

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF
THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

January 14, 1935

A regular meeting of the Trustees of the Institute for Advanced Study was held at the Uptown Club, 60 East 42nd Street, New York City, on Monday, January 14, 1935.

Present: Messrs. Aydelotte, Edgar S. Bamberger, Louis Bamberger, Carrel, Flexner, Frankfurter, Friedenwald, Hardin, Leidesdorf, Maass, Stewart, Straus, Veblen, Weed, Mrs. Fuld, and Miss Sabin.

Absent and excused: Mr. Houghton

The Vice-Chairman, Mr. Maass, presided.

The minutes of the meeting held on October 8, 1934, having been distributed, their reading was dispensed with, and they were approved.

The Board ratified the action which it had authorized the Executive Committee to take in appointing Professor Marston Morse a professor in the School of Mathematics beginning July 1, 1935, at a salary of \$12,500. a year, of which he will contribute 5% to the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association of America, the Institute contributing an equal sum monthly, and that, unless his term of appointment is prolonged by mutual consent, he retire at 65 years of age.

Mr. Hardin, Chairman of the Finance Committee, stated that the report of the Treasurer would cover the subject of finance.

The Treasurer presented a report which was approved and ordered to be filed.

The following report was presented by the Director and, on motion, was ordered to be incorporated in the minutes of the meeting:

"The last meeting of the Board was held on October 8, 1934. Since that date the School of Mathematics has begun its second year. In dealing with it, I have pursued the policy which spontaneously worked itself out during the previous year, leaving to the members of the staff the widest possible range of responsibility in respect to the conduct of the School. They have chosen their own students, decided upon their own courses, conferences, and research, utilized such methods as they individually preferred, and carried on their administrative responsibilities in their own way, consulting with me courteously whenever a question arose, but displaying such excellent judgment and fine feeling that to all intents and purposes the School has been an autonomous group. I am in no position to say anything as to the value of what they are doing. This I know only indirectly from the workers who have been admitted. In a long life devoted to higher education I have never seen anything approaching the happiness and the satisfaction of the entire group which is almost twice as large as the group last year. Before the beginning of the Christmas vacation Professor Morgan Ward of the California Institute of Technology called to wish me the season's greetings and in so doing said, 'You have here at Princeton a mathematical paradise.' I replied that the credit belonged to the staff and the workers and that I could only hope that the same spirit would prevail indefinitely. Expressions of the same tenor have reached me from many other persons. Mathematicians elsewhere are, I think, already beginning to realize what is happening at Princeton, and there are indications that at a period of great academic unemployment the workers now assembled in the School of Mathematics, who do not already hold positions, will receive posts as they are ready for them.

It is interesting to note that one of the younger members of the group has been invited to make an address on the subject of modern mathematics next February before a meeting of all the high school teachers of mathematics in Greater New York, and he has accepted the invitation. Dr. Weed was kind enough to write me a courteous letter expressing some doubt as to the wisdom of placing these young workers in secondary schools. I submitted the correspondence to Professor Veblen, who saw no danger in the procedure. On the other hand, I am delighted that Dr. Weed has felt free to express his misgivings, and I hope that at the proper time in this meeting he will state them frankly to the Board.

My main thoughts since the last meeting have been concentrated on the proposed School of Economics and Politics or, as Mr. Bamberger says in his discussions of the subject, Social Justice, to which sound economic thinking would make the greatest conceivable contribution. This subject has been in my mind from the very outset. I alluded to it as one of the possibilities in the brief remarks which I made at the Organization Meeting. Since then I have been in practically constant communication with persons competent to advise me in this country and Europe. I have reported my findings to the Board at practically every meeting and have invited discussion. As far as I recall, the members of the Board have concurred in the point of view from which I conceive the subject, namely, that there should be in the initial group someone competent to study the history of political theory, someone alive to the international complications involved in economic practice, and someone who had both a theoretical and a practical knowledge of America and contemporary economics. It seemed to me that three such persons would form the nucleus for something important in the field of economic and political study, that they would need in the

first instance not students or perhaps even workers but opportunity to scrutinize thoroughly what is happening and what has been happening and how it has come about. For two of these posts Professor Earle and Professor Mitrany have already been selected, and the remaining one will, I hope, be filled today.

To this small group I propose to give precisely the same autonomy enjoyed by the mathematicians. It does not follow, however, that they will work out their problem in the same way as the mathematicians, for the material which they need cannot possibly be concentrated at Princeton or at any other single place. I do not think that we should call upon them for a scheme in advance. They are men of brains, energy, enthusiasm, and maturity. If they cannot solve their problem, it cannot be solved by me or by this Board. They should have the same degree of autonomy which has worked so smoothly and beautifully in the field of mathematics.

