sure that I shall give the most eager and sympathetic consideration to your desire to have me on your Board.

Hastily but always yours,

Dr. Abraham Flexner  
Enc.

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February 25, 1933.

Dear Felix:

Many thanks for the Ogden memorandum and the correspondence with Cardozo. Mrs. Bailey has just recalled to me the fact that Mr. Ogden came to see me and left with me a copy of a little book of his entitled "Basic English Applied." I shall read his memorandum over the week-end and write you again on the subject.

The treasurer of Howard University is to call me on long distance telephone this morning and I shall be happy to suggest Dean Acheson to him. I am wondering whether his connection with the trust company will not make it awkward for him to act against an official of another trust company, viz., The Munsey Trust Company.

"High class silence" is excellent. I am going to make a little speech at the Cosmopolitan Club this week-end and I shall steal it, for it will fit in beautifully with what I have to say.

I am lunching with Stewart Tuesday to pursue further his coming on the Board. It would be perfectly grand if we could get one or both of you. Mitrany writes ecstatically, and his wife is just as happy. They are made of the real stuff.

Very affectionately,

A. J.

Professor Felix Frankfurter,  
Harvard Law School,  
Cambridge, Mass.

COPY

March 4, 1933

Dear Abe:

If I have delayed action upon your kind suggestion to have me join the Board of Directors of your Institute, it is not for lack of deep sympathy with your efforts or keen interest in the realization of the purposes of the Institute. Just because I so strongly hope for great things for learning and the promotion of higher learning in this country, I have been hesitating lest I undertake a responsibility which I cannot, even within my limited powers, discharge. You know how I feel about dummy directors in general and most fiercely about dummy educational directors. They seem to me to violate the spirit of the holy ghost most flagrantly. In saying this I do not mean to overrate the function of the members of the Board of an organization like your Institute. For of course the essential direction of the Institute should be by its members - a society of scholars must be governed by the scholars of that society; and yet, <sup>certainly</sup> ~~certainly~~ at the outset, there may be a useful function for a Board - a temporary period, as it were, in the stages of the ultimate government of the Institute.

I wanted to be sure that I had the available time to discharge such a conception as I have of the duties of a member of your Board. On the whole I do not feel justified in refusing on a speculation in view of the special case you made to me for the enlistment of the interest and experience of men like Stewart and myself, now that you are engaged in the establishment of what roughly I shall call a school of sociology. I am prepared, therefore, to accept membership on your Board if you and the Board are ready to have me, in the light of the attitude <sup>of mind</sup> disclosed in this letter - which is of course no news to you - as well as upon the distinct understanding that if I find I cannot responsibly discharge the obligations of the office you will release me.

Very sincerely yours,

Felix Frankfurter

Dr. Abraham Flexner

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March 6, 1933

Dear Felix;

I am extremely happy that you will accept membership on the Board of Trustees of the Institute. We are of one mind regarding dummy directors, be they in a university, the Institute, or the National City Bank, and this does not mean that the scholars of the Institute are not really the final arbiters, enjoying freedom, independence, dignity, and leisure. I am sure that men like you and Stewart, looking at the problems of social life from a somewhat different point of view, will prove of inestimable value to those who are in the last resort bound to do the job. It is one of my main ambitions to illustrate in the conduct of this Institute what under American conditions the relative functions of faculty, director, and trustees are and should be. I do hope that nothing may interfere with your standing by us.

With all good wishes and very deep gratitude,

Sincerely yours,

*A. F.*

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
Law School of Harvard University  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

AF:ESB

XV

*See*

THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY  
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March 14, 1933

Dear Felix:

You may be interested in the enclosed  
from Philip Kerr (the Marquess of Lothian). If  
you are too busy to write about it, wait until  
we meet some time.

Ever sincerely,

*A. J.*

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
Law School of Harvard University  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

AF:ESB

206 x -

SEYMOUR HOUSE  
17, Waterloo Place, S.W.1.

13th February 1933.

My dear Flexner:

You asked what I thought your Institute ought to consider in the field of government and economics. In my view two aspects of what is really one problem, the reconciliation or synthesis between socialism and individualism and between the national state and world government.

These are the two issues which, consciously and subconsciously are in human thought today, in Europe, Asia, Africa, America and Australia alike. We shall not get to our new order until we find the answers to this world questioning.

To be more precise - most thinking people today realise that both laissez faire and communism are extremes. There is a field and a growing field within which the political state, actuated by public opinion, restrains individual economic enterprise by law, protects the individual worker and shareholder against the evils of unrestrained competition, and in some degree plans the collective life of the community. There is also a field in which individualist competition must be given free play, both as the spur to progress, as the condition of virile character and initiative, and because universal regimentation is both beyond human capacity (and tolerance) today and bad for the independence and spirit of man. Where is the dividing line? How far can state planning, state regulation, state management, state taxation replace the automatic balancing of supply and demand through the price system? If you go too far, not only may you impair human character but you will certainly break down democracy as we have known it. Our institutions



have been developed to perform political functions. If you give them economic responsibility as well they will break down (as in Russia and Italy) and you will find yourself in the hands of dictatorship, political as well as economic. Is the day of democracy over, or is its prestige failing because we are overloading Parliaments with economics?

Then we enter the second problem. As the outcome of the world war progressive opinion has come to recognize the necessity of balancing national sovereignty with international sovereignty. It has begun to do so in the League of Nations, the Kellogg Pact, the International Labour Office and the Disarmament Conference. These are only a beginning because vested interests are strong and the patriotism of humanity is a plant of slow growth. On the political side the road forward seems to me to strengthen and develop the institutions already in being. But so far the international movement has scarcely touched economics. Nationalism in tariffs, debts, subsidies, embargoes, etc., is stronger rather than weaker than ever before. Because of the lack of any economic covenant of nations every state is inflicting terrible wounds on every other state, which not only force these states (as with armaments) to retaliate, but to interfere with the internal economic life by subsidies, quotas, equalisation and price raising schemes, which both dislocate the working of the economic system and overburden the governmental machinery of the state itself. The depression today is not due to the breakdown of capitalism, so called. There is no reason why it should not function far more successfully in this century than in the last, for the vast majority of the 2,000,000,000 of humanity are still utterly poverty stricken and modern labour saving machinery is no more devastating to older methods than were the factory or the discovery of electricity. Moreover, through factory acts, insurance against old age, sickness and unemployment, and taxation of large incomes, the grosser evils of the

industrial revolution were beginning to disappear. But capitalism is not being allowed to work, for it depends upon free play in the market and national interferences, external and internal, are increasingly throwing it out of gear. The depression is fundamentally caused by the maladjustment of supply and demand artificially caused by political action, by tariffs, subsidies, embargoes, and in some respects by ill advised taxation and trades-union action.

The economic problem, i.e., socialism v. individualism, is therefore inextricably mixed up with the political international problem. If we are to rise to a higher civilization it will be because we discover the true division of function both between individual initiative and socialism and between nationalism and world government. I hope your Institute will discover it!

