

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF
THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

October 9, 1939

A regular meeting of the Trustees of the Institute for Advanced Study was held at the Uptown Club, 60 East 42nd Street, New York City, on Monday, October 9, 1939.

Present: Messrs. Aydelotte, Edgar S. Bamberger, Louis Bamberger, Flexner, Friedenwald, Hardin, Houghton, Leidesdorf, Maass, Riefler, Stewart, Straus, Veblen, and Weed.

Absent and excused: Mr. Carrel and Mrs. Fuld.

The Chairman, Mr. Houghton, presided.

The minutes of the meetings held on May 22, 1939, namely,

Annual Meeting, Members of the Corporation
Regular Meeting, Board of Trustees

having been distributed, their reading was dispensed with, and they were approved.

Mr. Hardin, Chairman of the Finance Committee, stated that the report of the Finance Committee would appear in the report of the Treasurer.

The Treasurer, Mr. Leidesdorf, distributed among the Trustees copies of a detailed report on the finances of the Institute and gave a brief summary of the report.

On motion, the report was accepted and ordered to be placed on file.

Mr. Maass, Chairman of the Committee on Buildings and Grounds, reported that Fuld Hall was finished and equipped and now in use by the Institute, that a contractor was in charge of the grounds, and that all was taken care of within the budget.

In accepting the report, a vote of thanks was tendered to Mr. Maass and the members of the Committee on Buildings and Grounds for their zeal in bringing into reality Fuld Hall which answers the needs of the Institute ideally in the way of facilities and is a beautiful addition to the academic buildings of the United States.

The following report was presented by the Director:

At this meeting which, as I notified the Trustees during the summer, closes my connection with the Institute as Director, I have no definite suggestions to make as respects the future, for I desire that my successor shall have a free hand and shall take the place I now occupy without being embarrassed by any commitments which I might make at this time. Nevertheless I confess that my mind has for several months been roaming over the experience of the years during which the Institute has been at work, and I venture to suggest that, as I said in one of my reports, the Trustees of the Institute as well as the Director would be wise if from time to time they refreshed their memories as to our purposes and asked themselves critically whether or not experience has shown that such steps as we have taken have been wise or unwise.

As to our general purpose Mr. Bamberger and Mrs. Fuld made the following statement in a letter to their Trustees, dated June 6, 1930:

"Many of these who enter the institution will probably qualify themselves for professorships in other institutions of learning, but the institution itself is established not merely to train teachers or to produce holders of advanced degrees. The primary purpose is the pursuit of advanced learning and exploration in fields of pure science and high scholarship to the utmost degree that the facilities of the institution and the ability of the faculty and students will permit."

I do not believe that anything has happened since that letter was written that is calculated in any wise or in the slightest degree to modify the purpose expressed in that quotation. Indeed with all Europe apparently collapsing around us the function of the Institute as stated in that paragraph is of greater importance than ever not only to the American people but to mankind as a whole. Before our very eyes the lamp of learning is being transferred for safe keeping from Europe to the United States. The Institute for Advanced Study, the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, and the graduate departments of the large American universities are the places in which that lamp must be kept alight. As far therefore as our resources permit - and I trust that they will be cautiously increased from time to time - there is nothing in this paragraph that I should in the light of my experience ask Mr. Bamberger and Mrs. Fuld to change. A copy of Bulletin No. 1, published in 1930, containing their letter to their Trustees, has been placed before every member of the Board, and for the sake of the new Director I hope that the Trustees may find an opportunity to peruse it with care. A little more than a year afterwards, that is, in September, 1931, I submitted to the Board a confidential memorandum in which I tried to outline what the Institute should be, as I had by that time come to think of it. The 1931 memorandum is actually based upon a memorandum prepared by me ten years earlier, while I was Secretary of the General Education Board, so that it represents the thought and observation of many years and varied experience in this country and Europe. Almost to the letter, our experience during the past six or seven years sustains the program which in general terms was

mapped out in the confidential memorandum, a copy of which is also provided for each member in the hope that it too may be carefully perused. I must, however, admit that in a few minor respects the experiments which I then suggested in the way of organization can, according to my present judgment, be improved. Of course, I hold firmly to my belief that the Institute is essentially its professors and its members, not its director and not its trustees; and I hold further to the conviction that the professors must enjoy what they have from the beginning enjoyed without hindrance or interference, namely, absolute freedom in deciding as to what they will do and how they will do it. I am sure that I was right when I stated that no administrator and no organizer can do more than furnish conditions "favorable to the restless prowling of an enlightened and informed human spirit seeking its intellectual and spiritual prey, and that standardization and organization do not aid: they are simply irksome."