I am happy to be able to make a formal announcement that has already appeared in the press, namely, that the American Ambassador to Germany, Professor William E. Dodd, wrote me some months ago saying that he would like at this juncture to make an academic address on The Meaning and Significance of the American Constitution and that he had selected the Institute as the place where he would most prefer to make it. President Dodds has as usual been most coöperative, and the address will be given on the evening of January 16. It would give me the keenest pleasure if the members of the Board were able to attend. Since his arrival in this country I have had an opportunity to discuss with Ambassador Dodd the general outline above given of the School of Economics and Politics. It met with his complete and enthusiastic approval. Indeed he stated that, in his judgment, economic thinking in this country would be seriously hampered unless some such school, as we have in contemplation, were formed,

and competent thinkers were placed under the conditions which they will enjoy at the Institute.

I am anxious that the Board should understand what I conceive to be my proper relationship to the Institute. From the very start I have held that the separate schools should be as nearly as possible autonomous. My own function as director during these early years is mainly the function which President Gilman and Dr. Welch discharged in Baltimore, namely, that of searching out the fields in which the Institute could be most useful and in finding one or two persons to whom the further development of additional schools could be left, subject always of course to easy and informal conference with me and criticism, suggestion, and approval or rejection by the Board.

There was a time not long ago when I was inclined to make a beginning in the field of the humanities, and I still think that in the America of today a few great humanistic centers require to be set up. On the other hand, the more I have thought of it, the less inclined I am to start two schools at once. I have therefore decided to limit my recommendations at this meeting to making the next step in the field of economics.

I should like for a moment to recur to the School of Mathematics. When Professor Morse was appointed, the members of the School of Mathematics agreed that if necessary for financial reasons the visiting professorship could be discontinued. The finances of the Institute are, however, in such condition now, that I am under the impression that a visiting professor in mathematics can be called for the coming year. We are not in this way committed beyond one year at a time, and indeed our budget is an extremely elastic one in other respects, for in the event of financial difficulty it can be considerably reduced, though of course the opportunities for workers would be also reduced at the same time.

I have had some correspondence with the Warden of All Souls College which began in an inquiry as to whether Dr. Marschak, a Fellow of All Souls College, could come to this country in order to visit a number of institutions and confer with a number of American economists. As a result, the Warden of All Souls has suggested that, as Oxford will probably embark upon a larger scheme in the field of economics, it may be that some form of coöperation between the School of Economics and Oxford University may be developed. Beyond this, I have taken no steps.

I have perhaps been very slow in forming any opinion respecting the question of a building and site. I have the feeling now that I am in possession of sufficient information to ask that the Committee on Buildings and Grounds renew during this coming spring their active consideration of that subject.

I cannot conclude this report without expressing once more my deep appreciation of the courtesy and coöperation which the Institute has received from President Dodds, Dean Eisenhart, and all other officials of Princeton University."

The Director reported that after careful consideration and conference with educators, economists, and publicists in this country and abroad he desired to nominate to a professorship in the School of Economics and Politics Dr. Winfield W. Riefler, who was a graduate of Amherst College and the Brookings Graduate School, had been foreign trade officer in the Department of Commerce, Buenos Aires, had been connected with the Division of Research and Statistics of the Federal Reserve Board for a period of ten years, was Chairman of the Central Statistical Board as well as economic adviser to the Executive Council during the past year, and had published in 1930 a book entitled Money Rates and Money Markets in the United States. The Director thereupon recommended that Dr. Winfield W. Riefler be appointed a professor in the

School of Economics and Politics of the Institute for Advanced Study at a salary of \$12,000. a year, of which he will contribute 5% to the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association of America, the Institute contributing an equal sum monthly, beginning at a date to be arranged by the Director in conference with Dr. Riefler, and that, unless his term of appointment is prolonged by mutual consent, he retire at 65 years of age.

Mr. Frankfurter, while expressing himself in favor of the selection of Dr. Riefler at the salary mentioned, urged that the other two members of the economic group be placed on the same salary. After discussion, in the course of which it was obvious that most of the Board was opposed to the principle of standardized salaries, the resolution as offered by the Director was adopted. Mr. Frankfurter asked that he be recorded as being opposed to the resolution in so far as it involved differentiation in salary of the three members of the initial group.

The Director reported that Professor Earle would probably come East in April spending some time in the Poconos before moving to Princeton.

The Director stated that the Master of Balliol College had asked that one of his students be accepted as a worker in the School of Economics and Politics next year.

On motion, it was

RESOLVED That, subject to the approval of the Treasurer, the members of the School of Mathematics be and hereby are authorized to repeat the experiment which was made this year in the case of Professor Dirac by calling a visiting professor to the Institute for the year 1935-1936 at a salary of \$10,000. a year.

