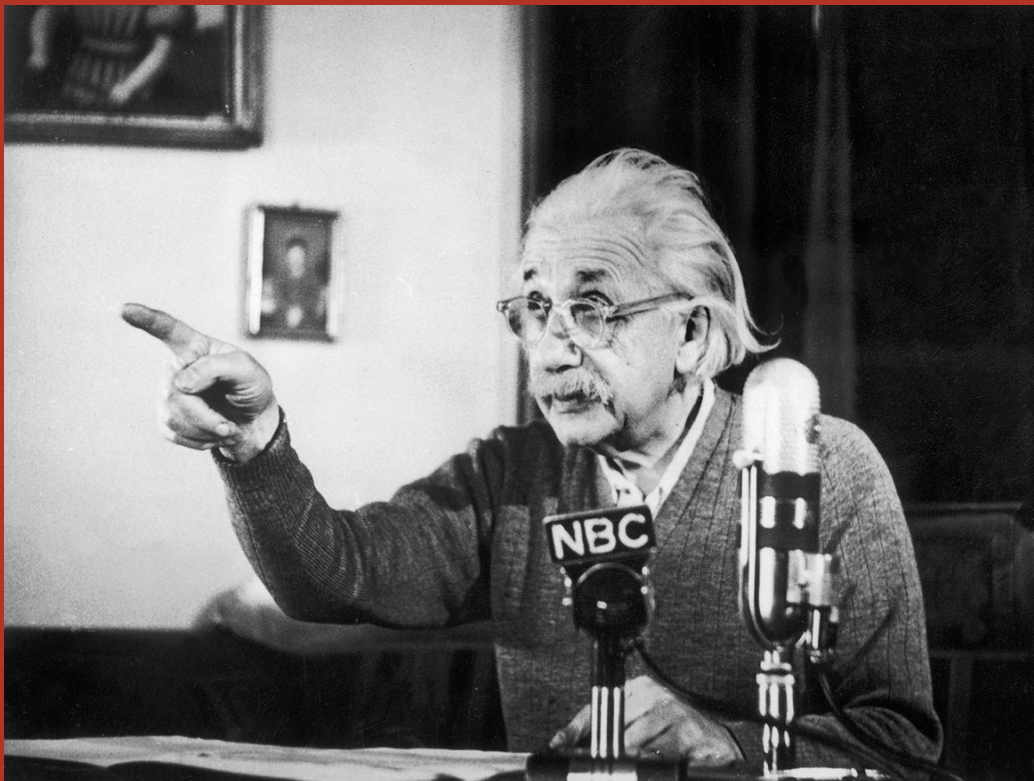


# A REFUGE FOR SCHOLARS

*Present Challenges in Historical Perspective*



INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY  
HISTORY WORKING GROUP

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*The three articles reproduced here, originally published in the Spring 2017 issue of the Institute Letter, were written by a Member-organized History Working Group that mobilized in response to the January 27, 2017, executive order initially banning travel and immigration from seven predominantly Muslim countries. The History Working Group articles were authored by Fadi Bardawil, Member in the School of Social Science; Thomas Dodman, Member in the School of Historical Studies; Ian Jauslin, Member in the School of Mathematics; Pascal Marichalar, Visitor in the School of Social Science; Klaus Oschema, Gerda Henkel Stiftung Member in the School of Historical Studies; and Peter Redfield, Member in the School of Social Science. The authors acknowledge the help and past work of Josie Faass, Director of Academic Affairs; Peter Goddard, Professor Emeritus in the School of Natural Sciences and past Director of the Institute; Erica Mosner, Archival Assistant; Amy Ramsey, Associate Content Editor; Kelly Devine Thomas, Editorial Director; María Tuya, Digital Scholarship Software Support Specialist; Marcia Tucker, Librarian, Historical Studies and Social Science; and Karen Uhlenbeck, Visitor in the School of Mathematics and Professor and Sid W. Richardson Regents Chairholder at the University of Texas at Austin. Peter Goddard wrote the Introduction.*

**This booklet, and the individual documents reproduced in it, are available online in PDF format from the Shelby White and Leon Levy Archives Center, Institute for Advanced Study, at:**

<https://library.ias.edu/refuge>

# INTRODUCTION

## A House of Refuge

Moments of conception are, perhaps, necessarily contingent and precarious. Certainly, it was so in the case of the Institute for Advanced Study, for its founders, Louis Bamberger and his sister, Caroline Bamberger Fuld, had other plans when they sent their representatives to Abraham Flexner to ask for advice on how to found a medical school. And, it was only by fortunate timing that the Bambergers had retained the resources to enable them to devote \$5 million to the project, because they had sold their business to Macy's for \$11 million in cash, as well as some of Macy's stock, shortly before the Great Crash of 1929.

But the seed Flexner planted in their minds was not for a school to train physicians; rather, it was set to germinate into his own dream, a new type of institution: an institute for advanced study. Others had also been dreaming such dreams. In the dark days before the end of the First World War, the Norwegian-American economist Thorstein Veblen proposed in his influential book *The Higher Learning in America* that, in order to reestablish international communication between academics after the conflict, an institution should be established in the United States, where scientists and scholars of all nations might come to work together. He referred to this institution as a house of refuge and entertainment, a nice term for the Institute, which, from its earliest days, has provided its Faculty and Members with a refuge from the pressures of the contemporary university, and entertainment in the sense of academic diversion as well as lodging and hospitality.

The Bambergers made it clear from the start that discrimination on the basis of race, religion, or gender was to have no place at the Institute. In their invitation letter to the first Board of Trustees, they wrote on June 4, 1930, "We feel strongly that the spirit characteristic of America at its noblest, above all the pursuit of higher learning, cannot admit of any conditions as to personnel other than those designed to promote the objects for which this institution is established, and particularly with no regard whatever to accidents of race, creed, or sex." And they stipulated that this applied to the Institute's staff as much as to its Faculty and Members.

The Institute was born just as the Great Depression was deepening and fascist regimes were spreading through parts of Europe. Its early development continued through the Second World War, the beginning of the Cold War, and the McCarthy era in the United States. These events could not fail to have a major impact on the Institute and provide it with challenges, both ethical and operational, but also with opportunities both for constructive responses and for its own development. Indeed, in important ways they shaped the Institute and its ethos.

In 2017, the Institute again found itself in uncertain times, with what might be dark clouds on the horizon. The presidential executive order, issued on January 27, banning travel and immigration into the United States from seven predominantly Muslim countries, generated great concern and discussion among the Institute community. One reaction of the community was to try to understand current developments, and the responses that the Institute could make to them, in the context of the challenges that the Institute had faced in the past and what it had been able to do to address them. Members from various Schools formed themselves into a **History Working Group** that produced three articles published in the *Institute Letter*, which are now reprinted here.

The first of these articles discusses how the ethos of the Institute was shaped at its foundation. In the three years of gestation, from the Bambergers' announcement of the founding of the Institute for Advanced Study to its coming into being in the fall of 1933, Flexner considered carefully how he should realize his dream. Although, in large part, his motivation was to address the deficiencies he perceived in the American higher education system, confused as to purpose both in the provision of undergraduate education and in commitment to fundamental research, Flexner's perspectives were international, shaped by European models, particularly the development of the modern research university in Germany. When he set out his first thoughts for the Institute's Trustees in December 1930, he said that he would explore "this country and the cultural countries of Western Europe" for "the talent likely to carry the Institute to success."

The first two professors he signed up for the new Faculty in 1932 were Albert Einstein and Oswald Veblen, a mathematician at Princeton University and the nephew of Thorstein. Einstein, of course, had felt impelled to leave Germany by the rise of Nazism. When he and his wife arrived in the United States in October 1933 to take up his post at the Institute, Flexner arranged for them to be taken off the SS *Westerland* quietly before it reached New York harbor, partly for security reasons.

Like his uncle, the younger Veblen had also been thinking about the need for research institutes, and, as early as 1923, he had written to Abraham Flexner's brother, Simon, the founding director of the Rockefeller Institute (now Rockefeller University) to seek his backing; Simon had referred him to Abraham. Veblen had already played a major role in the development of mathematical training both in Princeton and nationally. Even before he was appointed to its Faculty, he was providing guidance on the development of the School of Mathematics, as the Institute's first School, to Flexner, who confessed that "mathematicians, like cows in the dark, all look alike to me." Given two such strong-willed and visionary individuals as Flexner and Veblen, tensions were inevitable, and, indeed, they persisted strongly on a number of issues until Flexner stepped down as Director in 1939.

**The Institute's Founding Ethos in Our Precarious Present**, with which this booklet begins, describes the interactions between Flexner and Veblen as a stream of academic refugees from Europe developed just when the Institute was about to open in 1933. Flexner found a conflict between the need to give assistance and find openings for displaced scholars, on the one hand, and one of his primary purposes, to use the Institute's resources to provide opportunities for the development of young American academics, on the other. With Veblen's urging, Flexner gradually became more active in aiding those seeking to leave Europe, and, to an extent, the Institute became a house of refuge in a more literal sense than Thorstein Veblen had foreseen.

Among the many distinguished scientists forced out of Germany in the early 1930s was Emmy Noether, whose seminal work in algebra and theoretical physics had already secured her a permanent place in the history of mathematics. The second article, **Emmy Noether's Paradise**, explains how Veblen helped secure her position at Bryn Mawr and how she was invited to give one of the first lecture series at the Institute, before her tragically early death in April 1935.

After Noether's death, Albert Einstein wrote to the *New York Times* to extol the achievements of his fellow refugee. Following the First World War, in what was then hoped to be the dawn of an age of scientific optimism, Einstein had become a world-famous cultural icon, renowned for demonstrating the power of abstract thought to master the physical universe. With the events of 1933, he became as well the epitome of the displaced intellectual, the academic refugee, and he was very willing to exploit his fame and status in support of others, of all stations, fleeing oppression and tyranny.

For the last two decades of his life, which he spent at the Institute, Einstein continued to speak out in support of the liberal causes he believed in and against the suppression of freedom of thought and speech. The third article reproduced here, **Einstein, Plumbers, and McCarthyism**, recounts how, in the two years before his death, Einstein took a very public stand against McCarthyism, supporting its victims, withstanding vilification from McCarthy himself, and attacking practices "which have become incomprehensible to the rest of civilized mankind and exposed our country to ridicule."