Yours,

(Signed) Lothian

Dr. Abraham Flexner,  
150 East 72nd Street,  
NEW YORK.

x

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March 21, 1933

Dear Felix:

Jesse Straus called me up last night to say that the State Department had sent Sackett the cable that you suggested. I saw in the afternoon Sun that Einstein's house had been searched for arms. Those people must be stark crazy - looking for arms in the house of the leading pacifist of the world. The morning Times reports that they found a breadknife.

This whole explosion in Germany is the worst hysteria that we have ever witnessed in our lives. It reminds me of a quotation which Carlyle made: "This Napoleonism cannot last. It is unjust." For the moment decent people in Germany are terrorized and unorganized, but Hitlerism will be struck a deadly blow when decent people cease to travel on German boats and tourists cease to visit Germany. Meanwhile, however, the harm that is done to civilization is incalculably great.

Professor Ernst H. Weilchenfeld has sent me an account of himself and a good many memoranda and reviews and copies of his own works. We are not as yet prepared for his field, but you doubtless have an opinion as to whether he is a scholar and a thinker of the first rank or merely an exalted digger after facts.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
Law School of Harvard University  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

A. J.  
7

AT:ESB

March 30, 1935

Dear Abe:

1. Madness and the worst phases of mediaevalism are in the saddle in Germany. There is no comfort whatever to be taken except the comfort that comes from the fact that the things will not apparently be allowed to be done in the dark - the strong rays of the world's public opinion will light up the spectacle.

2. That's an interesting memorandum of Philip Carr's, about which we can have talk one of these days. <sup>Kerr's</sup>

3. I know Feilchenfeld, something of his work and the judgment in which he is held by men whose judgment matters. I don't believe he is a "thinker of the first rank", neither is he "merely an excited digger after facts". He has, I believe, not only learning and the capacity for greater learning but considerable insight and the power to strike out into new paths. In any sizable collection of sociological scholars, I should think he would make a real contribution.

Always yours,

Dr. Abraham Flexner

X V

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April 25, 1933

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
Harvard Law School  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

My dear Professor Frankfurter:

I am happy to inform you that at a meeting of the Trustees of the Institute for Advanced Study held yesterday you were elected to membership on the Board.

The next meeting will be held on October 9, 1933, and subsequent meetings on January 8 and April 23, 1934. A copy of the amended By-Laws will be sent you promptly on publication in the near future.

Very truly yours,

*Esther S. Bailey*  
Assistant Secretary

XV

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PERCY S. STRAUS  
LEWIS H. WEED

April 26, 1933

Dear Felix:

I presume that you will have received by this time official notification of your election as Trustee of the Institute for Advanced Study. I want to express my own personal gratification that you have joined the Board, as has also Mr. Walter W. Stewart. I am sure that you will be invaluable not only in advising in respect to the general work of the Institute but also in particular respecting the field in which you are so thoroughly at home.

With all good wishes and renewed thanks,

Sincerely yours,

*A.S.*  
7

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
Harvard Law School  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

AF:ESB

XV

April 27, 1933

Dear Abe:

Mrs. Bailey's kind notice of my election to the membership of the Institute Board makes me aware of the thoughtlessness with which I assented to your suggestion to have my name presented. For of course I shall not be able to attend any of next year's meetings. That being so, I ought not to have been elected to membership.

BUT you and I don't believe that error should be persisted in. And so the problem is how to mend it. Is a leave of absence - formally grant it - the way to do it? Or how? Or what? You see even before you wrote I had almost fanatical views against dummy membership on educational boards.

Always yours,

Dr. Abraham Flexner

XJ

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LEWIS H. WEED

April 28, 1933

Dear Felix;

It was thoroughly understood at the time of your election to the Board that you would be in Oxford next year. Indeed I feel certain that that experience is going to increase your usefulness to us. I share your "almost fanatical views against dummy membership", but I do not consider that you are a "dummy" when you are spending a year at Oxford making a contribution to them and perhaps absorbing something useful from them.

With all good wishes,

Ever sincerely,

*G. J.*

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
Law School of Harvard University  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

AF:ESB



May 1, 1933

Dear Abe:

Thank you for your gracious letter of the 28th.

No, I don't expect to be wholly a dummy at Oxford, but it does imply absence from this country for a year. You will have to put up with my pedantry - for about a few things which used to be called "principles" I am a little fussy. I shall be away and therefore shall not be able to attend the meetings of the Board. It is therefore essential for my own serenity that in a formal way I be given leave of absence from your Board.

The worst thing about the German situation is the justification that it affords those who found in Prussian aggression the essential cause of the World War. The mentality that is now on deck - and the behavior of the Universities in regard to the present regime - reminds me tragically of the behavior of the German professoriat before the War and after it broke out.

Always yours,

Dr. Abraham Flexner

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LEWIS H. WEED

May 3, 1933

Dear Felix:

I shall at the October meeting request leave of absence for you for the year. I am sure that every one will understand and approve.

You are quite right about what you say of the German situation. Of course, the Treaty of Versailles is fundamentally responsible for what has now happened, but two wrongs do not make a right. Germany was in the process of proving that the Treaty of Versailles was wrong and had won the sympathy of England, the United States, and a considerable section of the French. In a few years the Treaty might have been revised in other respects just as it was revised in respect to reparations. Now that is all done for. My mail is loaded with letters from German professors (not one of them from a Jew) who have been put out of their places because of their liberal ideas. No such phenomenon has occurred in human history for centuries past.

With all good wishes,

Ever sincerely,

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
Law School of Harvard University  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

*a. f.*

AF:ESB

P.S. You are being put on the Executive Committee of the Institute with full understanding that you will be on leave of absence next year.

A.F.

Xv

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November 1, 1933

HONORARY TRUSTEES  
LOUIS BAMBERGER  
MRS. FELIX FULD

Dear Felix;

I have your note of the 17th of October, and Ben has sent me a copy of your Introductory Remarks.

As to the former, I had learned from the press that Mendelssohn-Bartholdy had been dismissed. It is another case of the "base Indian throwing a pearl away richer than all his tribe". You must not, however, hesitate to make suggestions to me, for God knows that I am trying to work in fields in which my knowledge and experience are shamefully limited. As far as the Institute is concerned, we are committed in the field of international relations to Mitrany, who in some ways, I think, though I may be mistaken, meets our needs better than anyone else I know. He commands so many languages, has long worked with Shotwell, has twice spent a year at Harvard, and has the widest experience of any one I know in the international field. Tell me if you think I am mistaken and, while I am on the subject, I should appreciate it if in the most confidential way you could let me know how Ena is doing. I am uneasy about her. I hope also that you will see Mitrany in the course of the year, and I am sure that discussions between you will be fruitful for the Institute when economic conditions become more settled and we start in the field of economics and politics.

Now as to the second point, your Introductory Remarks were sound and

F.F.

