

JOHN WINTHROP HOUSE
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
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Jan. 21

East Sandwich,
Mass.

Dear Flexner,

Thank you so much for your letter, and for so kindly telling me about your plans.

I am delighted that what has been going on in my mind so closely fits into your own trend of thought. The reference in my previous letter to Hobhouse will of itself suggest that I agree with the need for an all-round approach, social rather than technical, to economics. Our present difficulties are not due to technical obstacles, but to a conflict of social ideals. And our egalitarian outlook, our intricate economic interdependence, and the scale of our economic activities - they all present a combination of conditions without parallel in human history. Our picture of society therefore needs re-thinking all over and freshly again; and that can be done intelligently only by such a literal putting together of heads as you contemplate.

As you mention Frankfurter, I may say that I showed him my memorandum, before sending it to you, because it was written under some personal difficulties and I wanted his keen and candid mind to discover any bad holes there may have been in the argument. After some general comments, he wrote: "Your 'Notes' really excited me. I am sending them back, but I should like to have a copy for further reading and reflection. You have put the knife deep below the surface. With the program for your inquiry and the thought which you outline, I not only do not quarrel; I find myself heartily in accord." One may presume therefore that he would fully appreciate your standpoint.

I should greatly welcome an opportunity to talk with you of all this. I am not going to Princeton until March 20. (I confess not to have connected their friendly invitation with the Institute. They mentioned your name, and I hope I thanked you for your intercession, as I meant to do; but as they want me to speak on topical matters, somehow my mind failed to make an association between such a lecture and the Institute.) My course resumes on February 6, and I intend staying here until the 4th. So I could come any time between now and then, and most conveniently for me on February 4th, before I return to Cambridge. Would you tell me whether this would be agreeable to you, or whether you would prefer that I came before that date?

Always yours sincerely

J. Winthrop

January 17, 1933

My dear Mitranj:

You may have guessed from the fact that you have been asked to come to Princeton that I am approaching the making a start in the field of economics and government or political theory. This winter I have devoted myself to mathematics, and I hope that before the winter is over I shall have the mathematical group in shape so that I can turn my attention to another field.

I have chosen economics in a very broad sense and in it I should like to include precisely the kind of study which you briefly outline in your memorandum. I should like also to have the so-called economic group contain a lawyer like Frankfurter and a historian so that economics could be viewed not as a separate science concerned with exchange or transportation or profit or loss but as one factor in the organization of society. I know of no one who would fit into such a group more adequately than would you and, if, as I hope I can, I devote my attention next to forming a nucleus in this field, I should, I think, without doubt want you to be associated with it. Is this enough for the next few weeks? I should like your critical reaction to the scheme as I have outlined it above, and I should like also to talk with you about it and your possible relation to it on your way to or from Princeton or earlier.

I should have moved more rapidly but for the fact that Anne has been

unwell and that I have myself had this miserable neuritis which has diminished for the time being my working power, also I have been handling a couple of very temperamental mathematicians, who, however, are now, I think, off my shoulders. Of course, the financial situation has led me to proceed more slowly than I otherwise would, but our funds are fortunately thus far intact and our income has been but slightly affected, though it is from the American point of view a modest sum.

This morning comes your note which crossed mine to East Sandwich. The Princeton people have been marvelous. I did not know that there was in America or indeed anywhere else an academic group so wedded to the promotion of knowledge as to be willing to make great sacrifices in order that this new scheme might succeed. I suspect that the Harvard Society of Fellows has been conceived more or less under the influence of what the Institute for Advanced Study is trying to do, and I wish it well. Things of this kind are rarely thought out thoroughly in America. We leave too much to impulse or competition or mere motion. That by the way is another reason for my slow mental functioning.

I hope that Ena continues to improve. Anne is much better and will be returning next week. My arm has also improved. There is a good time coming yet.

Ever sincerely,

Dr. David Mitrany
East Sandwich
Massachusetts

ABRAHAM FLEXNER

AF;ESB