The Director stated that the Institute was represented at the Second All-Soviet Mathematical Congress last summer by Professor Lefschetz, who was selected on account of his knowledge of the Russian language and his personal

acquaintance with continental mathematicians, that a detailed report dealing with the scientific importance of the Congress was published by Professor Lefschetz in Science on Friday, November 23, 1934, and that in addition Professor Lefschetz had prepared for the Director a report, from which the following excerpt was ordered to be incorporated in the minutes of the meeting:

"Investigators in mathematical sciences are just as free in the U.S.S.R. as in our own country. I am saying advisedly 'mathematical sciences' because on these I have complete information, but to the best of my knowledge this is just as true regarding the other branches of science. I have heard of no restrictions for research workers in one direction rather than in another, but deem it likely that some have received preferential treatment. However, this is equally true in any country and has little to do with the attitude of the government towards scientific endeavor and much to do with the political cleverness of some of the scientists - again a phenomenon not unknown elsewhere. I doubt if the funds assigned to the scientists constitute the largest item in the governmental budget, for the armed forces at least must absorb a very large amount. I deem it no less likely to hold for the U.S.S.R. than anywhere else. Had I not feared to seem to gush regarding the situation, I would have said more complimentary things in my article. I am personally convinced that the situation of the scientists is improving in the Soviet Union faster than that of the rest of the population. Striking indeed is the comparison with the situation three years ago when I made my first visit there. Nowhere do scientific men seem to command more respect than in the U.S.S.R.

Generally speaking, the picture presented by the Soviet Union is similar with the situation in the United States in the first part of the century. The new universities and research institutions in the large

centers and the universities in such places as Rostov, Voronej, Minsk, to name them at random, are the analogues of our Mid-Western and South-western universities. The institutions of learning in the Soviet Union are strongly influenced by the idea of 'service', not in the Rotarian sense but in the genuine sense of educating the people as a whole rather than a very small number of selected individuals. The problem in the Union, as in the United States in the past, is complicated by the great difficulty in finding well prepared and experienced education or research leaders. Some of these new universities are wholly manned in certain of their departments by young men just out of graduate schools. Another element similar to ours is the strong drift towards the larger centers. It is naturally much more interesting to live and operate in a place like Moscow than in a place like Rostov, and it requires a good deal of pioneering spirit to prefer the latter to the former. You recognize here a problem very similar to one of our own.

Regarding the general methods of bringing up young men of learning, the tendency is definitely towards 'normalcy'. Degrees are coming back and titles also. One would not expect that in a communistic commonwealth but so it is.

The situation being as it is, the Soviet Union is still willing to absorb a certain number of well prepared and worthy scientists to give backbone wherever it is needed. For some time there will be openings available there for suitable men who, however, must be endowed with pioneering enthusiasm and willing to endure a few temporary hardships on the material side for the sake of a dignified and good career in the long run.

One of the more serious difficulties that Soviet scientists have to contend with is the impossibility for them to obtain permission to go

abroad. I know of several cases where it would have been of the greatest benefit for certain mathematicians to take advantage of fellowships or grants-in-aid for their scientific development but they have not been allowed to leave the U.S.S.R. The reason given is that they are needed at the present in their own country and the government can not afford to dispense with them. The argument is rather poor because in the cases of outstanding men, it deprives them of important contacts and valuable sources of information. There is grave danger that a serious gap is being created between Soviet and non-Soviet scientists which is increased by the difference in the languages and difficulties in obtaining foreign publications. However, in this respect, the situation is tending to be similar in other European countries, for example, in Poland and to some extent, in Germany. I have gone a great deal out of my way to discuss this matter with people high up in government councils in Moscow and they all affirm that before long these difficulties will be smoothed out but so far nothing has been done."

Inasmuch as the term of trusteeship of Mr. Straus will expire in April, 1935, the Chairman appointed Mr. Aydelotte in place of Mr. Straus on the Nominating Committee to report at the annual meeting.

The Director stated that he had corresponded with the Warden of All Souls College in reference to Dr. Marschak's possible visit to the United States but that he had not as yet issued an invitation to Dr. Marschak, inasmuch as the Executive Committee, communicated with by mail, had not unanimously consented. Mr. Aydelotte suggested that in matters of this nature the Director be permitted to use his own discretion, as long as no commitment was made by the Institute. To this suggestion no exception was taken.

Mr. Weed expressed doubt as to the wisdom of the Institute's inviting persons connected with secondary schools to visit the School of Mathematics lest the Institute seem to be "advertising its product" and the fear that pressure might be ultimately exerted on the Institute to have teacher-training courses, etc. Mr. Veblen, speaking for the mathematicians, held that neither teaching nor research would or could be unfavorably influenced and that improvement of secondary education was of vital importance to both colleges and universities.

The Director asked the Trustees to consider the date of the January meeting, stating that the second Monday in January might be any date from January 8 to 14, which occasionally brought the meeting very near the holidays; the third Monday in January was impossible for some of the Trustees; the fourth Monday would be any time from January 22 to 28 and seemed to be generally acceptable; it was suggested that an amendment to the By-Laws be submitted at the annual meeting.

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