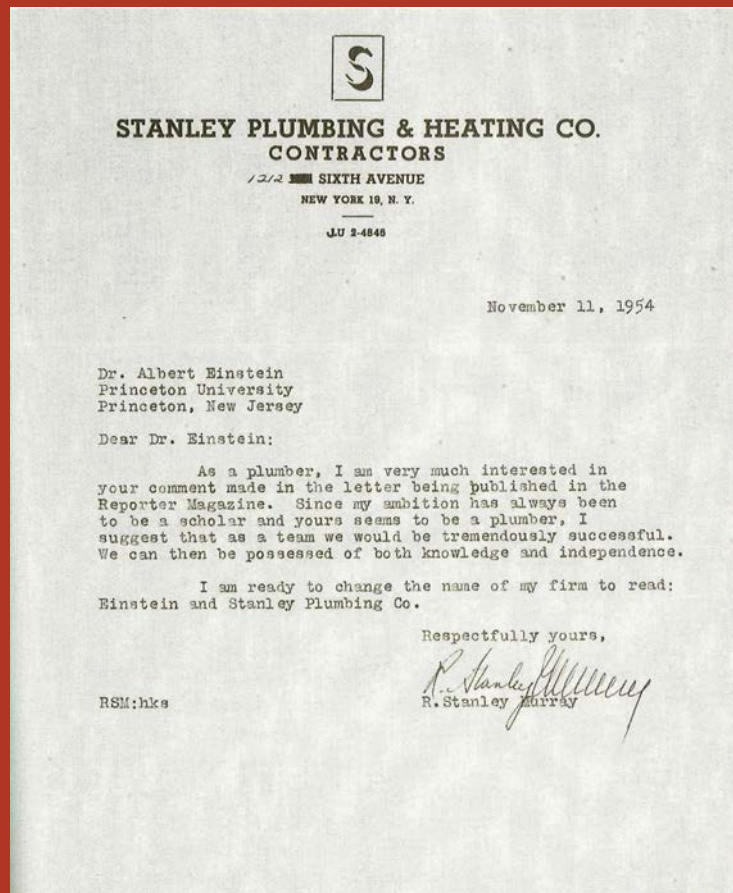
To accompany the three articles, the **History Working Group** produced an exhibit, **A Scholar's Paradise, in the World**, which illustrates, largely through correspondence drawn from the Institute's archives, how the rapidly deteriorating situation in Europe as the Institute began its work influenced its plans for recruitment of Faculty and Members and motivated it to provide assistance to displaced scholars; how later Einstein campaigned for intellectual freedom during McCarthyism; and how Albert Hirschman, who had fled to the United States from Vichy France in 1941 after helping many to escape before him, joined the Faculty of the fledgling School of Social Science in 1974 and brought many scholars to the Institute who had suffered under authoritarian regimes in South America.

The Institute remains faithful to the mission of disinterested research into fundamental problems, set by its founders, and to the defense of truth and the integrity of knowledge, and it is still committed to selecting its Faculty and Members on the basis of ability and achievements alone. As a consequence, it has retained and enhanced the international character present from its earliest years with an increasingly diverse academic community drawn each year from all over world, the majority coming from outside the United States. It was natural, therefore, that the Institute condemned the executive order as being contrary to the values of the international community to which we belong, asserting again its commitment to the proposition that no distinction—geographical, political, or religious—must be made among those who work for the advancement of the sciences and humanities.





# ARTICLES



Letter from a plumber, Stanley Murray, to Albert Einstein, offering to go into business with him. See page 13.

The Albert Einstein Archives, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

## The Institute's Founding Ethos in Our Precarious Present

On scientific progress, the autonomy of scientific research, and the mobility of researchers

### Sanctuary Rites

The Institute for Advanced Study came into being at the most inauspicious of times. Founded in the early years of the Great Depression, it took shape during the buildup to the Second World War and under the growing shadow of authoritarian regimes. Its first Director Abraham Flexner published his manifesto on the "The Usefulness of Useless Knowledge" in October 1939, barely a month after the outbreak of hostilities in Europe. Surely this was a daunting moment to defend "the fearless and irresponsible thinker" and advocate for the free expression of knowledge and curiosity. The very adversity of the era, however, also created opportunities for the fledgling institution, primarily in the form of sudden availability of renowned and newly mobile scholars from the upper echelons of the German university system. After expressing initial hesitation, Flexner followed the urging of influential faculty members, particularly the mathematician Oswald Veblen, in seeking to provide a haven for some of these new refugees, a sanctuary tradition continued by Director Frank Aydelotte, Flexner's successor. In association with the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars (on which Veblen and Flexner served and whose name initially specified German rather than Foreign Scholars), the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Carnegie Foundation, IAS played a leading role in this farsighted, if ever elite, rescue effort.

We find ourselves today, nearly nine decades after the Institute's founding in 1930, at another inauspicious juncture. Global political forces in power from Turkey to the United States are posing serious threats to the autonomy of scientific research and the mobility of researchers, undercutting two cardinal conditions for scientific progress. Walls, fences, bans, blocks, restrictions, cuts, and expulsions are slowly becoming run-of-the-mill terms for us to navigate in an increasingly precarious political landscape.

Travel restrictions involving pure accidents of birth, documented by passports from flagged countries, have prompted us to revisit today the Institute's history not because we believe that history repeats itself. Rather, we seek to provide the IAS community with sketches of scholarly lives and scientific cultures, interrupted by nationalist forces of exclusion. That these lives and cultures managed to reconstitute themselves and enrich our common human heritage is thanks only to efforts to provide them with sanctuary.

### The Conversion of Abraham Flexner

At the end of January 1933, Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany. Over the next two months, the Nazi Party moved quickly to consolidate its power, expanding executive authority through emergency decrees following the Reichstag fire and swiftly moving into a formal dictatorship. An edict in April initiated a purge of civil servants who were of non-Aryan descent or exhibited suspect political sentiments. This law directly impacted German universities, and it had a particularly strong effect in the fields of mathematics and natural sciences, where Jews had enjoyed better prospects of pursuing a scholarly career. As a consequence, many of the country's strongest intellectual centers lost leading figures in the space of just a few months, including the renowned Mathematical Institute at the University of Göttingen, home of David Hilbert, Richard Courant, Hermann Weyl, and Emmy Noether. This upheaval produced a sudden wave of refugee scholars seeking to emigrate and desperate to find positions elsewhere. It also coincided with the transition of IAS from a concept to an embodied institution, through the founding of the inaugural School of Mathematics.

The crisis of refugee scholars presented Flexner and Veblen with a challenging opportunity. The Institute had already pulled an extraordinary coup in recruiting Albert Einstein and John von Neumann shortly before Hitler's coming to power. But how far should they continue in recruiting additional émigrés? Flexner initially expressed ambivalence on the topic, torn between a desire to live up to founding ideals and concern over the need to support and foster local talent. As he wrote to Veblen on March 27, 1933: "Mr. Bamberger and Mrs. Fuld were very anxious from the outset that no distinction should be made as respects race, religion, nationality, etc., and of course I am in thorough sympathy with their point of view, but on the other hand if we do not develop America, who is going to do it, and the question arises how much we ought to do for others and how much to make sure that civilization in America advances." On May 2, again responding to Veblen, he expanded on the same theme:

We are certainly in the devil of a fix. Unable to care for our own younger men, we are pressed by applications from foreign countries. It seems to me

clear that we must in the first place endeavor to find work for those whom we have encouraged to train themselves in this country on the theory that, if they were worthy, there would be jobs waiting for them. Until we have done that, what else can we do? Our opportunities for making places for foreigners are therefore at the moment limited to a few outstanding personages such as Einstein and Weyl . . .

For his part, Veblen pressed for a more active stance, not only advocating that the Institute do all it could, but also endorsing the establishment of a formal network to provide assistance to scholars in need. As he wrote to Flexner on May 5:

Some kind of a committee to raise funds for the purpose of enabling some of them to live and continue their scholarly work in the countries adjacent to Germany or elsewhere might be feasible. The existence of such a committee would in itself be an eloquent protest.

That same month, the Institute of International Education in New York City set up an Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced German Scholars (later renamed to include all Foreign Scholars), headed by Edward R. Murrow, to assist scholars fleeing Europe. Veblen would join its board soon thereafter.

Over the course of the ensuing years, Flexner would undergo a conversion, becoming more deeply involved in assistance projects—he followed Veblen into the Emergency Committee—and increasingly willing to mobilize the Institute to this effect. In a 1938 letter to George Birkhoff at Harvard, he insisted that national origin should never stand in the way of higher goals:

Let us keep firmly in front of our eyes our real goal, namely the development of mathematics, not American mathematics or any other specific brand of mathematics, just simply mathematics. It can be developed only by having first-rate men in important posts, and every time an institution gets one first-rate man he creates opportunities for other first-rate men, and every such center that is developed stimulates some other institution to do likewise. Hitler has played into our hands and is still doing it like the mad man that he is. I am sorry for Germany. I am glad for the United States. I will undertake to get a position within a reasonable time for any really first-rate American mathematician, and I will also undertake simultaneously to do the same for any first-rate foreign mathematician whom Hitler may dismiss. The more the merrier.

In his Director's Report the following spring, Flexner even cast the matter as heralding a seismic change in the geography of knowledge:

We are living in an epoch-making time. The center of human culture is being shifted under our very eyes. Once it had its home in Athens. A few centuries later it had its home in Italy, a few centuries later in Paris, and thereafter also in Great Britain and Germany. It is now being unmistakably shifted to the United States. The scholars of Europe are refugees driven out of their own countries sometimes for political or religious reasons and sometimes because they are too unhappy and too distracted to pursue the work to which they are giving their lives. They have come to the Institute or have corresponded with the Institute literally by the hundreds. We cannot, of course, undertake either to give them places or to find them places, though we have done something substantial under both heads. Fifty years from now the historian looking backward will, if we act with courage and imagination, report that during our time the center of gravity in scholarship moved across the Atlantic Ocean to the United States. It is a grave responsibility which is thus being thrust upon us all.

From a vantage point almost eighty years later, Flexner's claim seems more prophetic than hyperbolic. Although the transference in scientific work away from German and toward global English may have begun earlier, the center of gravity clearly shifted in the second half of the twentieth century. Germany's leading share of Nobel Prizes plummeted after the war, even as the number of American laureates soared (one third of whom were foreign born).

#### **“A Wall of Bureaucratic Measures”**

The actual process of reaching the United States was far from simple for most would-be immigrants, who had to navigate not just an ocean, but also a maze of paperwork to obtain the requisite permission to exit and enter. To assist them, Flexner and Aydelotte used their extensive contacts and pulled strings as much as possible. When the mathematical logician Kurt Gödel found himself unable to leave Vienna in October 1939, Flexner contacted the chief of the visa division at the Department of State to plead on his behalf. Although Gödel had been legally admitted as a permanent resident earlier in the 1930s, he had returned to the annexed country that used to be Austria, and was facing difficulty getting authorization to return to the United States. “Is there anything that the State Department or the Consul

General can do,” Flexner asked, “to suggest some helpful method of procedure?” The American authorities answered that the problem seemed to be with German authorities, and so Flexner's successor Aydelotte contacted the German embassy in Washington, D.C. Eventually Gödel and his wife Adele were permitted to leave. By German directive they traveled east instead of west, avoiding British surveillance of the Atlantic by crossing Siberia and eventually getting to Japan in 1940, where they found a boat to San Francisco.