Research into the hitherto unknown, contact with others similarly engaged, stimulus of younger men - these are the tasks - and as I believe more strongly than ever - the sole tasks and responsibilities alike of professors and members. In 1936 Professor Marshall H. Stone of Harvard, having been awarded a stipend by the Institute, wrote to ask me, "What are my duties?"

I replied, "You have no duties, only opportunities" - opportunities, I may add, of which he made such admirable use that shortly after returning to Harvard he was promoted from an associate professorship to a full professorship.

I do not deceive myself; intellectual concentration so intense is not easy. Brilliant and fertile men may, as they grow older, find such concentration more difficult. Some of them may unconsciously deceive them-

selves by escape into executive or managerial activities that are inherently of no real importance or that should be disposed of by the Director, his immediate assistants, or the Trustees who sacrifice time and energy in order that the energy and attention and interest of professors and members may not be diverted. Others take a different turn: they may cease to be productive themselves, but they make up for this loss by increase in the scope of their knowledge and an increased mellowness, which takes the form of wisdom. The executive turn is in such an institute as this of little or no value; it may even prove harmful or disturbing. But the wisdom that comes of long experience and growing knowledge is precious beyond words. I think in this connection of the late Dr. William H. Welch. He was not a productive scientist after he had passed the early forties. But he constantly widened his knowledge and sympathies. His range of information and interest expanded to the day of his death. Born in 1850, he organized the Johns Hopkins Medical School in 1893; he retired from medicine to create the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health in 1916; and he left the School of Hygiene to become at the age of seventy-six the founder of the Institute of the History of Medicine in 1926. There he remained, a source of illumination, the Nestor of American medicine, until his death in 1934. The Director should scrutinize the activities and interests of every professor in the Institute closely and determine for himself to which of these two different types he belongs.

Of course, I do not mean to imply that a professorial post in the Institute or in a university requires that the incumbent lead a monastic life. Quite the contrary is true. Professors require diversion, hobbies, and wider interests than their individual professorial duty carries with it. The greatest of living English mathematicians,

Professor Hardy of Cambridge, is a baseball enthusiast, and Dr. Welch not only knew all of Shakespeare's short sonnets by heart but was widely read in almost every field of current interest. It matters not, therefore, whether a great scholar and scientist loves music or art or cutting down trees; he needs for his mental health something different from his professional concern.

I was, I believe, correct in saying in the 1931 memorandum that delicate questions arise in connection with the relations which exist between Director, staff, and Trustees. I made certain suggestions of an experimental nature, in respect to some of which I took a certain risk against the advice which I might have followed. In so far as experience has proved me wrong, my successor should do differently. I have not changed my mind as to the impracticability of faculty government. I believe now, as I have always believed, that faculty government would not only result in the waste of time and energy on executive and mechanical details, but that as a matter of fact it has never existed anywhere in the academic world. It certainly never existed in Germany where there have always been strong educational ministries, and it does not exist in the great English universities - Oxford and Cambridge - where Parliament has within a relatively brief period three times, through the creation of statutory commissions, brought about changes which the faculty might have brought about of their own accord, but through excessive conservatism failed to do. Our problem is to give the professors every possible aid and encouragement in the pursuit of their several specialties, but it is equally our problem to protect them against interference and interruptions. I reiterate now what I said in 1931:

"Mere organization and rules will not alone achieve our purpose - that of creating a genuine seat of learning. Sympathy, helpfulness, and mutual respect, involving director, trustees, and faculty are all requisite to create an atmosphere free of tension, attractive to men of high attainments and to students of unusual ability."