Nov. 1, 1933

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and dignified. They were, I assume, from their date, made before the recent edict for destroying the faculty entirely and giving the German Minister of Education the right to name a president with whom he will confer when it comes to filling vacancies. To be sure, a senate remains, but it is a shadowy thing without power and must contain representations of the Nazi Studentenschaften. I am sorry to have lived to see the German universities wrecked in any such barbarous fashion.

Ben tells me that you would like Einstein to know the truth as regards the Harvard invitation. I shall be delighted to put your remarks and Ben's note in his hands. He has conducted himself since reaching America with dignity and reticence, though it has not been easy for him to maintain seclusion from the press, dinners, etc. I think he is happier in his situation here than he has ever been in his life.

I am sorry that you missed the last meeting, for we had a somewhat lengthy discussion upon the subject of the point of view from which to start the development of the School of Politics and Economics. Walter Stewart was very clear that we ought in view of existing experiments and conditions to make a fresh and scientific approach from the historic side. He was of the opinion that we would not get far with men who had already committed themselves about so many of the problems, with which a school of this sort must concern itself. He thought in the long run we should do far better to take younger men of promise for a period of prolonged probation. It will be a slow development as compared with mathematics, but Stewart thought this method of approach offered the best chance of making a contribution of value in this field.

The School of Mathematics has started out beautifully. Weyl of Göttingen is now in this country and begins his active duties December 1. I had not

F.F.

Nov. 1, 1933

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supposed that we would have as many as ten students who could meet the severe requirements that Veblen and his colleagues had set up - that not only should they possess the Ph.D. degree but that they should have given evidence of the ability to work independently. As a matter of fact, we have almost twenty, and the combined Princeton and Institute groups have a mathematical club which has thus far had an attendance weekly of about sixty. I do not say this, because I have any pride in the numbers, for, as you know, I have not. I say it rather to show my surprise that so many promising young mathematicians, already holding academic posts in this country and abroad, should on the basis of our first announcement have managed to get away for a year in order to enjoy the opportunities which Veblen and his associates as well as the Princeton men offer. The internal arrangements of the School are absolutely informal. Practically every one of them knows what he wants to do and makes his individual arrangements with the professor in whose field he is interested. Thus far they have sometimes planned for weekly meetings, sometimes for a luncheon, sometimes for a walk. The Princeton people have treated us in the most gracious and hospitable fashion. They have not only offered us their facilities, as they promised, but they have gone out of their way in every possible manner so as to enable Veblen and his associates to work either alone or in collaboration with the Princeton men as seems best in individual cases.

Your address, Norham Gardens, stirs in me some of the most vivid and happy recollections of my whole life. Anne and I occupied the corner house on the same side of the street, long the home of a great classicist, Professor Bywater. Across the street from you is Osler's house, and of course we were often with McElroy and his wife in the house which you and Marion occupy.

I hope that you are going to see something of All Souls. Perhaps I could send you a card to Woodward. Do you know E. A. Lowe of Corpus Christi or

F.F.

Nov. 1, 1933

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Chapman of the University Press, who lives right around the corner from you?

We are having a glorious autumn here at Princeton, and Anne and I are settling down to a new life very happily.

With love to you and Marion,

Ever sincerely,

*A. F.*

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
18, Norham Gardens  
Oxford, England

AF:ESB

P.S.

November 2, 1933

1. Of course, we shall take no action in reference to economics until you have an opportunity to participate in the discussion. I thought you would have an opportunity to think and talk about the subject while you are in Oxford.

2. In connection with Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, I recall that ~~Spykman~~ of Yale approached Mitrany. I wonder if Mitrany or you yourself could not bring Mendelssohn-Bartholdy to the attention of ~~Spykman~~ or someone else at Yale who would be interested.

A.F.

XV

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November 18, 1933

HONORARY TRUSTEES  
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MRS. FELIX FULD

Dear Felix:

Thank you for your kind note with its enclosure from Mr. Clark.

For the present, the value of the dollar being so uncertain, I am inclined to go very slowly in the matter of expansion, though I am keeping my eyes and ears open. I judge that you know Mr. Clark very well. Hence I shall certainly want to talk with you about him when you return. Whether you are on leave from the Board is a matter of no consequence. I count on your interest all the same, and as to the composition of the faculty in your realm I most certainly wish a candid expression of your opinion.

The School of Mathematics has started most auspiciously. If only one could feel the same security when dealing with economics or politics.

The general situation over here is, if I can formulate it, one of great misgiving regarding the gold policy of the government, but of course I have no opinion. I am sorry to see that Dean Acheson did not feel able to go along with the Administration.

Remember us warmly to Marion, and believe me

Ever sincerely,

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
18, Norham Gardens  
Oxford, England

A. J.

AF:ESB

XV

18, Norham Gardens  
Oxford, England  
11. xii. 33.

Dear Abe:

I have now read the Minutes which Mrs. Bailey has been kind enough to send me.

I have been thrilled all over again by the formal account in the Minutes of what you wrote me in your letter of the truly creative, scholarly activity that has so quickly and so spontaneously made itself manifest in the life of the Institute. That there were those sources of real collaborative learning to be tapped in America was of course the major premise of your undertaking. I never had any doubt about it, but it is exciting to have one's faith so quickly vindicated. What is true of mathematics will, I am sure, equally be revealed in the social sciences. There is one item in your Minutes which naturally stirs my curiosity in view of the previous correspondence and talk you and I have had about the subject, namely, the compensation of the faculty. I notice the terms under which Professor Weyl has been called. Would you mind telling me whether Weyl's salary represents the scale or is an individualistic treatment. Partly I want to know this for its own sake, as affecting the practices of the Institute, partly also it bears on what you are contemplating for the School of Politics. What salaries have you in mind for that School?

I hope you had a very good party at the Princeton Inn. One has to pay for things. Missing that is on the debit side of the year at Oxford. The credit side is enormous.

With the season's good wishes,

Always yours,

Dr. Abraham Flexner



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*NEWS FROM PARADISE*

December 16, 1933

- HONORARY TRUSTEES
- LOUIS BAMBERGER
- MRS. FELIX FULD

Dear Felix;

*but my style*

Many thanks for your kind letter of the first. I sent it to Ben immediately because I knew that he was in touch with the Rockefeller Foundation, and he at once telephoned me that he had spoken to Gregg and would send you a radiogram. He was very hopeful that the Foundation would furnish Balliol the money needed to add Mendelssohn-Bartholdy to their staff. If such proves not to be the case, let me know and I will explore in some other direction.

I wish very much that you might have been on this side during these first months of the Institute. What has happened is not exactly what I planned but is much better than I planned. I have frequently used the phrase, "paradise for scholars", without any very distinct notion of just how a paradise would be created. What has happened is the following: we have five mathematicians of great eminence, each with his own work to do. We have admitted to the Institute about twenty persons who have shown capacity for independent work - persons who have already attained the rank of assistant professor or associate professor in American universities or abroad. They have been turned loose in Fine Hall without any regulations whatsoever. The professors know of course what they want to do and are doing it. The students shop around in order to find the man who can be most helpful to them. They make their individual arrangements, sometimes meeting them once a week for fifteen minutes or a couple of hours, sometimes oftener, if there is occasion.