Even after refugees succeeded in reaching the United States, they needed to stay bureaucratically alert, and often required assistance. Under the Alien Registration Act of 1940, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service collected fingerprints and required noncitizens to record all changes of address. Even local travel could necessitate permission, such that Gödel, once finally settled in Princeton, had to request permission to travel with his wife to visit a doctor in New York City in January 1942. They always went by train, Gödel assured the U.S. Attorney, and returned on the same day. Three weeks later, Aydelotte's secretary sent a follow-up plea, noting, “If you could grant them this permission promptly it would be a great relief to them and would be very much appreciated.”

The IAS faced other hurdles in its attempts to assist refugee scholars, including the criteria established by the very bodies seeking to provide aid. The case of Ernst Kapp illustrates the poignant complications involved. In 1937, Kapp, an eminent classicist, lost his position in Hamburg due to his liberal beliefs and his wife's classification as “non-Aryan.” Already in England for a visit to Oxford, Kapp managed to get himself to New York by 1939, and began desperately seeking a position. At IAS, the art historian Erwin Panofsky and Aydelotte sought to assist him, contacting possible means of support. After extensive efforts Kapp managed to find an instructorship at the H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College for women at Tulane University in New Orleans, but it only paid \$750 a year, not the \$2,000 required to receive the necessary visa. The Oberlaender Trust offered an additional \$650, and Panofsky wrote to the Emergency Committee to plead for the remainder. This last-minute success only brought a year's reprieve, and more than two hundred applications later he still had nothing; classicists were not in demand. Moreover, he fell between categories for assistance. As Aydelotte discovered when trying to assist him, the New School's University in Exile had no room for

scholars who were already in the United States. Kapp returned to New York for a temporary editing project. At the end of 1940, Aydelotte noted that despite potential support from the Emergency Committee and others, scholars were lost without an institutional home:

All that Kapp needs is an appointment with some institution, so that the institution can make a request for these contributions. In addition, I think some of Kapp's friends would, if necessary, put up small sums such as they could afford (from \$10 to \$25 a month each) to ensure a modest livelihood for him. Kapp is not eligible for Dr. Alvin Johnson's scheme because he is already in this country. The fact is that if he does not get some help he will not be here long, for he is likely to starve to death. He is at the moment down almost to his last dollar.

Again, Kapp found last-minute rescue in the form of an unorthodox appointment at Columbia, partly subvented by the Emergency Committee.

The Institute's most famous scholar in exile, Albert Einstein, underscored the unending hassles that hindered attempts to welcome foreign scholars in a letter he wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt on July 26, 1941:

A policy is now being pursued in the State Department which makes it all but impossible to give refuge in America to many worthy persons who are the victims of Fascist cruelty in Europe. Of course, this is not openly avowed by those responsible for it. The method which is being used, however, is to make immigration impossible by erecting a wall of bureaucratic measures alleged to be necessary to protect America against subversive, dangerous, elements.

#### **A Call for Vigilance**

As we immersed ourselves in the thicket of correspondence at the heart of the Institute's archives, the sense of urgency expressed by scholars like Flexner, Veblen, Aydelotte, Einstein, Kapp, and Noether resonated deeply. Their notes and exchanges, not to mention the Emergency Committee that Flexner and Veblen served on, had an unsettling contemporary ring to them. This part of the Institute's history testifies to the individual courage of these men and women who extended a helping hand and built institutional networks to provide sanctuary for displaced refugees. In doing so, they overcame the nationalist siege-mentality that sees foreigners, whether they are mathematicians or fruit pickers, as a threat to be warded off. An unintended conse



quence of their acts was the shifting of the center of intellectual research from Germany to the United States, enriching the country that gave them refuge. Their individual initiatives and collective institution-building endeavors provide us with much-needed exemplars of moral fortitude.

It only took a few months and one edict purging civil servants of non-Aryan descent or exhibiting suspect political sentiments in April 1933 to drain the German university of many of its brightest minds and its intellectual vigor. Of course, the contemporary political situation in the United States remains far from this extreme case. Nonetheless, knowledge of this history should serve as a call for vigilance in the face of policies such as travel bans and immigrant deportations, as well as attempts to curb scientific inquiry and cut funding to arts and humanities endowments that now threaten the autonomy of research and the pursuit of a dignified human life. Unfortunately, history suggests it takes much less time to destroy than to build. As it did in the 1930s, the Institute can play a leading symbolic role in our contemporary predicament.

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## Emmy Noether's Paradise

How IAS helped support the first female professor in Germany when she became a displaced refugee

To Albert Einstein, she was "the most significant creative mathematical genius thus far produced since the higher education of women began." More straightforward in his praise, Einstein's fellow Professor at the Institute for Advanced Study, Hermann Weyl, called her a "great woman mathematician [... indeed] the greatest that history has known." It was April 1935, and Einstein and Weyl were each paying tribute to a recently deceased colleague who had, like them, fled Nazi persecution across the Atlantic only two years earlier. Her name was Emmy Noether, and her short but remarkable life left an indelible mark not only on the history of mathematics, but also on that of IAS in its critical first years.

### A Woman in Göttingen

Amalie Emmy Noether was born in 1882 into an affluent family from the Bavarian town of Erlangen. She followed her father's footsteps to study mathematics at the University of Erlangen and, in 1907, she became the second woman to obtain a Ph.D. in mathematics from a German university. A female maverick in a man's world, Noether taught for several years without pay before being invited, in 1915, to join the University of Göttingen, home to the most prestigious mathematics department in the world at the time. She lectured for other professors and was only allowed to pass her habilitation following the collapse of the *Kaiserreich* and sweeping university reforms in 1919. Noether became an adjunct professor in 1922—the first female professor in Germany—but only started receiving a modest compensation for her teaching the following year. Despite international recognition, she never obtained a permanent position in Göttingen, and her situation took a turn for the worst with the rise to power of the Nazi party. In 1932, she was denounced by a neighbor as a "Marxist Jewess" and had to leave her apartment. The following year, she was removed from all teaching duties at the university and was eventually forced to flee Germany like many other purged academics. Thanks to the intervention of the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced German Scholars (set up in 1933 by the Institute for International Education in New York City) Noether was able to take a temporary position at Bryn Mawr College. Once in Pennsylvania, she reconnected with her former Göttingen colleague Weyl, himself freshly recruited to the Institute for Advanced Study by its first Director Abraham Flexner and resident Professors Oswald Veblen and Einstein.

### A Most Significant Creative Mathematical Genius

It was during her years in Göttingen that Emmy Noether developed an international reputation as a formidable mathematician. She made seminal contributions to the field of "abstract algebra," where she identified a simple, yet elegant, property of number systems, which proved instrumental in the study of arithmetic and geometric phenomena such as prime decomposition and dimension. Noether brought similar clarity to her pioneering research in physics, where she understood the relationship between symmetries of the laws of nature and the notion of "conservation laws." As an illustration, consider the "principle of energy conservation," a paradigmatic conservation law, which states that the total "energy" of an isolated system cannot change. When a car accelerates, for instance, its energy increases, implying that it must have drawn energy from somewhere, according to the principle of energy conservation (in this case, from burning gasoline). On the other hand, consider "time-translation invariance," a fundamental symmetry of the laws of nature, which states that an experiment performed today would give the same outcome if performed tomorrow: the speed of a free-falling cannonball is the same now as it was in the time of Galileo. Noether was able to connect these two seemingly unrelated concepts: energy conservation comes from time-translation invariance and vice versa. Scientists had long known the connection between energy and time, but Noether was the first to theorize a systematic correspondence: symmetries and conservation laws are related, *in general*. The idea arose out of a debate between David Hilbert, Felix Klein, and Albert Einstein over the notion of energy in Einstein's recently formulated general theory of relativity. Noether's theorem not only laid this controversy to rest, but, due to its striking generality, has been widely used in many other fields of physics, perhaps most notably in the study of elementary particles.

### Rethinking the Scholar's Paradise in the 1930s

Emmy Noether was thus already a household name among mathematicians when Veblen approached Flexner about supporting her in the United States. Their personal correspondence reveals how the Institute was forced to reconsider its mission in the face of unprecedented assaults on scholars in Europe. Noether's position at Bryn Mawr was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation (as part of their \$1.5 million aid package

for displaced scholars) but was only temporary. At Veblen's invitation, she began giving weekly lectures at the Institute as a Visitor in the School of Mathematics, where she joined the first cohort of IAS Members. Noether was happy to be at the Institute—and not at Princeton's "men's university, where nothing female is admitted," as she once said—but she didn't receive any honorariums for her lectures, unlike seventeen other occasional visiting lecturers, all male, who spoke at the Institute throughout the 1930s. On the other hand, Veblen did request a "small grant-in-aid," to help keep her at Bryn Mawr through 1935 and 1936, on the grounds of "Miss Noether's unique position in the world as the only woman mathematician of the first rank." Flexner was sympathetic to Noether's plight, but worried about the Institute overcommitting, and he repeatedly encouraged Veblen to view the question as an administrator (a crucial step, in his opinion, in establishing a credible system of faculty governance). Flexner wondered what such a short-term commitment could achieve and expressed concern at the Institute doing any more than what it already had for German scholars, as it needed to be "careful not to create the impression that [it was] overlooking Americans in order to help these unfortunate foreigners." Sidestepping the thorny issue of nationality, Veblen was eventually able to secure a \$1,500 grant and continued soliciting larger donations for a "permanent commitment on the part of the Institute." As he put it, Noether was not merely unique as a "woman mathematician," she offered the Institute an opportunity to capitalize on the brain-drain from Göttingen by supporting "one of the most important scientists" displaced by the events in Germany.

Assisting endangered scholars presented, in other words, as many opportunities as it entailed risks and burdens for the newly established IAS. Flexner himself came around to seeing this, albeit only after Noether's untimely death on April 14, 1935. No doubt inspired by Weyl's and Einstein's stirring obituaries, he invoked her memory in a lecture on "The Usefulness of Useless Knowledge"—an idea he had long pursued and would, two years later, publish as his famous article in *Harper's* magazine—that he gave at Bryn Mawr on June 2, 1937. Noether, he had come to believe, "was driven from Göttingen for no better reason than that she was a Jewess." Bryn Mawr had "welcomed her with open arms," as many other institutions had done for other scholars at risk across the country. "This is civilization," Flexner concluded, "this is culture. . . . a country like America, of which only a small fraction has been culturally developed, can only

be enriched by the folly which drives great thinkers, novelists, dramatists, and poets out of the Old World to make a fresh start in the New." Flexner's words ring loud today, as a reminder of how the Institute found a new *raison d'être* in challenging times, and as an admonition of how fragile and contingent "scholars' paradises" such as the IAS, or Göttingen before it, can be.

