

Abba Ptachya Lerner

A Register of His Papers in the Library of Congress

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Expanded and revised by Connie L. Cartledge**



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

1997

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Latest revision: 2004-10-15

Collection Summary

Title: Papers of Abba Ptachya Lerner

Span Dates: 1929-1986

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1939-1982)

ID No.: MSS61499

Creator: Lerner, Abba Ptachya, 1903-

Extent: 13,100 items; 38 containers; 15.2 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Repository: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Abstract: Economist and educator. Correspondence, memoranda, diary and dream notes, writings, speeches, reports, interviews, research material, family and legal papers, drawings, photographs, and other papers relating primarily to Lerner's activities as professor, lecturer, and advisor in the field of economics.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Names:

Lerner, Abba Ptachya, 1903-

Ben-Shahar, Haim--Correspondence

Buell, Raymond Leslie, 1896-1946--Correspondence

Burns, Arthur Edward, 1908-1986--Correspondence

Colander, David C.--Correspondence

Ford, Gerald R., 1913- --Correspondence

Friedman, Milton, 1912- --Correspondence

Galbraith, John Kenneth, 1908- --Correspondence

Kahn, Alfred E. (Alfred Edward)--Correspondence

Khomeini, Ruhollah--Correspondence

Proxmire, William--Correspondence

Rivlin, Alice M.--Correspondence

Taft, Robert A. (Robert Alphonso), 1889-1953--Correspondence

Rand Corporation

Lerner, Daliah Goldfarb. Papers of Daliah Goldfarb Lerner

Subjects:

Art

Drawing

Economics

Economics--Study and teaching

Iran Hostage Crisis, 1979-1981

Keynesian economics

Mobiles (Sculpture)

Money

Photography

Wealth

Welfare economics

Iran--Foreign relations--United States

Middle East--Foreign relations

United States--Economic policy

United States--Foreign relations--Iran

Occupations:

Economists

Educators

Administrative Information

Provenance:

The papers of Abba Ptachya Lerner, economist, educator, and lecturer, were given to the Library of Congress by his wife, Daliah Lerner, in 1983 and 1986.

Processing History:

The papers of Abba Ptachya Lerner were arranged and described in 1994. Additional material was incorporated into the collection in 1997.

Transfers:

Most of the photographs relating to Lerner's family and professional career have been transferred to the Library's Prints and Photographs Division where they are identified as a part of these papers. Other photographs remain with the papers and are filed in the [Miscellany](#) series.

Copyright Status:

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Abba P. Lerner in these papers and in other collections of papers in the custody of the Library of Congress has been dedicated to the public.

Preferred Citation:

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Abba Ptachya Lerner Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Event</i> |
|-------------|---|
| 1903 | Born, Bessarabia, Russia |
| 1929 | Married Alice Sendak (divorced) |
| 1932 | B.Sc. in economics, University of London, London, England |
| 1935-1939 | Instructor, London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London, London, England |
| 1940-1942 | Assistant professor, University of Kansas City, Kansas City, Mo. |
| 1942-1947 | Professor, New School for Social Research, New York, N.Y. |
| 1943 | Ph.D. in economics, University of London, London, England |
| 1944 | Published <i>Economics of Control</i> (New York: Macmillan Co. 428 pp.) |
| 1947-1959 | Professor, Roosevelt University, Chicago, Ill. |
| 1949 | Became a naturalized citizen of the United States Consultant to RAND Corp. |