F.F.

December 16, 1933

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Every afternoon tea is served informally and there is, to my astonishment, an attendance of about sixty, comprising both the advanced workers and the staff of Princeton and our own folks. They talk mathematics but not only mathematics and drift in and out without explanation or ascertainable reason. Then once a week there is a Mathematics Club meeting, at which some member of one of the two institutions presents a paper. Students and professors attend, and after the paper there is informal discussion, and I should defy anyone to make out whether the persons participating are professors or workers. Inasmuch as our workers have all been teachers working under a heavy routine for some years, they are as happy as birds, doing precisely the things which they have wanted to do. I feel sure that after a year or two spent in this way they will be enormously more useful to their respective institutions and to the science of mathematics than they would otherwise have been. I had rather thought the workers would be recent Ph.D.'s, but this has not proved to be the case, and very fortunately, as I should think. They are Ph.D.'s who have been seasoned and matured by responsibility. Many of them have wives, and one of them has four children.

I am searching about, as I hope you are, for persons who will start the School of Politics and Economics. Perhaps we shall have to begin that more embryonically and let the men find themselves for a year or two before doing much in the way of attaching workers to them. Time is really of no importance.

I am delighted that you and Marion love Oxford and that you are more and more persuaded that we bet right when we chose Mitrany. I am worried about Ena and the effect upon him, but I say nothing. The men whom you mention - Whitehead, Acton, Maitland, Adams - represent the type of person whom we want to assemble.

Perhaps I ought to add in conclusion that there is absolutely no organization. We have no record of anything beyond a list of names and a list of persons to notify in case of emergency.

*Love & light!*

F.F.

December 16, 1933

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When you go to Cambridge, I hope you will see one of the great men there -  
Sir William B. Hardy, 5 Grange Road. All you need to do is to write him a note,  
telling him you are my friend, and ask to see him. He is one of the glorious men.

Give our love to Marion and to all our Oxford friends.

Though we are living in paradise, for Princeton is a charming, intelligent,  
and hospitable place, which has received us with open arms, we have never ceased to  
yearn for Oxford.

Ever affectionately,

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
18, Norham Gardens  
Oxford, England

AF:ESB

*F.F.*

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December 28, 1933

- HONORARY TRUSTEES**
- LOUIS BAMBERGER
  - MRS. FELIX FULD

Dear Felix:

Thank you for your very kind letter of December 11. Since receiving it, the wives of the mathematical professors of the Institute and Princeton have given an evening party to the advanced students in mathematics in the two institutions. It turned out that the weather was absolutely vile that night. None the less there were - mirabile dictu - ninety persons present, more mathematicians, I should imagine, at that rank than could be assembled anywhere else. I use the word, "more", with the utmost trepidation, for I had no idea when we started out last autumn that quality would find itself in such quantity. A happier group I have never seen, and it was interesting to move among them and to observe how in one corner the talk was of mathematics and somewhere else of politics and so on.

I am glad to answer your question about Weyl's salary. As in my book on Universities, I have urged upon the Board the general view that professors have no interest in money but ought for the sake of their work, for the sake of the opportunities they may give themselves and their children, and for the sake of meeting such other obligations as almost inevitably fall upon us, as we grow older, to ~~they should~~ receive security and such remuneration as will forever banish financial care. The number of our professors is so small that it has been possible to make individual adjustments without an absolutely standardized scale. The offer made to Weyl is in effect substantially that enjoyed by his colleagues of professional rank. It differs somewhat in form because of his personal and domestic situation and his obligations towards his wife's people and his own, who have been deprived

F.F.

Dec. 28, 1933

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of the means of livelihood in Germany. The salary taken alone is a little less than that paid men of similar rank in the Rockefeller Institute but the other provisions are somewhat more flexible and liberal, so that the two can be considered as about the same. <sup>with the Officers of the General Education Board.</sup> I should suppose that, if we secure men of similar eminence, we would follow the same policy in the School of Politics and Economics. However, in both mathematics and economics we would use a considerable sum to give modest salaries or allowances to younger man who show promise but who have not yet developed. These young men would thus be in receipt of an income which would not be large enough to fasten them upon the Institute permanently. On the contrary, I think Simon's practice is wise, namely, to pay beginners a little less than they might earn elsewhere so that they can easily be placed in other posts, if they do not prove of permanent value to the Institute. On the other hand, it is always possible to raise the salaries in case of anyone the Institute wishes to keep either for a longer period or permanently.

I have now also your second letter regarding Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, and I am going to make an effort to secure the sum which Balliol needs. I have already pretty nearly exhausted my available sources for previous victims of the Hitler madness. I had hoped to turn my attention to this detail immediately upon beginning my Christmas holidays, but, as ill luck would have it, I have had an attack of neuritis in my left arm, for which there appears to be no relief but rest, so I am spending the days on a couch with my arm on a soft pillow, obeying the doctors implicitly in the hope of bringing this nuisance to a quick conclusion. It is merely a matter of time, and I hope to make the time a brief one.

With all good wishes for the New Year for you and Marion,

Ever sincerely,

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
18, Norham Gardens  
Oxford, England

A. J.  
→

AF:ESB

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HONORARY TRUSTEES

LOUIS BAMBERGER  
MRS. FELIX FULD

January 4, 1934

Dear Felix:

I may have conveyed a wrong impression when I wrote the other day on the salary question. The top salaries are received by three men: Einstein, Weyl, and Veblen. Salaries of \$10,000 are paid Alexander and von Neumann, who are much younger men, and whose future, though hardly open to doubt, is still not so securely established. Mitrany has been promised the \$10,000 salary when he begins work. Meanwhile, he is on leave at \$6,000 a year. My general object was to provide a small group of men of real eminence with the conditions which would permit them and their families to lead civilized lives and to make the profession of teaching not a lucrative but an attractive one to pursue for persons who have tastes and obligations in addition to professional competency of a very high order.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely yours,

*G. J.*  
7

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
18, Norham Gardens  
Oxford, England

AF:ESB

X✓

Eastman House  
Norham Gardens  
Oxford, England  
24. 1. 34.

Dear Abe:

You would not want me to keep from you the very real anxiety aroused in me by your statement as to the financial treatment of members of the Institute. I fully understand, of course, the existence of categories in your salary scale, a differentiation between \$15,000 for older men of high distinction and \$10,000 for younger men as plainly rational. But individualization within these categories or outside them seems to me hostile to the underlying assumptions of the Institute and gravely menacing to the realization of its purposes, and this for two reasons.

In the first place, you cannot give preferential treatment to individuals - for such it will inevitably appear to be - without introducing feelings of discrimination and self-consciousness, thereby undermining that sense of fellowship and unselfconsciousness which is essential for the well being of a community of scholars. I am not here dealing in abstractions. I have had occasion to think about this problem for a good many years. In the heyday of prosperity I refused two bonanza offers in two different institutions, in part at least because I would not accept membership in institutions where I would be given special treatment. I also know the damage that has been wrought to a very important educational institution because its head has made private arrangements with two or three members of the staff out of line with the general salary scale. These matters cannot remain secret, and knowledge of them sows distrust and quiet resentment and thus poisons the atmosphere.