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## Einstein, Plumbers, and McCarthyism

Einstein's response to a political climate increasingly hostile to scientists and teachers

In November 1954, Albert Einstein wrote a letter to a magazine in which he declared that, were he a young man again, he would not try to become a scientist: "I would rather choose to be a plumber or a peddler in the hope to find that modest degree of independence still available under present circumstances." Around the United States, plumbers responded. The famous physicist was offered membership in the Chicago plumbers union, and Stanley Murray, a New York plumber, wrote to him: "Since my ambition has always been to be a scholar and yours seems to be a plumber, I suggest that as a team we would be tremendously successful. We can then be possessed by both knowledge and independence. I am ready to change the name of my firm to read: Einstein and Stanley Plumbing Co."

Einstein was only half-joking, however, when he issued his statement. The physicist sincerely considered that the political climate in the country was becoming increasingly hostile to scientists and teachers. Our own troubled times have many aspects in common with the dreadful period of the McCarthy investigations: the attacks on the freedom of academics, teachers, and the press, the silencing and censorship of government workers, the idea that the United States is threatened by certain creeds. It is worth describing the dire sequence of past events, and learning from Einstein's clairvoyant and courageous response to them, in order to best address the present situation.

### A Campaign of Untruth

On February 9, 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy from Wisconsin announced that he had a list of 205 workers of the State Department who were members of the Communist Party. The next day, a journalist asked to see the list. But McCarthy could not find it; his explanation was that he had left it in another suit. The Senate committee that was created to investigate these claims concluded a few months later that McCarthy's accusations represented "perhaps the most nefarious campaign of half-truths and untruth in the history of this republic." Historians are now sure there never was such a list.

Nevertheless, at the time, mainstream Republicans ignored the findings of the Senate committee. They saw McCarthy's tactics as something that would help them take control of the White House, after a sixteen-year absence. They invited him to meetings where he ranted about the "plot" at the highest levels of government. McCarthy's staff also circulated a doctored photograph, purportedly showing the leader of the Senate committee

in close conversation with leaders of the Communist Party.

The 1952 elections were a great success for the Republicans, who gained control of the White House, the House of Representatives, and the Senate. Senator McCarthy's power was unchecked. During a speech on the Senate floor, he piled hundreds of documents on a table, claiming they contained evidence of the infiltration. No one was permitted to examine them. McCarthy was nominated Chair of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, and he extended the loyalty inquisition to many sectors, foremost among them, the nation's educational system. As a former president of the University of Chicago noted, "The entire teaching profession of the U.S. is now intimidated."

### Teachers at Risk

William Frauenglass, a teacher in a Brooklyn high school, was called before the Senate subcommittee in April 1953. In his case, the accusation of disloyalty stemmed from a course he had given six years before, in a session for other teachers organized by the Board of Education. It was called Techniques of Intercultural Teaching, and it reviewed methods to "help ease intercultural or interracial tensions" in the classroom. One witness called upon by the committee declared that such teachings were "against the interests of the United States." Frauenglass was shocked: "Imagine such an accusation when one of the fundamental objectives of public education is the creation of intercultural understanding among our many minorities!" he wrote in a later letter. The teacher was also asked which organizations he belonged to, and he refused to answer.

Frauenglass needed help and decided to ask it from someone he greatly respected, who had recently described himself as an "incorrigible nonconformist": Albert Einstein, Professor of Theoretical Physics at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, undoubtedly the most famous scientist in the world, and also a notorious antiracist and antiwar activist. "A statement from you would be most helpful in rallying educators and the public to meet this new obscurantist attack," Frauenglass wrote. Einstein obliged. His May 16, 1953, letter of reply—which, he specified, "need not be considered confidential"—was quoted extensively by the *New York Times*:

The reactionary politicians have managed to instill suspicion of all intellectual efforts into the public by dangling before their eyes a danger from without. Having succeeded so far, they are now proceeding to suppress the freedom of teaching



and to deprive of their positions all those who do not prove submissive, i.e., to starve them.

Einstein strongly advised the teacher to refuse to testify any longer. He should be prepared, Einstein wrote, “for the sacrifice of his personal welfare in the interest of the cultural welfare of his country.” The physicist added, “This kind of inquisition violates the spirit of the Constitution. If enough people are ready to take this grave step, they will be successful. If not, then the intellectuals of this country deserve nothing better than the slavery which is intended for them.” When Frauenglass and Einstein met in Princeton a few days later, Einstein said he himself was ready to go to jail for these principles. Frauenglass followed his advice. As was foreseen, he was fired from his job, but nevertheless thanked the scientist for a “historic letter”: “Its echoes are still reverberating throughout the world.”

#### The Right to Search for Truth

McCarthy was quick to react to Einstein’s stand. He told the media that whether his “name is Einstein or John Jones,” the giver of such advice was undoubtedly an “enemy of America,” “a disloyal American,” and “not a good American.” But Einstein was in no way deterred. In remarks he made to an assembly of lawyers, he continued to criticize practices “which have become incomprehensible to the rest of civilized mankind and exposed our country to ridicule.” And he warned, “The existence and validity of human rights are not written in the stars.”

Einstein was concerned about the curtailing of academic freedom. In a public statement in March 1954, he advocated for “the right to search for truth and to publish and teach what one holds to be true.” He regretted that in this dark age “freedom of teaching, mutual exchange of opinions, and freedom of press and other media of communication are encroached upon or obstructed,” adding that “this is a state of affairs which a democratic government cannot survive in the long run.”

For some, these statements were proof of Einstein’s disloyalty and continued foreignness—he the German Jew who had been granted American citizenship in 1940. In March 1954, a woman from Los Angeles wrote to the Director of the Institute for Advanced Study: “The man needs lessons in Americanism. I have no patience with this idea that a person who has performed a great deed or discovered something, should be excused from what citizens of U.S.A. must conform to, or that they need not account for questionable acts of theirs.” A man from New York City

put it more bluntly: “I suggest he move to Russia—and soon! We don’t need him.”

The Director of the Institute at the time, Robert Oppenheimer, himself a target of McCarthy’s inquisition, remained steadfast in his support of his famous colleague. Six months later, in December 1954, McCarthy was finally “condemned” by a large majority of his Senate colleagues for “contemptuous” and “reprehensible” conduct. Of course, Einstein’s actions did not by themselves cause McCarthy’s downfall. But they certainly facilitated it, by reaffirming essential principles that date back to the Enlightenment, and by empowering many others to keep up the continuing fight to protect democracy.

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## EXHIBIT

### A Scholar’s Paradise, in the World

In 1930, the Institute for Advanced Study was created as an academic retreat for the pursuit of daring research, unfettered by material constraints. From the beginning, political turmoil around the world interfered with this dream and the Institute’s founders and its first faculty were faced with difficult dilemmas. Their decision to take action in solidarity and to defend fundamental freedoms inaugurated a tradition of involvement with international and domestic affairs. Contrary to initial fears, helping and welcoming academics from around the world secured the Institute’s position as a beacon for science and the humanities. It also taught its founders that scholars’ paradises aren’t eternal, but rather come and go with changing political circumstances. This exhibit traces key moments in this history, focusing on questions of displacement and academic freedom in Europe, the United States, and Latin America from the 1930s to the 1970s.

This exhibit was curated by a Member-organized History Working Group that mobilized in response to the January 27, 2017, executive order banning travel and immigration from seven predominantly Muslim countries, in conjunction with the Shelby White and Leon Levy Archives Center and permanent faculty and staff at the Institute, in particular Erica Mosner and María Tuya.

This exhibit is a companion to the Spring 2017 *Institute Letter*. Except where noted otherwise, all documents presented here come from the IAS Archives.





# Correspondence between Flexner and von Neumann

Budapest, April 24, 1933.

My dear Doctor Flexner!  
Many thanks for your kind letter,  
and for your information. I received  
the Bulletin No. 2. of the Institute  
today, and I agree absolutely with  
your statement, that its objective  
and unpretentious tone is the best  
and soundest way to secure to  
this institution an outstanding place  
in modern public opinion, as it  
deserves it. —

Mr. R. V. ...  
Bulletin the ...  
obliged to ...  
same thing ...  
to send you ...  
the Hungary ...  
"Our century ...  
thing. It is ...  
\*) I wrote Mrs. Bailey ...  
to describe my ...

contains a review of your book on  
"Universities", by Miss D. N. Beer (on pages  
30-32). At the end of this review Vambéry  
asks, whether you maintain your high  
opinion on German universities and  
education — under the present  
conditions? I am sending this paper  
under separate cover. —

The German developments are  
going bad and ~~more~~ worse, the  
papers to day wrote the expulsion  
of 36 university-professors, f.i. 1/2 of  
the Göttingen mathematics and physics  
faculty. Where will this lead, if not  
to the ruin of science in Germany? —

I am very curious about the  
present and future economical develop-  
ments in U.S.A. Is it probable that  
this much discussed "controlled inflation"  
will upset the present price-sys-  
tem? Or is it more likely, that the  
things will run in analogy with

the English devaluation in 1931? —

Please give my wife's best regards to  
Mrs. Flexner as well as to Mrs. Bailey  
and mine too. I am very truly yours

John von Neumann.

May 6, 1933

Dear Professor Von Neumann:

Many thanks for your very kind letter of April 26,  
and may I ask you to thank Doctor Vambéry for the copy of  
his periodical reviewing my book. I shall keep this copy  
until you return in order that you may translate it for me, -  
or are you under the impression that I read Hungarian?

Mrs. Bailey received your note and deposited your  
check at the Princeton Bank & Trust Company. She is likewise  
holding your insurance policy in the Teachers' Insurance and  
Annuity Association of America.

Of course I am in no position to say precisely what  
is contemplated at Washington, but most people here think  
that the President has asked for these extraordinary powers  
because they are safer in his hands than they were in the hands  
of Congress. I do not believe that the dollar will be greatly  
depreciated - perhaps hardly at all. On the other hand, there  
is more uncertainty and concern than we have had at any time  
since the War.

The whole American nation is a unit as respects the  
crazy performances of the German Government. Göttingen has been  
absolutely ruined and the University students must all be mad.

Nothing crazier has happened in human history since the days  
of the French Terror.

We are moving our offices to 20 Nassau Street about  
the middle of the month. Early in July we shall go to our  
summer camp in Canada.

My wife and family are well. I hope you and Mrs.  
Von Neumann are equally so. I rejoice that you are not in Berlin.