I should add to this, however, now that we have centralized the activities of the Institute in Fuld Hall, a beautiful and commodious building, that it will be possible for the Director to have a more intimate and fuller knowledge of the workings of the Institute than was possible during the years when we were scattered at various points in Princeton.

To the view that the "Institute should be viewed as experimental" I still adhere, and it is for that reason that I ask the Trustees and the Director who will succeed me to scan carefully from time to time the experience of the Institute in order to preserve its experimental character. Experiment inevitably means that some things will succeed while others may fail. But let me make it plain and emphatic that, taken as a whole, the Institute has succeeded far beyond anything of which we dreamed nine years ago. Not only have we every year lifted groups of American and foreign workers to a higher level of competency, but we have attracted to Princeton some of the most prominent scholars and scientists in the world: Dirac and G. H. Hardy from Cambridge, Pauli from Zürich, Abbé Lemaître from Louvain, Niels Bohr from Copenhagen, Levi-Civita from Rome, Wade-Gery from Oxford, Henry Clay from the Bank of England, and others equally well known. These men, standing at the very head of their several subjects, have come to learn, but have also taught - they have learned from our professors, and by them our own professors have been taught. If the Trustees wish at any moment to ascertain whether the Institute is achieving its purpose, let them scan the roll of those who are here, for that list tells the whole tale. No director, no trustee can himself judge the value of our work; but when he is informed that Professor Siegel of Frankfurt, Professor Hlavaty of Prague, Professor Gödel of Vienna, Professor Murnaghan of Johns Hopkins University, Professor Walsh of Harvard, Professor Doro Levi of Florence, Professor Nakayama of Tokyo, Professor Fubini-Ghiron of Turin, Professor Rensselaer W. Lee

of Northwestern University, Professor Rowley of Princeton University, Professor Wilder of Michigan, and Professor Bronner of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens have worked in the Institute, his doubts or questionings may be permitted to disappear.

On the other hand, if I were a younger man, I should suggest certain relatively slight modifications, and I trust that my successor will not hesitate to depart from precedents which I have set if, in his judgment, the Institute can be thus made more effective for the purpose for which it was designed. No professor need take alarm at these words, for no one can ever be found to act as director who would interfere with the professors in their several fields of activity. No director will be a mathematician, an economist, an epigraphist, or an art historian, and yet there are ways, as I now see, in which economies may be made, time may be saved by relatively slight changes which will increase rather than decrease freedom of thought and freedom of opinion, and which will keep the director in his proper place, as I have tried - I hope with a measure of success - to keep in mine. It is true now, as it was when in 1931 I quoted the words of the late Professor Starling:

"The preparation of insulin by Banting and Best, an admirable piece of work, is but the last step of an arduous journey, in which hundreds of workers have taken part. There is no need to be concerned about 'discoveries'. It is only necessary to ensure that the growing tree of knowledge is dug round and pruned and watered."

It is also true, truer than I myself imagined that, as I said in 1931:

"I am not unaware of the fact that I have sketched an educational Utopia. I have deliberately hitched the Institute to a star; it would be wrong to begin with any other ambition or aspiration. On the other hand, I have been careful to keep within the realm of the practical. But I do not deceive myself; it will not be easy even to begin on any such basis; it will be harder, as the years pass, to keep to this standard. We shall find ourselves dealing with men and women, not with angels or super-men."

In conclusion, I wish to express my gratitude, first of all, to the Founders. I have in the course of my lifetime been extraordinarily fortunate in being intimately associated with large-minded philanthropists: Mr. Carnegie, Dr. Pritchett, Mr. Rockefeller, Mr. Gates, Dr. Buttrick, and many others. When I left the General Education Board in 1928, I said to myself in reference to these men, "I shall not look upon their like again." But I was mistaken. I have found in Mr. Bamberger and Mrs. Fuld the same objectivity, the same resourcefulness, the same devotion and affection which I found in the illustrious list of men that I have just cited - a list to which they should be added. They have been ideal donors and founders, interested, devoted, liberal, wise, critical, as donors and founders have a right and a duty to be. I wish, therefore, to make it a matter of record that at a time when I thought my active life was over they gave me the greatest opportunity that I had ever enjoyed in my educational experience.