Secondly, such individualization is bound to affect adversely the recruiting of the staff. For only hardier natures - men capable of driving bargains or unabashed in asserting their special needs - are likely to make

2.

claims for special treatment, whereas shyer and prouder scholars, usually the finer spirits, will be unwilling to enter a competitive market and will be deterred from an institution in which they must push, if not their wares, at least their needs. I cannot imagine, for instance, that Carl Becker, whose family needs I happen to know are very great, would ever base claims upon them, or that Harold Laski would urge, however much justified, a favored position.

Really, dear Abe, you are in for great trouble and damage to your Institute once you embark upon this path, however much benevolence and justifiable confidence in your own disinterestedness in making differentiations may enter into the process. Really it is idle for you or anyone else to believe that he can make nice discriminations between degrees of eminence in scholarship. Even assuming that you could, please remember John Morley's remark that even Mr. Gladstone sometimes forgot that the interpretation of an act may be as important as the act itself. I rest my very serious objections to any departure from a fixed classification of salaries (whether the departure is by way of direct increase in salary or indirect emoluments by way of retirement allowances, insurance, etc.) on what I am confident will be the unfailing consequences - gradual disunion among the members of the Institute and the generation of an atmosphere fatal to serene collaboration.

Very sincerely yours,

Dr. Abraham Flexner



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### HONORARY TRUSTEES

LOUIS BAMBERGER  
MRS. FELIX FULD

February 6, 1934

Dear Felix:

I have your recent letter and I am glad you approve of broad differentiation. I agree with you that one cannot, within these categories, make small distinctions or offer unusual rewards, but I think it conceivable that a man may find himself in a position where it is necessary for an institution to do something unusual. That has happened, for example, in the case of Professor Weyl. As opposed to the other full professors, Einstein, Veblen, von Neumann and Alexander, who have no children and no encumbrances, Weyl is a fugitive from Germany and has left everything behind; he has two children, and he and his wife have dependent parents. We therefore made an initial appropriation so as to free him from the burden of debt - it was only a question of a few thousand dollars - so that he might start from scratch. No exception has been taken to it by anyone.

I had an opportunity at the General Education Board to observe what rigid rules involved. Thus in the General Education Board in dealing with young men we never made any rule as to what allowance we would make when it came to sending them abroad for a year or giving them additional opportunities. Some of them were unmarried and without responsibility. Some of them were married and had children and dependents. I used to go into their circumstances carefully

February 6, 1934

and figure out what they needed, and the number of persons involved was not so large that it was very difficult or impossible; nor were the sums so large that the purpose we had in view, viz: that of enabling promising persons to go ahead, was ever misunderstood. At the same time the Rockefeller Foundation, the International Health Board, etc. all had absolutely fixed rules. The result was that they very often were unable to secure as fellows or workers the persons whom they most desired to secure. In the G.E.B. we never failed once, and I have never heard, directly or indirectly, that anybody was offended by the irregularities in our grants-in-aid.

In the case you mention, for instance - Carl Becker - if he were a young man I would not ask him "to base a claim." I would try to get him to be quite candid with me and figure out just what it was he needed in order to be able to be free of financial worries and to give his undivided attention to his scholarly work.

There are two considerations to bear in mind: (1) The German universities arose to their eminence by pursuing just such a policy as I have outlined above. There was in the best days a fixed basic salary, and then various allowances that varied from case to case, with the result that a German professor with a family did not have to resort to money making in order to keep afloat. (2) American professors are far too frequently compelled to do hack work, summer teaching, lecturing, and God knows what all, at terrible cost to their intellect and productivity, simply because their salaries are insufficient.

✓ Simon has avoided this kind of thing at the Institute, which is much larger than our Institute will be for many years to come, and I believe we can avoid it too if we preserve the right spirit and grow gradually, thus

Professor Felix Frankfurter

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February 6, 1934

maintaining the sort of intimate, confidential, personal relationship with which we have begun. But mind you, I absolutely agree with you in holding (1) that I would not make a financial bid for any man in competition with another institution; (2) I would shear away at once from anyone who is trying to make a good bargain.

*What about  
Alex + V.N.?*

"Serene collaboration" (your own phrase) is attainable, I believe, if the intellectual superiority is kept where it now is. If it falls below that, "serene collaboration" will fail, not only in the financial realm, but in the intellectual realm as well.

Since I dictated the preceding I have been called to the telephone by Dean Eisenhart of Princeton and Veblen of our own group. The three parties collaborate in a way which would be impossible if anyone were trying to get any advantage for himself or his own institution. Why should we not aim to keep this Institute a paradise for scholars and to create within it the conditions which make that a possibility, or even a probability? Once more, in its best days the German university did that. The Kaiser Wilhelm Institute at Berlin also did it. Arithmetical equality is not everything.

Always sincerely,

*Abraham Flexner*

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
18, Norham Gardens  
Oxford, England

AF/MCE

Professor Felix Frankfurter

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February 7, 1934

P. S. Since dictating the above I have given further thought to the subject with which it deals. The real point is: What are we aiming at? My answer is: We are trying to bring together in successive <sup>subjects</sup> ~~studies~~ or schools small groups of able and promising men who will be as free as possible from worldly concern or pressure. That cannot be done if we have already at the outset bound ourselves by any sort of red tape. For example, we are spending this current year about \$20,000 to give grants-in-aid to promising young mathematicians, some of whom have been instructors and some of whom have been associate professors in universities like Chicago and Michigan; some are Americans and some are foreigners; some have families and some have not. Our grants have varied from \$500 to \$3500. The grants have been, as you see, very uneven, but the end result has been the same. Now which is important, the sum granted or the end reached? I strongly favor the latter.

I recall that at the General Education Board we once made a grant of something like \$15,000 to Professor Ross Harrison of Yale to enable him to go abroad for a year and a half. It was important to American biology that Harrison should do this, for he had not been abroad for many years, did not know personally the younger men who had come up in his field, and did not himself know what had been done in his field at Dahlem-Berlin, Naples, and elsewhere. He had four boys at school, insurance policies to keep up, and a mother to provide for. We figured it out quite carefully. He went abroad and came back freshly inspired. No better investment was ever made by the General Education Board, and yet at the same time we were making grants of \$1500 to men differently situated.

I notice that the Harvard Society of Fellows provides that no one should be over twenty-five and that there should be a regular stipend of a definite sum. This is precisely what I want to avoid. It is immaterial to me whether a

man is twenty-five or fifty-five. The question to ask is: Is this person likely to produce? If so, let's find out the conditions under which he can be made productive.

For next year we have made a grant of \$3000 or \$3500 to an associate professor of mathematics of Harvard who is in the middle thirties, and we are going to make one to a professor of mathematics of the University of Cincinnati who is fifty-two and who has, according to our mathematicians, an extraordinarily important contribution to complete. We are also bringing from Cambridge a visiting professor, Dirac, who recently won the Nobel Prize in mathematics, *There is now* at a salary of \$10,000 for the year.