With all good wishes,

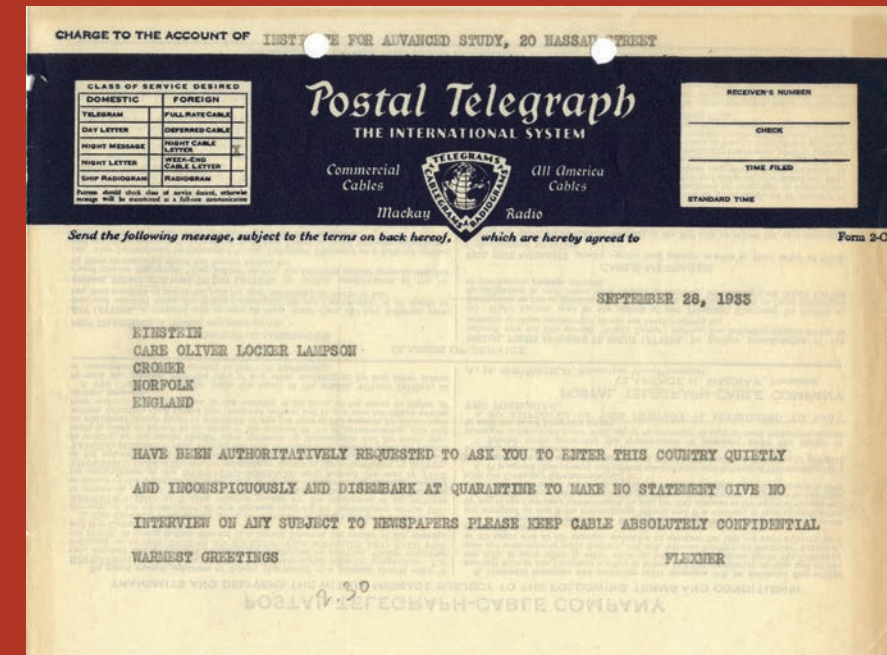
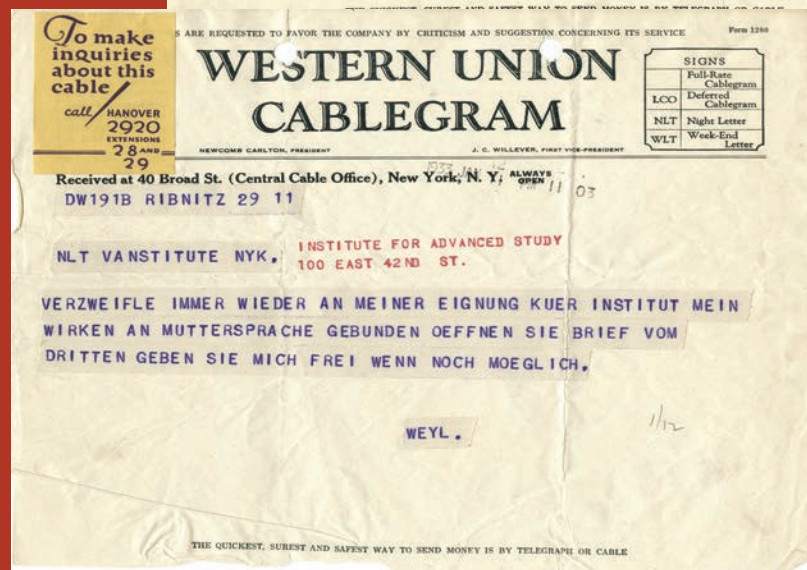
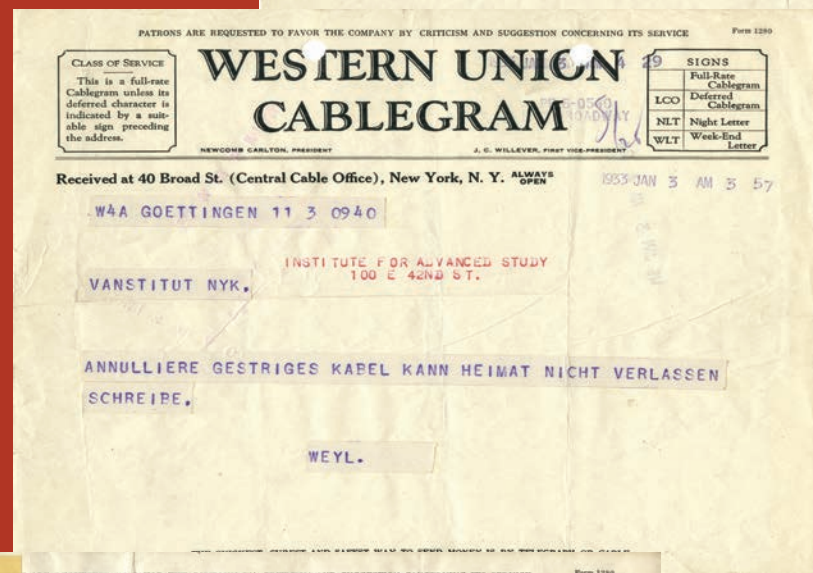
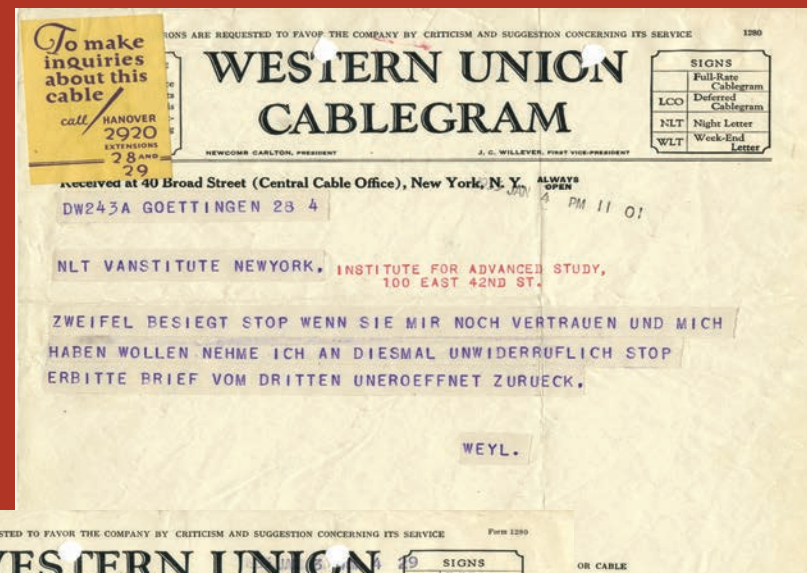
Sincerely yours,

Abraham FLEXNER

The Institute for Advanced Study hired the Hungarian mathematician **John von Neumann** on January 28, 1933. Two days later, Adolf Hitler was elected chancellor of Germany. This correspondence between von Neumann and Institute founding Director **Abraham Flexner** illustrates how the political context was on their minds as they discussed their academic projects.



# Flexner's Correspondence with Einstein and Weyl



Recruiting scholars from Europe was not always easy, as shown by the protracted negotiations for the appointment of **Hermann Weyl**, Professor of Mathematics in Göttingen, in 1932. Weyl suffered from depression and was reluctant to emigrate to the United States. In a first cable to Flexner that arrived on January 4, 1933, he signaled his willingness to join the Institute: “Doubts vanquished Stop If you still trust me and want me, this time I accept irrevocably. Ask letter from third [of January] back unopened.” But he changed his mind the very next day, explaining that he “couldn’t leave his home country,” and further adding in a third cable: “Despair over and over again about my suitability for Institute. My activity bound to mother tongue. Open the letter from the third [of January]. Set me free if still possible.” Weyl had another change of heart after Hitler’s rise to power and was eventually able to flee Germany with his Jewish wife and children to join the Institute in autumn 1933. At the same time, Albert Einstein was crossing the Atlantic en route to the Institute. Director Flexner urged him to refrain from making any political statements in the United States.



# Correspondence between Flexner and Veblen

March 27, 1933

Dear Professor Veblen:

I am very glad that you and I see eye to eye on this question of the form which our responsibility should take. Mr. Bomberger and Mrs. Fuld were very anxious from the outset that no distinction should be made as respects race, religion, nationality, etc., and of course I am in thorough sympathy with their point of view, but on the other hand if we do not develop America, who is going to do it, and the question arises how much we ought to do for others and how much to make sure that civilization in America advances. The matter has been very, very much on my mind, and I do not know that any two persons would solve it in exactly the same way. I can only say that I am glad to be assured that you realize that my mind is as wide open as it can possibly be, and in these days in view of the incredible things happening in Germany we do not wish to brand ourselves as nationalists in any way whatsoever.

I have been talking with Fisdale on the telephone. He is going out shortly on a tour which will include Princeton. That will give you and Lefschetz a chance to talk with him.

For the convenience of the Treasurer Mrs. Bailey makes requisitions twice a month. This has enabled us to keep down organization and overhead. These requisitions are made about the 10th and 25th of the month, so that Princeton will

Subsequently the checks will be sent on the first day of each quarter.

Mrs. Bailey has been also looking about in order to find a person who could be equally useful to the School of Mathematics and to herself when the mathematicians did not require her help. She has tried to find an educated woman with a leaning in the direction of mathematics who has had secretarial experience. With the help of her college dean, she has found a Miss Schember, a graduate of St. Lawrence University (with high honors), who majored in mathematics and science. Miss Schember has had only one position which she has kept during eleven years and has been promoted straight along. I saw her the other day. She is an excellent stenographer, though the material which I dictated to her was very unfamiliar, is pleasant and very presentable, about thirty-five years of age, I should think, and a resident of New Jersey. Of course, Mrs. Bailey will see Miss Gray when she goes down to Princeton, but I have the feeling that with Miss Schember we will be taking no chances and that you and your associates will have a really first-rate person to help you. Of course, before she is engaged, you and Alexander at least will have the opportunity to see her.

No action has yet been taken in respect to the appropriation of \$5,000 which you suggested, inasmuch as there has been no meeting of the Board and will be none until the 24th of April. I have of course no power to authorize any commitment in advance of action of the Board. Under ordinary circumstances,

March 27, 1933

Professor Veblen

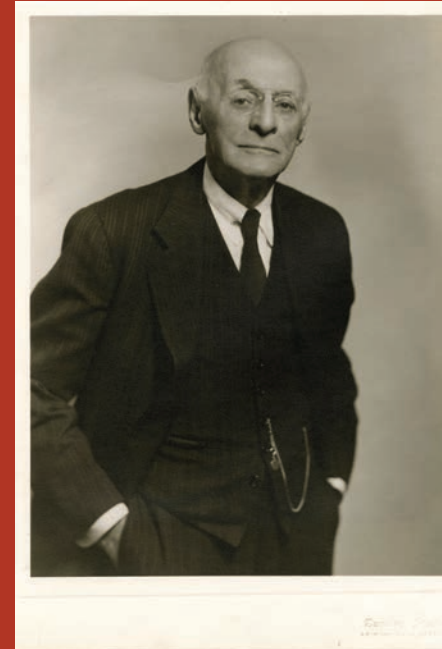
everything will be all right, and for the present everything is surely all right with us, but the one thing that I do not want is that you or I or any person connected with the Institute shall ever have the slightest concern as respects money.