The Trustees as a body have been helpful, but I cannot characterize separately the contribution which each of them has made. I wish, however, to make special acknowledgement of gratitude to the Chairman. His name lent distinction to the Institute from the very beginning. When I went abroad searching for ideas and for men, I found in England and Germany that the mere fact that Mr. Houghton was Chairman was all the guarantee that any one wished as to the character and quality of the Institute for Advanced Study. From that day to this he has been a friend, a counselor, a helper to whom I desire to express my infinite gratitude.

As is inevitable in the course of nature, the time has come when, about to begin my seventy-fourth year, I believe that I can be of greater service to the Institute if I am not its Director but rather the friend of the Director, a friend who will never hamper him with advice, but who will be willing to give him the results of his own experience both in the Institute

and previously should he care to seek them. This is precisely the arrangement which my brother has with his successor, Dr. Gasser, as Director of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. If there is anything at any time that the Founders or the Director or the Trustees wish me to do, I shall be happy to comply with their wishes if I am capable of doing so. I beg you all to accept my grateful thanks for cooperation through the dangerous period of the early years now safely passed. The Institute is successfully launched, and I have no fear that it will not justify the high hopes of those who are responsible for its inception and its support.

I ask the Trustees now to accept my resignation as Director, effective at the close of this meeting.

After the presentation of the report of the Director, the Chairman, Mr. Houghton, said:

"This is a very painful moment for us all. As Chairman of the Board, there are a few words I think I ought to say on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

"There can be only one reason sufficient to justify Dr. Flexner in resigning as Director at this time, just as there can be but one reason sufficient to justify the Trustees in accepting that resignation - and that is the condition of his health. For nine long and arduous years, Dr. Flexner has given unstintedly of his work, of his strength, and of his vitality. No one could overestimate, I think, what he has given to the Institute, and, as I review these years of achievement, it seems to me that if Dr. Flexner has not been the Institute, he has been, at any rate, its soul. It was the child of his imagination. He had dreamed a great and noble dream of what might be accomplished by a company of

scholars working together in freedom, not that cold term 'academic' freedom, but true freedom, real freedom, the freedom which means adequate living conditions, proper provision for old age, and perhaps most important of all freedom to devote oneself utterly to one's work, freedom to give the world the best one has to give without let or hindrance. That dream was made possible of realization by the princely benefaction of Mr. Bamberger and Mrs. Fuld.

"I have no need to recall to your minds the rapid progress that has been made. The School of Mathematics, for instance, is admittedly now the leading school of mathematics in the world. In the School of Humanistic Studies our scholars working with the Princeton group and others are rapidly forging to an equally prominent position, and as to the role of the School of Economics and Politics, perhaps the best judgment I could express would be what President Conant told a mutual friend a week or two ago, namely, that he believed the one proper approach to economics made in this country was that being made by the Institute. I do not need to dwell on these things, but I must add that, if at the age of seventy-four, with a body none too robust, but in the full plenitude of his powers, Dr. Flexner now feels that the burden of his office should rest on younger shoulders, then whatever our loss, however deeply we regret the parting, who of us could possibly say him 'Nay'? And in conclusion let me say this, that I believe no distinction which can ever come to the lives of any of us will equal the fact that we have been associated with Dr. Flexner in the founding of the Institute."

Mr. Riefler thereupon stated that they had all known that this day must come at some time and had dreaded it; he continued:

"Dr. Flexner has given us his resignation. I move that it be accepted and that the Chair appoint a committee to draw up a statement in the form of a resolution to be presented at the next meeting of the Board of Trustees."

The motion was carried.

Mr. Bamberger arising said:

"I move that a Special Committee of four be appointed by the Chairman to select a successor to Dr. Flexner and that the Chairman be a member of this Special Committee."