As successive schools are developed my notion is that we should appropriate a lump sum to each school to be used for grants-in-aid, and allow the different schools to make whatever arrangements seem wise without ~~admitting~~ <sup>requiring</sup> anything like uniformity or conformity. In other words, I believe that a group such as our mathematics group can be trusted, and I hope that successive groups will be equally trustworthy. Certainly, the scheme has worked perfectly this year. If it breaks down, nothing is easier than to change it, for we have not committed ourselves to perpetuating it.

Oxford and Cambridge are luckily in a position to do this sort of thing. They have various funds from which the university and the colleges can draw in order to enable persons differently situated to carry on their work. Thus a stipend sufficient to support a given individual is often made up by adding together sums obtained from a number of different sources. Woodward of All Souls could probably give you details.

*A. J.*

Eastman House  
Oxford, England  
21. 11. 34.

Dear Abe:

Your letter of the 6th has come.

You are quite right. "The real point is: What are we aiming at?"

Let us clear away confusion by eliminating what we are not aiming at.

1. For myself, I don't want to hear anything more about German Universities for a good long while anyhow. Partly I dare say this is the intolerance of an ignorant man, for I know very little and you know very much about German Universities. But I cannot bring myself to believe either that they have said the last word or that they furnish good criteria. After all, a university is something more than a means for contributing to knowledge. Especially in the social sciences, the test of knowledge lies in action. In successive moral crises not only have the universities of Germany failed to reveal the accumulated wisdom that we call civilization, but to a large extent they have been the centres of decivilization. I cannot believe that if one knew all there is to know one would not find something in the organization of German universities, in their relation to authority and in the relations of the professors inter se that would explain why in so large a measure German universities have been poisonous centres of anti-Semitism, militarism and Nazism. I can understand the coercive power of economic necessity and the consequences of subjecting the human spirit to such a tyranny as that which now rules Germany. But you'll have a very hard time to explain away the behavior of colleagues in letting a man like Mendelssohn-Bartholdy be cast off as he has been without so much as a word of decent human friendliness, however secretly imparted, from a single mother's son of them. This is not an isolated case. A society of scholars that has the moral account to settle which Redlich can formulate with great particularity against the German pro-

fessoriat during the last sixty years or so, had better not serve as a watershed for our enlightenment - except by way of dangers to avoid.

2. Nor do I think it very helpful to take too seriously the exuberant rhetoric of thinking of the Institute as a "paradise of scholars". For one thing, the natural history of paradise is none too encouraging as a precedent. Apparently it was an excellent place for one person, but it was fatal even for two - or at least for two when the snake entered, and the snake seems to be an early and congenial companion of man. Really, figures of speech are among the most fertile sources of intellectual confusion. Let's try to aim at something human, for we are dealing with humans and not with angels. I do not know by what right you may hope for a combination of greater disinterestedness and capacity than, say, the Harvard Law School is able to attract or, let us say, than is now found on the Supreme Court, with five out of nine men of real size. I can assure you that neither of these institutions could be conducted on the assumption that it is a paradise. In both personal interactions play an important part; in both personal sensitiveness has not been wanting because of personal differentiations.

3. Equally irrelevant seems to me your account of grants-in-aid by the General Education Board or by the Institute to individual scholars coming to it for a year. I am not concerned with individual scholars. I am concerned with the Institute as a permanent group of scholars engaged in a permanent joint adventure. Individual benefactions for short periods are one thing; the building of a permanent institution quite another.

4. And so I have been brought, by way of denying what we are not aiming at, to what we are aiming at - a society of scholars. I quite agree with you that such a society cannot flourish best under financial pressure. I must add, however, that my stay here has not led me to conclude that great simplicity, even the need of thinking three times how a half crown is to be spent, is hostile to

scholarship nor that the standards of commercial or financial income are relevant for a scholarly society. Let me also say that differentiations in income between the Colleges is not one of the most edifying aspects of Oxford nor making most for scholarship. But I wholeheartedly agree that the members of your Institute should be relieved of the necessity "to do hack work, summer teaching, lecturing and God knows what all, at terrible cost to their intellect and productivity," - circumstances which operate perhaps most unfairly against the wives and thereby greatly hamper in achieving a gracious society, which I deem an essential for a society of scholars. Therefore I think salaries should be ample. Put them as generously as you will - to me it seems that \$10,000 for the younger men and \$15,000 for older men is ample, considering the general economic level in <sup>to</sup> which, I am sure, we are entering. I do not even have objection to a family allowance by way of so much for each child, in addition to a base salary. What I do insist on is that whatever classifications there be - and there ought to be very few classes - they should be impersonal. This is what I meant by approving of "broad differentiation". It excludes all personal differentiation.

5. I need not repeat the grounds of my objection. But may I say that such a society of scholars as I envisage precludes an administrator who plays Lady Bountiful or, to keep my sex straight, Mrs. Tringle. Does it occur to you that the Carl Beckers might not want to discuss with you their intimate affairs? To be very blunt, he may feel that it is none of your business how he allocates his salary. Why should he have to tell you that he has a demented step-daughter? And why is it any of your concern whether, although I have no children, I have other obligations? The Institute's concern is so to fix salaries as to enable a man to live as a civilized gentleman in a world in which the family is the ordinary social unit. You seem to me to have a little bit too much the administrator's confidence in assuming (a) that you could spot the man "who is trying to make a good bargain" or (b) that you could plan the life of a man who is too shy or too



proud to enter the realm of bargaining. And if you'll forgive me for saying so, you also have a little bit the optimism of the administrator who thinks his scheme "works perfectly" because evils have not at yet disclosed themselves, and particularly have not been disclosed to him.

6. From all of which you will gather that I feel very strongly about this. It is only one aspect of my conviction that a society of scholars implies a democratic aristocracy like unto the self-government by which, say, Balliol is conducted. This implies impersonal equality and self-government by the group. Those are the aims to which I am committed. I write thus frankly because you may think that, holding these views, I may not be a very useful member for your Board. If so, I'd better get off before I am on. In putting this to you, I am quite impersonal. It has nothing to do with our personal relations, and they would remain quite what they were before were you to tell me that perhaps it is just as well that I resign before I become active.

With warm regards,

Always yours,

Dr. Abraham Flexner

*See D Flexner. On March 15, 1934 Flexner sent a letter of Frankfurter to my letter (presumably this letter - no other here) with draft of his reply for his comments.*

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### HONORARY TRUSTEES

LOUIS BAMBERGER  
MRS. FELIX FULD

February 21, 1934

Dear Felix:

Thank you very much for the letter regarding Lowe, whom I know very well and whom I saw when he was in America last autumn. I know all about his work and his standing, but I do not see how at present the Institute can suddenly launch out in the direction of palaeography, for we have not yet the means nor the material. It may be, however, that Princeton, which has an excellent department of mediaeval studies, could with the cooperation of either the Rockefeller boards or the Carnegie Institution strengthen itself with him. I shall take the matter up with Percy, the head of the department, and if he is favorable, with Dodds, the new president, who is a thoroughly nice fellow. He is anxious to achieve in other subjects the rank which has been achieved in mathematics and physics.