With all good wishes,

Very sincerely yours,

ABRAHAM FLEXNER

Professor Oswald Veblen  
Fine Hall, Princeton University  
Princeton, New Jersey



May 2, 1933

Dear Professor Veblen:

I wonder if there is anyone at Princeton who would be interested in the enclosed which comes to me from Professor Farina at Dahlen.

We are certainly in the devil of a fix. Unable to care for our own younger men, we are pressed by applications from foreign countries. It seems to me clear that we must in the first place endeavor to find work for those whom we have encouraged to train themselves in this country on the theory that, if they were worthy, there would be jobs waiting for them. Until we have done that, what else can we do? Our opportunities for making places for foreigners are therefore at the moment limited to a few outstanding personages such as Einstein and Weyl, from whom, by the way, I have another letter which I am enclosing with my reply thereto. As you will note, I am not writing him to Göttingen, but I am replying to him via Professor Zangger.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely yours,

ABRAHAM FLEXNER

Professor Oswald Veblen  
Fine Hall, Princeton University  
Princeton, New Jersey

At first **Abraham Flexner** was reluctant to further open the Institute to foreign scholars, except “outstanding personages such as Weyl and Einstein,” despite the founders’ concern that “no distinction should be made as respects race, religion, nationality.” Flexner said it would impede the development of science in the United States and foster resentment among American scholars. In contrast, Faculty member **Oswald Veblen** advocated for vigorous action in favor of refugee academics.



# Amalie Emmy Noether



Born in 1882, **Amalie Emmy Noether** was a groundbreaking German mathematician, known in particular for her theorem relating symmetries to conservation laws. Following the Nazis' rise to power, she was fired from the University of Göttingen. Thanks to **Oswald Veblen** and others, she was able to come to the United States, where she taught at Bryn Mawr and was a Visitor at the Institute. She died suddenly in 1935, prompting **Albert Einstein** and **Hermann Weyl** to herald her as one of the greatest mathematicians of all time.

Letters to the Ed.

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**THE LATE EMMY NOETHER.**

Professor Einstein Writes in Appreciation of a Fellow-Mathematician.

*To the Editor of The New York Times:*

The efforts of most human beings are consumed in the struggle for their daily bread, but most of those who are, either through fortune or some special gift, relieved of this struggle are largely absorbed in further improving their worldly lot. Beneath the effort directed toward the accumulation of worldly goods lies all too frequently the illusion that this is the most substantial and desirable end to be achieved; but there is, fortunately, a minority composed of those who recognize early in their lives that the most beautiful and satisfying experiences open to humankind are not derived from the outside, but are bound up with the development of the individual's own feeling, thinking and acting. The genuine artists, investigators and thinkers have always been persons of this kind. However inconspicuously the life of these individuals runs its course, none the less the fruits of their endeavors are the most valuable contributions which one generation can make to its successors.

Within the past few days a distinguished mathematician, Professor Emmy Noether, formerly connected with the University of Goettingen and for the past two years at Bryn Mawr College, died in her fifty-third year. In the judgment of the most competent living mathematicians, Fraeulein Noether was the most significant creative mathematical genius thus far produced since the higher education of women began. In the realm of algebra, in which the most gifted mathematicians have been busy for centuries, she discovered methods which have proved of enormous importance in the development of the present-day younger generation of mathematicians. Pure mathematics is, in its way, the poetry of logical ideas. One seeks the most general ideas of operation which will bring together in simple, logical and unified form the largest possible circle of formal relationships. In this effort toward logical beauty spiritual formulae are discovered necessary for the deeper penetration into the laws of nature.

Born in a Jewish family distinguished for the love of learning, Emmy Noether, who, in spite of the efforts of the great Goettingen mathematician, Hilbert, never reached the academic standing due her in her own country, none the less surrounded herself with a group of students and investigators at Goettingen, who have already become distinguished as teachers and investigators. Her unselfish, significant work over a period of many years was rewarded by the new rulers of Germany with a dismissal, which cost her the means of maintaining her simple life and the opportunity to carry on her mathematical studies. Farsighted friends of science in this country were fortunately able to make such arrangements at Bryn Mawr College and at Princeton that she found in America up to the day of her death not only colleagues who esteemed her friendship but grateful pupils whose enthusiasm made her last years the happiest and perhaps the most fruitful of her entire career.

ALBERT EINSTEIN.  
Princeton University, May 1, 1935.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SATURDAY, MAY 4, 1935.

THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY  
SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS  
FINE HALL  
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

February 28, 1935

Dear Doctor Flexner:

I have been thinking over the question about Miss Noether which is implied in the letter from Mrs. Manning. I think that her way of putting the case to Mr. Weaver was unfortunate. If she had said that efforts were being made to raise a fund which would enable Bryn Mawr to keep Miss Noether permanently, it is quite possible that Weaver's response would have been different. I am inclined to think that even now if the matter were put before him in that form it might help. Indeed, if there were some way by which you could let him know that such efforts are being made it might be useful.

It would be possible to say to Weaver (1) that Miss Noether's unique position in the world as the only woman mathematician of the first rank should ultimately make it possible to raise the necessary funds; and (2) that all of us would be prepared to do anything that we could in the way of persuading possible donors to help in this matter.

The actual action agreed upon by the professors of the Institute with regard to a grant is to set aside \$1500 to be used as a grant for Miss Noether in the year 1935-36 in case other means of support should fail. This proposal was agreed to (1) in recognition of the fact that Miss Noether has been conducting a seminar last year and this, without compensation, and (2) in view of our appreciation of her intrinsic worth. It is my personal opinion that it would be legitimate to use this money so as to help Bryn Mawr to keep the \$1700 which has thus far been raised toward a permanent fund.

February 28, 1935

Dr. Abraham Flexner - 2

I am inclined to think that the view of our group towards further commitments would be something like this: that we should be glad to see further grants made during a period in which an effort was being made to place her permanently at Bryn Mawr or elsewhere; moreover, that in saying this we should be conscious of the possibility that this might become a permanent commitment on the part of the Institute. There is no doubt that, apart from the uniqueness of her position as a woman mathematician, she is quite obviously one of the most important scientists who have been displaced by the events in Germany. Therefore even a permanent commitment could be nothing but creditable to the Institute.

In saying all this, I am conscious that we have already gone pretty far in the way of finding places for the displaced German mathematicians.

Yours sincerely,  
O.V.  
Oswald Veblen

Dr. Abraham Flexner  
20 Nassau Street  
Princeton, N.J.  
OV:GB

March 1

P.S. It may be that it would be desirable to discuss some scheme by which we would share with Bryn Mawr in the support of Miss Noether, and thereby assure the continuance of the present arrangement, under which she makes a real contribution to the work of the Institute. Perhaps it would be desirable for me to come in and discuss this with you a little more in detail. I feel sure that if something like this were in prospect, it would be a sufficient basis for the continuance of the Rockefeller Foundation grant for at least a year or two longer.

O.V.



# The Institute's Activism in Favor of Displaced Scholars

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY  
May 22, 1939

A regular meeting of the Trustees of the Institute for Advanced Study was held at the Princeton Inn, Princeton, New Jersey, on Monday, May 22, 1939.

Present: Messrs. Aydelotte, Edgar S. Bamberger, Flexner, Friedemald, Hardin, Houghton, Mass, Stomart, Veblen, and Weed.

Absent and excused: Messrs. Louis Bamberger, Carrel, Leidesdorf, Riefler, Straus, and Mrs. Fuld.

The Chairman, Mr. Houghton, presided.

The Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars  
2 WEST 45TH STREET · NEW YORK CITY · Telephone: VANDerbilt 6-1471 · Cable Address: EMERCOM NEW YORK

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Please address all Communications to the Secretary

September 23, 1939

Dr. Abraham Flexner, Director  
Institute for Advanced Study  
Princeton, New Jersey

Dear Dr. Flexner:

The Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars, at its executive meeting on September 21, discussed the cases of current grantees who were still in Europe at the opening of the academic year, and who might be expected to be unable to reach their college or university in time to take up their work during this present period--among them, Dr. Wolfgang Windelband. The Committee knows that questions of emigration are of course very difficult to handle at this time and it is by no means certain which scholars may be allowed to leave Europe.

The Committee did not wish, at this time, however, to cancel any of its grants in support of scholars who were unavoidably detained in Europe. These cases will be taken up again at a later meeting when more information has been obtained about the emigration problems involved.

Sincerely yours,  
*Betty Drury*  
Betty Drury  
Assistant Secretary

BD:OD

To some extent it is a matter dependent upon the conditions under which they work, their ideals, and the enthusiasm by which they are inspired. I hope therefore that every Trustee will consider it as important to spend at least a day at the Institute as he now regards it as his duty to attend a meeting of the Trustees, for Trustees who have not seen the Institute and who have not felt its impact cannot legislate for it.

There is one thought which I should like the members of the Board as well as the professors to realize, for it is impressed upon me daily. We are living in an epoch-making time. The center of human culture is being shifted under our very eyes. Once it had its home in Athens. A few centuries later it had its home in Italy, a few centuries later in Paris, and thereafter also in Great Britain and Germany. It is now being unmistakably shifted to the United States. The scholars of Europe are refugees driven out of their own countries sometimes for political or religious reasons and sometimes because they are too unhappy and too distracted to pursue the work to which they are giving their lives. They have come to the Institute or have corresponded with the Institute literally by the hundreds. We cannot, of course, undertake either to give them places or to find them places, though we have done something substantial under both heads. Fifty years from now the historian looking backward will, if we act with courage and imagination, report that during our time the center of gravity in scholarship moved across the Atlantic Ocean to the United States. It is a grave responsibility which is thus being thrust upon us all. We cannot afford to be mean or niggardly in respect to it.

THE USEFULNESS OF USELESS KNOWLEDGE  
BY ABRAHAM FLEXNER

... a curious fact that in a world of irrational hatreds which we live in the only world about which our senses can testify. Unless it is made a better world, a fairer world, millions will continue to go to their graves silent, saddened, and embittered. I myself spent many years pleading that schools should become more of the world in which students are destined to sometimes become...