The motion was carried, and the Chairman named the following:

Mr. Hardin
Mr. Leidesdorf
Mr. Bamberger
Mr. Houghton

Thereupon, on motion, the meeting adjourned while the Special Committee deliberated.

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Upon the return of the Special Committee the meeting was called to order, and Mr. Aydelotte was asked to withdraw. Mr. Flexner also withdrew.

The Chairman stated that the Special Committee had unanimously decided upon Mr. Aydelotte as Mr. Flexner's successor, whereupon, on motion, Mr. Aydelotte was appointed the Director of the Institute for Advanced Study.

Mr. Aydelotte and Mr. Flexner were invited to return to the meeting, and Mr. Aydelotte was formally notified by the Chairman of his appointment. In response to this notification he said:

"I appreciate deeply the honor and responsibility which the Trustees have conferred upon me and much more because of the

fact that the Trustees have acted only after prior consultation with members of the Faculty. In my judgment that is the only sound procedure for making such a selection as this.

"I have been a Trustee of the Institute for Advanced Study since its beginning and have constantly been interested in its welfare. I can, indeed, trace my connection with it further back than its actual beginning, since it chanced that I first suggested to the Rhodes Trustees that Dr. Flexner should be invited to deliver the Rhodes Memorial Lectures in Oxford in 1928. It was in these lectures that he first outlined the need for an institution of this type in the United States, and it was that statement, I believe, which caused Mr. Bamberger and Mrs. Fuld to devote their fortune to this purpose.

"I believe strongly in the soundness of Dr. Flexner's plan, and I congratulate him upon the admirable beginning which he has made during his ten years as Director. I receive your invitation to succeed him with great enthusiasm and also with great humility. I can only pledge my best efforts to measure up to the opportunity which your decision has thrown open to me.

"I must ask your permission to delay my formal acceptance until I have time to place my resignation in the hands of the Board of Trustees of Swarthmore College, to take effect as soon as my successor is chosen. My first responsibility is of course to Swarthmore, and I must continue to discharge the duties of my

office there until that time, although from now on I am confident of being able to spend one or two days each week in Princeton."

The Chairman asked that the new Director act as head of the committee to draw up proper resolutions regarding Mr. Flexner's work and the appreciation and affection of the Trustees for him, which should be made a permanent record in the minutes and a copy given to Mr. Flexner.

Mr. Stewart read the following extracts from a letter of Harold W. Dodds, President of Princeton University, dated October 6, 1939, to Mr. Flexner:

"Naturally I was shocked by your letter of October 3. Although from hints you have dropped from time to time I knew that you were considering the action which you are now about to take. I am sorry that you have been laid up with a bad throat. I assumed that the only reason I have not seen you around was that you were very busy in your new quarters.

"I appreciate deeply your very kind words about the University and about me. In turn I may say that it has been your understanding and distaste for personal glory and publicity that has made it possible for the two organizations to cooperate without experiencing that accumulation of frictions over minor matters which so frequently arises. I believe that you have started the Institute on a correct course and that tradition and precedents are sufficiently established, even in your brief tenure, to give you little cause for worry that further development will not be in accord with your great vision for the Institute."

(Handwritten postscript) "Upon reading over the above I see that I did not mention the real regret I feel at your action. Perhaps you will understand this without many words. I am sorry, deeply sorry, that you feel you must retire."

On motion, the Executive Committee was authorized to take the necessary steps in connection with Mr. Flexner's pension and to report to the Board at its next meeting.

The Chairman stated that Mr. Aydelotte must return to Swarthmore and set in motion the steps necessary for the appointment of a successor; until his arrangements were completed, the Trustees were bound in honor to say nothing of his appointment. At the proper time a statement would be given by the Chairman to the press for release on a certain date. Mr. Aydelotte's appointment would be effective as soon as arrangements could be made.