I have no doubt you are following with interest everything connected with the New Deal. I wonder if my hunch is correct that Roosevelt looks stronger than he really is. I suspect that there is a great deal of uncertainty and opposition, which is unexpressed. Unquestionably he has shown courage and intelligence, but he has also done some awfully foolish things for which he may pay in the long run.

Moskowitz is quite right about LaGuardia. He has made an excellent start.

F.F.

Feb. 21, 1954

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I continue to nose about in search of economists. Do you hear of any in England or on the Continent who would be available and who are of something like the calibre of our mathematicians? What do you know of Williams of Harvard? I imagine he is not of the highest rank, but it may be that we shall find ourselves simply compelled to begin with men who are willing themselves to make a fresh start and to surround themselves with a group of young men of promise.

Jim and Ben have had on the whole a good winter with certain ups and downs.

Anne and I love Princeton. It is quiet, simple, undemanding. The School of Mathematics is doing beautifully. We have gotten further in a few months than I could ever have expected to get in a few years - so much for sheer brains without buildings of our own or equipment.

Remember us warmly to Marion, and believe me

Ever sincerely,

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
18, Norham Gardens  
Oxford, England

A. J.

AF:ESB

P. S. Of course, Viner is also a possibility.

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HONORARY TRUSTEES  
LOUIS BAMBERGER  
MRS. FELIX FULD

March 15, 1934

Dear Felix:

Many thanks for your kind note in reply to my inquiry about Williams.

I have lunched with him twice, and I suspect that your judgment is probably correct. In this vast experimental economic laboratory, of which the world now consists, we are, I think, not likely to get far with persons who are so distinctly on record in books, pamphlets, and otherwise, that they can hardly approach the economic situation with an absolutely unbiased mind. I am afraid that Viner's relationship to Morgenthau and the need of cooperating in doing politic things may hurt him, though, of course, there is always the possibility that it may simply enrich him.

I am not quite clear what you mean when you say, "in the social sciences it is impossible to paint picture cards," but I suppose you are merely emphasizing the need of dealing with realities and not fooling ourselves.

I envy you your grand time in Cambridge. I have always been torn between the two places, Oxford and Cambridge. Alas, in these recent weeks the world has lost the most intimate of my Cambridge friends, Sir William Hardy - one of the greatest persons, in my judgment, that England has produced in our generation.

I have spent a few days in New York recently attending to a few

F. F.

March 15, 1934

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odds and ends. I found Ben and Mim both in extremely good health.

Everybody is puzzled by the political situation. My own guess is that Roosevelt is not as strong as he appears to be on the surface of things. Farley, for example, has, I think, done him incalculable damage by his political maneuvering, and of course, even the sound moves which Roosevelt makes antagonize selfish interests. Washington is in such a whirl and the officials are so overworked and overstrained that there is hardly time for deliberate thinking. On the other hand, I think there is a general recognition of the fact that Roosevelt has shown great courage in dealing with issues to which his predecessors have been utterly blind.

Anne joins me in warm greetings to you and Marion.

Ever sincerely,

A. J.

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
18, Norham Gardens  
Oxford, England

AF/MCE

Xu

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PERCY S. STRAUS  
LEWIS H. WEED

March 21, 1934

HONORARY TRUSTEES  
LOUIS BAMBERGER  
MRS. FELIX FULD

Dear Felix:

I have been a long time in answering yours of the 21st of February, because it worried me a good deal. I believe in candor and have practised it and been associated with those who practised it for the last quarter of a century, but I confess that it does not seem to me that in our correspondence or in correspondence with those associated with us in the Institute we need to be - to quote you - "very blunt". I am sure that you have encountered candor, tolerance, and discussion at Oxford, as I myself did, but bluntness never. That is too liable to distort issues that ought to be weighed very impassively.

Perhaps it is not necessary for me to answer your letter in detail, but as it represents no little effort on your part I think I ought probably to do so. Besides it seems to me only fair that, if there has been any doubt in your mind, as your letter would seem to indicate, as to the general methods and principles which have thus far governed us, they ought to be made clear to you.

I have said what I thought of the German universities in the last chapter of my book on Universities. I have never believed them perfect, and I have of course always known that there was an undercurrent of anti-Semitism in Germany. Taking this into consideration, it is really remarkable that so many Jews reached high academic posts rather than the reverse. For the measures which

F.F.

March 21, 1934

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have been taken by the present Hitler Government or for the inhuman treatment of men like Mendelssohn-Bartholdy nobody could feel more repugnance than I do. None the less, I cannot but bear in mind the enormous debt which American learning - and learning in other countries - owes to German universities, and there is no better proof of the reality of this debt than the avidity with which even now, when we have made great progress, German scholars are being absorbed by the American universities as fast as American resources permit. Harvard has just called a professor of art from Jena and a professor of education from Dresden. Our own School of Mathematics contains five professors, of whom three are German-trained and a fourth under heavy obligations to German colleagues. I confess, looking back at Hitler's attack, Divide et impera, while I have nothing to say in praise of the attitude of the German professorate as a whole, I would not dare to say how a given individual ought to have acted. Should Einstein have returned to Germany and been thrown into a concentration camp or perhaps shot? And one must not lose sight of the fact that without thought of the future a considerable number of non-Jewish professors have resigned and taken their chances of finding food and shelter for themselves and their families. I ought not to leave you in doubt, therefore, as to my reaction when you say, "I don't want to hear anything more about German universities for a good long while anyhow." There has never been a meeting of the Board when the German universities have not entered our discussion and, while I am perfectly willing to concede their faults, their services and their merits are so great that it is much more important, it seems to me, for us to learn from them than it is to dismiss them from attention wholesale. That is something that I am simply incapable of doing, and as to this the present Board has been a unit.

Just before dictating this letter I received a copy of an address on

the Interdependence of Medicine with other Sciences of Nature delivered by Dr. Welch before the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1907. Accidentally I opened this address on page 39 where Dr. Welch gives a list of the important physiologists of the last century. He mentions each by name. Seven were professors in German universities, one a Frenchman, one a Dutchman.

I enclose an announcement regarding the appointment of Professor Dirac of Cambridge to be Visiting Professor at the Institute in 1934-1935. Note that of the persons mentioned in this account, which is absolutely accurate, four are German professors, one an English professor. Einstein and Planck, both Germans, originated the work upon which the others have built.

Of course, nothing that I say or think in appreciation of German universities precludes in the least appreciation of other foreign and of American institutions, or learning from them, too, what is good and what has proved harmful.