October  
**Harpers**  
MAGAZINE

OLD PEOPLE: A RISING NATIONAL PROBLEM  
Is Money All They Need?  
By ROY HELTON

Roosevelt, the Rich Man's Alibi  
The Strange Noise of Dr. Beldoon. A Story  
How the Wright Brothers Began  
The Future of the British Empire  
Why Can't We Have Perfect Teeth?  
Conscience in Wartime  
Great Hawaii  
Why Slum Clearance May Fail  
Music in Aspic  
In Defense of Ghost Writing  
The Usefulness of Useless Knowledge  
One Man's Meat—Dr. Townsend Himself, by E. B. ...  
The New Books, by John Chamberlain

Elmer Davis  
Morris Markey  
Fred C. Kelly  
C. Hartley Grattan  
Walter C. Alvarez, M.D.  
Lucille B. Milner  
Groff Conklin  
Leonard Bacon  
Alfred Rheinstein  
Henry F. Pringle  
Oscar Levant  
Seneca Johnson  
Abraham F...

The Institute quickly stepped up its activism in favor of displaced scholars, joining forces with other organizations such as the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Scholars (originally called the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced German Scholars). In his final board meeting as Director in 1939, Abraham Flexner acknowledged that the choice of helping foreign academics had been a good one. This action was intensified during the war by Director Frank Aydelotte, giving an added meaning to the "usefulness" of the research conducted at the Institute.



THE NEW SCHOOL  
FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH  
66 W TWELFTH ST NEW YORK

September 23, 1940

Dear Dr. Aydelotte:

I am sorry but our present program doesn't include taking care of men who are already here, and so for the time being Kapp is out.

Sincerely,  
*Alvin Johnson*  
Alvin Johnson  
Director

AJ:EM

Dr. Frank Aydelotte  
Institute for Advanced Study  
Princeton, New Jersey

Helping scholars who had been forced to flee Europe was often tricky. Each aid scheme had its limitations, as illustrated by the case of classical scholar **Ernst Kapp**, who did not fit in the scholar-in-exile program as he was already in the United States when he sought help.

December 24, 1940

Dear Seelye:

I should like to urge very strongly upon you some effort on behalf of Professor Ernst Kapp, who is at present living at 414 West 120th Street (Apt. 304), New York City. Kapp is a good man. I believe the Emergency Committee has expressed its willingness to make a contribution towards his support, and the Carl Schurz Foundation or the Oberlander Trust is willing also to contribute. All that Kapp needs is an appointment with some institution, so that the institution can make a request for these contributions. In addition, I think some of Kapp's friends would, if necessary, put up small sums such as they could afford (from \$10 to \$25 a month each) to insure a modest livelihood for him.

Kapp is not eligible for Dr. Alvin Johnson's scheme because he is already in this country. The fact is that if he does not get some help he will not be here long, for he is likely to starve to death. He is at the moment down almost to his last dollar.

I expect there are full records concerning him in the office of the Emergency Committee, and these will give you a good idea of Kapp's quality. I have met him and can certify to his high character and personal charm.

It is only necessary to find some kind of an appointment for him in order to secure him a stipend, with no expense or only a very small expense to the institution concerned. If you could arrange that you would be saving a first-rate man from despair.

Yours sincerely,

FRANK AYDELOTTE

Dr. Laurens H. Seelye  
Emergency Committee in Aid of  
Displaced Foreign Scholars  
2 West 45th Street  
New York City

FA/MCE



# Kurt Gödel

Vienna, Jan. 5, 1940

Dear D. Aydelotte:

I am greatly obliged to you for the request, which you have addressed on my behalf to the German Charge d' Affairs in Washington. It is probably on this account, that I was ultimately granted leave by the German authorities. In view of Prof. Veblen's letter of Dec. 1 I am hoping now, that it will make no difficulty to obtain the American visa and that I shall be able to leave Vienna in a few days. So the only complication which remains is, that I shall have to take the route through Russia and Japan. The German certificate of leave makes explicitly this requirement and in addition I am told in all steamship bureaus, that the danger for German citizens to be arrested by the English is very great on the Atlantic.

I regret very much, that the trip over Japan

will create further delay and will make it impossible to arrive before the middle of February, but it seems to be the only possibility.

Thanking you very much again for the trouble which you have taken, to make my coming possible

I am faithfully yours

Kurt Gödel

Being a refugee scholar in 1940s United States was a bureaucratic nightmare. Austrian mathematician **Kurt Gödel** had fled Vienna with his wife Adele in 1940, crossing Russia, Japan, and the Pacific to finally reach Princeton, where he was offered a position at the Institute. In the following years, he was considered an "enemy alien" and had to ask for special authorization each time he wished to leave town. This did not deter U.S. authorities from calling him up for military service, prompting IAS Director Frank Aydelotte to reveal Gödel's psychiatric condition to the Service Selection Board.

January 8, 1942

Honorable Charles M. Phillips  
United States Attorney  
Post Office Building  
Trenton, New Jersey

Dear Sir:

My wife has been for some time in the care of Dr. Max Gruenthal, 32 West 82nd Street, New York City, and would like to make a visit to him during the coming week if we can get your permission to travel to New York. It may be necessary for her to make additional trips in the near future and it would be a great convenience if your permission could cover any later visits that may be necessary. I always accompany my wife on these trips and would greatly appreciate it if you could grant me permission for this travel. We always go by train and return during the same day on which we go.

My alien registration number is 4091237 and that of my wife, Adele Gödel, is 4091238. We are both Austrian citizens, but are becoming American citizens. We received our first papers on December 12, 1940.

Very truly yours,

Dr. Kurt Gödel

April 14, 1943

Selective Service Board  
6 Nassau Street  
Princeton, New Jersey  
Attention Miss Jones

Dear Miss Jones:

Dr. Kurt Gödel, a member of the School of Mathematics of the Institute for Advanced Study, informs me that he has recently been reclassified and ~~as 1A~~. Dr. Gödel, like most refugees from Nazi Germany, is eager to do anything he can in support of the American war effort, but under the circumstances I think I ought to inform the Selective Service Board that Dr. Gödel has twice since he has been in Princeton shown such signs of mental and nervous instability as to cause the doctors who were consulted to diagnose him as a psychopathic case. When he was here in 1938 this mental disturbance was so severe that it became necessary to send him back to his home in Austria. He responded so well to the treatment that we invited him again to come to the Institute in 1940 and he has been here since that time. Last year, however, the symptoms returned and it has been necessary for him again to have medical treatment, which was carried out under the direction of Dr. Vanneman, who knows more about the case than anyone in Princeton.

Mathematically, it would perhaps not be an exaggeration to call Dr. Gödel a genius. There are people who believe him to be the best man in the world in his particular phase of the subject. This ability, however, is unfortunately accompanied by certain mental symptoms which, while they do not prevent active work in mathematics, might prove serious from the standpoint of the Army. Dr. Vanneman would be the best person to supply you with medical details concerning this case.

Yours sincerely,

PA/MCE  
FRANK AYDELOTTE, Director

ALien REGISTRATION ADDRESS REPORTS

The Alien Registration Act, 1940, requires all resident aliens to report each change of address within 5 days of such change. Other aliens, for example: Visitors, students, and others not admitted for permanent residence in the United States, must report their address every three months whether they change their address or not. A penalty of fine and imprisonment is provided by law for failure to make the required reports. When reporting, give both your number and name.

10-26437-1

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,  
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE,  
ALIEN REGISTRATION DIVISION,  
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

PLACE  
1 CENT  
STAMP  
HERE

Form AR-11 (Revised)  
ADDRESS RECORD CARD—ALIEN REGISTRATION  
(This card may be used for both types of reports mentioned on the face of this card)

REGISTRATION NO. \_\_\_\_\_ (COPY FROM REGISTRATION RECEIPT)

Name (print or type) \_\_\_\_\_

My last address was \_\_\_\_\_  
(STREET ADDRESS OR RURAL ROUTE)

My present address is \_\_\_\_\_  
(POST OFFICE) (COUNTY) (STATE)

I work for \_\_\_\_\_  
(EMPLOYER'S NAME)

Whose address is \_\_\_\_\_  
(STREET ADDRESS)

Date \_\_\_\_\_ (POST OFFICE) (COUNTY) (STATE) Signature \_\_\_\_\_

10-26437-1 GPO



## Displaced Children Visit Einstein





# Einstein and McCarthyism

## Questions

- 1) What is the essential nature of academic freedom and why is it necessary for the pursuit of truth?
- 2) What threats to academic freedom do you see at this time?
- 3) What in your view are the particular responsibilities of a citizen at this time in the defense of our traditional freedoms as expressed in our Bill of Rights?
- 4) What in your opinion are the special obligations of an intellectual in a democratic society?
- 5) What in your opinion is the best way to help the victims of political inquisitions?

## Answers

- 1) By academic freedom I understand the right to search for truth and to publish and teach what one holds to be true. This right implies also a duty: one must not conceal any part of what one has recognized to be true. It is evident that any restriction of academic freedom acts in such a way as to hamper the dissemination of knowledge among people and thereby impedes rational judgment and action.
- 2) The threat to academic freedom in our time must be seen in the fact that, because of the alleged external danger to our country, freedom of teaching, mutual exchange of opinions and freedom of press and other media of communication are encroached upon or obstructed. This is done by creating a situation in which people feel their economic positions endangered. Consequently, more and more people avoid expressing their opinion freely, even in their private social life. This is a state of affairs which a democratic government cannot survive in the long run.
- 3) The strength of the Constitution lies entirely in the determination of each citizen to defend it. Only if every single citizen feels duty bound to do his share in this defense are the constitutional rights secure. Thus, a duty is imposed on everyone which no one must evade, notwithstanding risks and dangers for him and his family.
- 4) In principle, everybody is equally involved in defending the constitutional rights. The "intellectuals" in the widest sense of the word are, however, in a special position since they have, thanks to their special training, a particular strong influence on the formation of public opinion. This is the reason why those who are about to lead us toward an authoritarian government are particularly concerned with intimidating and muzzling that group. It is therefore, in the present situation, especially important for the intellectuals to do their duty. I see this duty in refusing to cooperate in any undertaking that violates the constitutional rights of the individual. This holds in particular for all inquisitions that are concerned with the private life and the political affiliations of the citizens. Whoever cooperates in such a case becomes an accessory to acts of violation or invalidation of the Constitution.
- 5) It is important for the defense of civil rights that assistance be given to the victims of this defense who in the above mentioned inquisitions have refused to testify, and beyond that to all those who through these inquisitions have suffered material loss in any way. In particular, it will be necessary to provide legal counsel and to find work for them.  
This requires money the collection and use of which should be put into the hands of a small organization under the supervision of persons known to be trustworthy. This organization should be in contact with all groups concerned with the preservation of civil rights. In this way it should be possible to solve this important problem without setting up another expensive fund-raising machinery.