Mr. Flexner reported that shortly after the Munich conference in September 1938, the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Morgenthau, had asked that in the event of war the Government might have the advantage of the advice and counsel of the economists of the Institute. Mr. Flexner replied that he felt sure that the Trustees would consider it a patriotic duty to do anything possible to help him in his great and difficult undertaking. Immediately on the outbreak of war Secretary Morgenthau requested that the Institute lend him Mr. Riefler and Mr. Stewart, for he could not get along without them. Mr. Flexner stipulated that they were not to accept any title and that their work should be absolutely untrammelled by any sort of political consideration. He stated that it should also be borne in mind that the professors were getting out of their experience as much as they were putting into it, for they are learning at close range what is going on in the financing of the present world disturbance. Immediately thereafter Dr. Goldenweiser, head of the Research Division of the Federal Reserve Board, asked that Mr. Warren be released for a short period. Mr. Flexner quoted from an explanatory letter written by Mr. Warren the following:

"Last spring Senator Wagner, Chairman of the standing Senate Committee on Money and Banking, introduced a resolution calling for a 'study' of the objectives of monetary policy.

"The first drafts were submitted about the end of September and disclosed two things: (1) The papers ran between 50 and 100 typed pages apiece, while the limit was approximately 20; and (2) the papers, individually prepared, did not form a clear-cut entity as a whole, nor could they be so grouped as to give a defined picture of the several major aspects discussed.

"At this point, Dr. Goldenweiser suggested that Mr. Woodward (a close friend of mine) and I be invited to study three papers, and it was for this purpose that we were brought here. We studied the papers and came to the prompt conclusion that the project required much more than editing. By November 1 we hope to have this program so well in motion that our continuous presence will no longer be needed. It seems to me that this entire undertaking falls within the intent of the Institute.

- a. It requires 'advanced study' of the money and banking system on my part.
- b. It contemplates outlining of projects of 'advanced study' by individuals who are members of an extremely competent staff of persons whose professional careers are midway between the theoretical and applied in one area of economics - money and banking.
- c. The undertaking itself is in the public interest, in that it is designed to improve the present administration and organization of the nation's banking system. As such it has certain claims upon the comparatively few persons who combine a presumed professional competence with time-freedom to employ it in such service.

"I believe, therefore, that our joint decision as to the propriety of my engaging in the undertaking, which at the time it was made was only a hazard, has been and is being justified by the development of the undertaking."

On motion, the action of Mr. Flexner in lending to the United States Government Mr. Riefler, Mr. Stewart, and Mr. Warren of the School of Economics and Politics during the period of emergency was ratified.

Mr. Flexner stated that Professor Mitran, a Rumanian by birth, a naturalized English citizen, had taken out his first papers in the United States, and that he was in England when the war broke out. He is thoroughly acquainted with the Balkans, had been foreign editor of the Manchester Guardian for many years, and his detailed knowledge of European conditions enables him to render

a real service to civilization. He has been drafted by the English Government and requests a leave of absence for the first term of 1939-1940 until the situation clarifies itself. Mr. Flexner recommended favorable action, whereupon, on motion, Professor Mitrany was granted leave of absence for the first term of 1939-1940.

Mr. Flexner stated that Miss Lavinia Bamberger, the sister of Mr. Bamberger and Mrs. Fuld, had presented to the Institute plaques of Mr. Bamberger, Mrs. Fuld, and Mr. Fuld.

On motion, Mr. Flexner was authorized to convey to Miss Bamberger the hearty thanks of the Trustees.

Mr. Flexner reported that a group of gentlemen consisting of Judge Irving Lehman of the New York Court of Appeals, Chancellor Harry Woodburn Chase of New York University, and others wished to present to the Institute a bronze bust of Professor Einstein.

On motion, Mr. Flexner was authorized to make suitable arrangements for the presentation, the Committee on Buildings and Grounds determining the location of the bust in the library.

Similar action was taken in respect to the gift of the bronze bust of Mr. Flexner to the Institute by his wife.

Mr. Flexner stated that a safe and cabinets, not taken care of by the building fund, were needed, that on September 21, 1939, Mr. Bamberger had authorized him to make the necessary purchase amounting to more than \$900.00 with the request that it be ratified at the October meeting of the Board. Thereupon, on motion, the action was endorsed.

There being no further business, on motion, the meeting adjourned.