I do not take too seriously the phrase, "a paradise for scholars", and yet speaking in human terms I do not see why we should aim at less. "Hitch your wagon to a star", said Emerson, and we have hitched ours. We are, to be sure, dealing with human beings. We shall have disappointments and failures, but, if we can imbue a small group of scholars with the highest possible human ideals, we shall not have made this effort in vain. A few weeks ago, so Dean Eisenhart of Princeton told me, a distinguished scholar spent a few days at Princeton. When he left Fine Hall, he said, "This is truly an Island of the Blessed." Can we keep it so? We stand a better chance, I think, if we will make this expressly our aim. I remember also a Chinese educator who was once talking to Dr. Buttrick in the old days at the General Education Board. He said, "Dr. Buttrick, what is your idea of the Kingdom of Heaven?" Dr. Buttrick replied promptly, "Our office." It was no exaggeration. I still look back to the twenty years I spent in association with him as an absolutely



F.F.

March 21, 1934

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flawless experience. How far this can be carried depends, I think, upon the spirit which I show, which my successors show, and which the human beings, who are our professors, show.

*Director's  
superhuman?*

There is another point in reference to which I have serious doubt, namely, as to whether, as you say, "the test of knowledge lies in action." There are persons who must "act", and there are philosophers like James and Dewey, who would probably agree with you, but I remember something that Graham Wallas once said, namely, that the most important body in the field of economics in England was the English Board of Trade, because, as he went on to say, it had the utmost responsibility for making known the facts, but no responsibility whatsoever for making its will prevail. I wonder if this dispassionate type of thinking and working in the very heart of human phenomena is not the kind of thing of which the world and the social sciences need nowadays.

*Richard Steward  
on FRB  
resp. to  
make grant-  
factors  
(income, loans)  
studies to  
draw conclusions*

I am sorry if you "envisage me as an administrator playing Lady Bountiful or Kris Kringle." I would rather that you thought of me as one who has a quite new responsibility and opportunity and who is endeavoring experimentally to find out whether things cannot be better done than they have hitherto been done in Europe or America. I am, I think, as little inclined as you to pry into any man's affairs, and yet you would be surprised if you knew the extent to which I have been consulted here already much as a lawyer or physician might be in individual cases. I do not see why we should tie ourselves by any kind of red tape thus early in our development. Aydelotte has spent thirteen years at Swarthmore very happily without having to resort to the kind of fixity that usually prevails in this country. We have already felt ourselves justified in taking certain unusual steps, partly by reason of world conditions. Unless I have been deceived by everybody, no difficulty

F.F.

March 21, 1934

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has resulted therefrom. Don't think of me, therefore, as having an "administrator's confidence in assuming" that I "can spot a man who is trying to make a good bargain" or I "can plan the life of a man or that I think my scheme works perfectly because evils have not yet disclosed themselves to me." My point is that we are still in an experimental stage and may be for some years to come and that the fewer permanent decisions we make at the outset, the greater freedom of action we retain for ourselves. With the sanction of the Board I have made as few decisions as I possibly could in order to get this thing going, and I have opposed a good many suggestions that seemed to anticipate experience; further, within the past week several developments have taken place which have proved that the attitude - the scientific attitude, as I should call it - has been extremely fortunate for us. I can hardly be said to "hold views". I have an ideal, which is, I think, a very different thing, because if one "holds views", one legislates, whereas, if one has an ideal, one is free from time to time to choose the means which seem most likely to realize it and to change the means if they fail in their purpose.

Of course, I make this long explanation in the hope that it may clarify the situation and that we may continue to enjoy the benefit of your cooperation and experience as member of the Board.

With all good wishes,

Very sincerely yours,

A. J.

Professor Felix Frankfurter  
18, Northam Gardens  
Oxford, England

AF:ESB

COPY

*Simon*

THE ROCKEFELLER INSTITUTE  
FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

April 2, 1934

Dear Ben:

My respect for Felix has risen greatly since I read his letter discussing "academic" organization. <sup>4/2/34</sup> This is entirely aside from his differences with Abe. What I am struck with is his unusual clarity of insight, as well as felicity and power of expression.

So far as Abe is concerned, he has had battles to fight at the G.E.B. and has not sidestepped them. He also does not lack courage and conviction. I have no doubt that he will welcome Felix on his Board just as warmly now that he knows his opposing points of view.

Felix was so felicitous about the "Paradise" figure of speech that I could not help being amused. The comment was obvious enough, but few persons could have put it so aptly.

Now about the Rockefeller Institute, so long as Abe has quoted it in support of his policy. As I said on the telephone, it is wholly "impersonal", as Felix would have. No man's private and domestic affairs are inquired into beyond this; when a very young man is taken on trial, he is made a small extra allowance for wife, child, dependent parent. Even Felix admits this distinction when he speaks of allowances for children, etc.

But at the Institute this distinction disappears instantly if the young man goes on for a few years, or permanently. He becomes then a

person to be dealt with "impersonally", according to his age and value to the Institute, and he is not interfered with, but rather helped, if another institution wishes him and he it. There is no thought of "bargaining" or money pressure to weight the decision.

It is true that the Institute has no single scale of salaries, but it does have a fixed scale. There are merely "classes", which Felix also seems to approve. Indeed, I do not see how one could manage except with some such recognized discrimination.

Nothing impressed me more than Felix's appreciation of the isolation really of the head of an institution. I surely hear and know less of what takes place among the staff - its discontents, bickerings, criticisms, etc. - than anyone in the place. This is inevitable and has kept me "humble" for years. I know that the Institute's staff is not the quiet body that it seems to me to be.

And yet, I have almost from the first run into those common human traits of selfishness, envy, jealousy, prestige, which must arise in a body of men. This is irrespective of the fact that the men who are striving and stewing could not be as well off as they are anywhere else in the country - and they know this. At this very moment I am having a struggle, which should be impossible, all the circumstances considered. It involves the very principle of the existence of the Institute as a center of high productive research. Theoretically, the person on the staff involved is all for the principle; but personally he cannot see the "wood for the trees", and would block action if he could.

In other words, he is just an ordinary human being, along with being a fine craftsman.

One of our Trustees once asked me how I accounted for the fact that occasionally a gifted scientist would let himself fo so regrettable an act

as to behave in an underhanded manner one way or another. I have had to answer this kind of question often, and the answer is, as I see it, that he is just a human being before he is a fine scientist.

Unless one recognizes that in education, research, art, professions, the productive units are only human, we shall, I fear, find ourselves some day not in the real world, but in a world of dreams.

The letters on the Securities Act interest me very much. As the weeks go by in Washington it does seem as if no attempt may be made to amend it. But I have no knowledge or judgment on this. It gratifies me to see how wide is the support and appreciation of your efforts.

Thank you for letting me see the letters.

I should not like Abe to know that I am so generously confided in by you. After all, he must make his own experiment as I make mine, and his institute may easily go much farther than the Rockefeller Institute.

To conclude, let me add that I had wholesome opposition in the original Board of Scientific Directors, especially from Dr. Prudden, and also from Dr. Welch and others. If there is any trouble at the moment, it arises from the fact that the present board is too little in opposition. I'm hopeful that Conant may come out stronger there.

Ever,

(signed) Simon

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*See Act*