*A. Einstein*

N.Y.C. 3/11/54  
 Gentlemen:  
 Since Albert Einstein is such a believer in Communism and rejects the U.S.'s stand on the subject, I suggest he move to Russia - and soon! You don't need him.  
 Sincerely,  
 M.H. DelHomme

NEW YORK  
 MAR 12 1954  
 4-PM  
 ZONE  
 THIS SIDE OF CARD IS FOR ADDRESS  
 Remember - ONLY ONE  
 PREVENT FOREST FIRES  
 POSTAL CARD  
 Institute for Advanced Studies  
 Princeton University  
 Princeton, N.J.

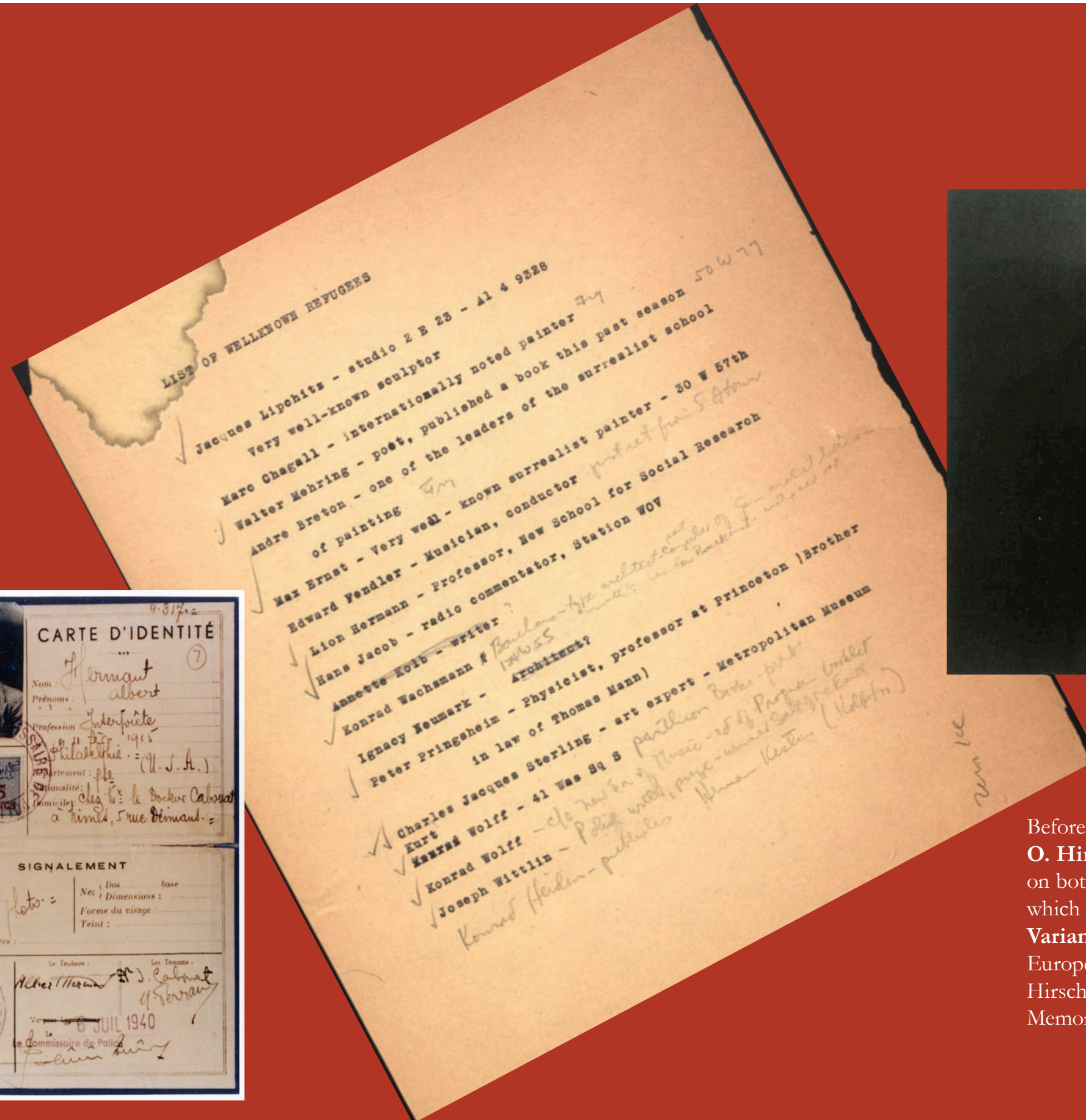
Box 5404 Metro Station,  
 Los Angeles 14 Calif.  
 March 11, 1954.  
 President or Director,  
 Institute for Advanced Study,  
 Princeton, N.J.  
 Dear Sir:  
 Are you keeping a watch that Dr. Albert Einstein, despite his great knowledge of mathematics, etc., is not teaching communistic philosophy, along with his subjects, to students? We have been reading about his advising a person not to cooperate before a committee of the Senate. The man needs lessons in Americanism. I have no patience with this idea that

a person who has performed a great deed or discovered something, should be excused from what citizens of the U.S.A. must conform to, so that they need not account for questionable acts of theirs.  
 Yours truly,  
 Carolyn M. Hagedorn

Einstein was very active during McCarthyism, campaigning in favor of intellectual freedom and supporting victims of anti-Communist purges. The Institute received letters denouncing his actions, sometimes in surprisingly violent terms.



Hirschman with an unknown refugee preparing his escape from France in 1940.



Before joining the Institute as a faculty member in 1974, **Albert O. Hirschman** was already a veteran of many political struggles on both sides of the Atlantic. Here we see the fake ID with which he fled France in 1941, after having helped journalist **Varian Fry** organize the escape of some 2000 people from Europe. (Documents on this panel courtesy of Katia Salomon, Hirschman Family Collection; and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.)



# The Institute's Continued Engagement

Hirschman's influential work on the emergence of authoritarian regimes in Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s brought him into contact with Latin American scholars who themselves suffered under those regimes. After joining the Institute as a Professor in 1974, Hirschman recruited many of those scholars, including the influential sociologist Fernando Henrique Cardoso, later president of Brazil. He also helped academics and student activists opposed to Franco's regime in Spain, including sociologist Victor M. Perez-Diaz, who came to Princeton as a Member in the newly founded School of Social Science in 1975-76. The launching of the School two years earlier with Hirschman and anthropologist Clifford Geertz at its helm signaled the Institute's continued engagement with contemporary social and political issues.

January 21, 1975

Mr. Victor M. Perez-Diaz  
Harvard University  
Center for European Studies  
5 Bryant Street  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

Dear Victor:

Many thanks for your letter. I was sorry to hear that your plans for research in Spain have become victims of the political situation there. On the other hand, the readiness of Harvard to accept your already published writings in lieu of a thesis is a consolation. Now to your inquiry about the possibility of coming here. Since I talked with you the few places that were still available for the next academic year have been filled by invitations on our part, but it is quite possible that some of the people whom we have invited will not accept and for this eventuality I should like to have at hand a curriculum vitae and a short description of what you would want to work on. I should think that this matter will be resolved within the next month or two.

Best regards to you and Marina, also from Sarah.

Cordialmente,  
  
Albert O. Hirschman

São Paulo, February 3, 1975

Mr. Pope  
Mr. Morg  
P.S. Ref. to D.O.

Dr. Carl Kaysen  
Director  
The Institute for Advanced Study  
Princeton, New Jersey 08540  
U.S.A.

Dear Dr. Kaysen,

I hope that Prof. Hirschman has already informed you of the reasons why I had to postpone my stay in Princeton. Although the difficult situation through which we are going still persists, I hope to be able to accomplish the engagements I undertook as follows: between March 10 and April 10 I would stay alone in Princeton; then I would return to Brazil for a period of two weeks, and around the end of April, I, and probably my wife, would again go to Princeton. During the months of June and July our children would join us there.

I can imagine all the administrative embarrassment this matter is causing you and I really apologise for this. On the other hand, regarding our accommodation in Princeton, I would like to assure you that we are ready to adapt ourselves to the possibilities you have to offer us.

Thanking you for your attention, I remain

yours sincerely,  
*Fernando Henrique Cardoso*  
Fernando Henrique Cardoso

Fernando Henrique Cardoso

During the last few years I concentrated an important portion of my interests to the analysis of authoritarianism in Latin America and especially in Brazil. My first effort at restating this theme is contained in a study on "State and Civil Society" which was published in the book Estado y Sociedad (see enclosed bibliography). Afterwards, I wrote two articles which, direct or indirectly, are related to the subject ("Las Contradicciones del Desarrollo Asociado", published in the review Desarrollo Economico, Buenos Aires, n. 53, and "State and Class Domination", still unpublished. In the meantime, I wrote many articles on the Brazilian political situation, of which the principal maybe is "The Question of Democracy".

Parallel to this theoretical-critical effort, together with a group of collaborators of CEBRAP, I started some research on the differentiation of the State apparatus and on the State as an economic productive organization in Brazil. This research follows three main lines: the growth of State organs which regulate the economy and the policies put into practice by them during the last ten years; the relative weight of State enterprises in the Brazilian economy; the constitution of a specific social class which is occupied with the direction of the State sector of the economy.

Regarding the last of these, to which I am more directly related, many surveys are being carried out on the social origin of the managers of State enterprises, on the interchanging groups of managers and on the entrepreneurial policies executed. These researches aim to test a hypothesis

2.

which I formulated regarding the formation of a kind of a "State Bourgeoisie" in Brazil, whose function is to promote capital accumulation in the framework of enterprises that, if not private properties, operate similarly to the big corporations.

Besides, I also formulated specific hypotheses on the kinds of relation among the sectors of civil society and the State, as well as on the action exerted within the State apparatus by the representatives of public enterprises. I designated the forms of articulation through which the interests of these groups are expressed in the State apparatus as "bureaucratical rings" and contrasted such "rings" with the classical forms of political organizations.

Other researchers in Latin America and the United States are working on similar themes, noteworthy among them being Juan Linz and Philippe Schmitter. Among the Latin Americans, to limit myself just to the most outstanding ones, I mention Guillermo O'Donnell, Luciano Martins, Simon Schwartzman and Bolivar Lamounier.

My plan of work during the second term of the academic year 1974/1975 at the Institute for Advanced Study would be the arrangement of the material collected in CEBRAP's research and the revision of the available bibliography. I intend to write a book which would constitute an empirically based contribution to the analysis of the subject matter of the form of relation between the State and Civil Society in Brazil, making some comparisons with Latin America and, if possible, with Portugal and Spain.



Pictured here are Faculty members Clifford Geertz, Joan Scott, and Michael Walzer in 1988.





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