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 1950-1951 | Member of Economic Commission for Europe, Geneva, Switzerland |
| 1951 | Published <i>Economics of Employment</i> (New York: McGraw-Hill. 397 pp.) |
| 1953 | Published <i>Essays in Economic Analysis</i> (London: Macmillan Co. 394 pp.) |
| 1953-1955 | Economic adviser to Israel |
| 1955-1956 | Adviser, treasury of Israel and Bank of Israel |
| 1958-1959 | Member, Institute for Mediterranean Affairs, New York, N.Y. |
| 1959-1965 | Professor, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich. |
| 1960 | Married Daliah Goldfarb |
| 1962 | Published <i>Everybody's Business</i> (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press. 134 pp.) |
| 1965-1971 | Professor, University of California, Berkeley, Calif. |
| 1971-1978 | Distinguished professor of economics, Queens College of the City University of New York, New York, N.Y. |
| 1972 | Published <i>Flation: Not Inflation of Prices, Not Deflation of Jobs; What You Always Wanted to Know About Inflation, Depression, and the Dollar</i> (New York: Quadrangle Books. 184 pp.) |
| 1975 | Published with Haim Ben-Shahar <i>The Economics of Efficiency and Growth: Lessons from Israel and the West Bank</i> (Cambridge: Ballinger Pub. Co. 187 pp.) |
| 1978-1982 | Professor, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Fla. |
| 1980 | Published with David C. Colander <i>MAP--A Market Anti-Inflation Plan</i> (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 128 pp.) |
| 1982, Oct. 27 | Died, Tallahassee, Fla. |

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Abba Ptachya Lerner (1903-1982) span 1929-1986, with the majority of the papers concentrated from 1939 to 1982. The bulk of the papers documents Lerner's activities as a professor, lecturer, and adviser in various fields of economics and economic theory. By working on the logic of using government fiscal policy to adjust the economy to allow full employment without inflation, Lerner was a significant contributor to the economic policy revolution associated with the "new economics." His papers consist of five series: [Family Papers](#); [General Correspondence](#); [Subject File](#); [Lectures, Speeches, and Writings](#); and [Miscellany](#). Interfiled throughout the collection are a few items of Lerner's wife, Daliah Goldfarb Lerner. The collection is fragmentary, however, because Lerner also gave a portion of his papers to the University of California at Berkeley.

The [Family Papers](#) (1929-1985) consist primarily of letters between Lerner and family members and pertain mostly to family matters. Lerner's early letters, especially those to his parents, often contain a detailed account of his professional and personal activities.

The [General Correspondence](#) series (1939-1986), consisting chiefly of incoming letters, relates to personal and professional matters. One item worthy of mention is a copy of a letter of 26 December 1979 from Lerner to Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini

encouraging the reestablishment of peaceful relations between Iran and the United States and the release of the American hostages. Also included are a few letters to other national government officials concerning economic policy.

Papers in the [Subject File](#) (1930-1984) constitute almost half the collection. The Subject File reflects a wide range of topics of interest to Lerner: money and wealth, welfare economics, and peace in the Middle East. This series includes correspondence, research material, and writings by Lerner and other academics. Also included are a few items relating to Lerner's work for the RAND Corporation.

The [Lectures, Speeches, and Writings](#) series (1932-1981) chronicles Lerner's prolific work as a speaker and writer. Although material relating to Lerner's books are fragmentary, this series contains numerous lectures, speeches, articles, papers, reviews, and letters to editors. Lerner's speeches and writings reflect the influence of one of his teachers, John Maynard Keynes, who theorized that government should use monetary and fiscal problems to increase employment and spending. Lerner's efforts to explain the British economist's theories have been credited by some with making Keynes understandable to the rest of the economic profession, particularly in the United States

The final series, [Miscellany](#) (1932-1983), relates primarily to Lerner's artistic endeavors. The papers document his interest in photography, art mobiles, and pen and ink portraits. A file of diary and dream notes provide a frank and intimate glimpse of Lerner's personal thoughts.

Among the most significant or frequent of Lerner's correspondents are Haim Ben-Shahar, Raymond L. Buell, Arthur Edward Burns, David C. Colander, Gerald R. Ford, Milton Friedman, John Kenneth Galbraith, Alfred E. Kahn, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, William Proxmire, Alice M. Rivlin, and Robert A. Taft (1889-1953).

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in five series:

- [Family Papers, 1929-1985, n.d.](#)
- [General Correspondence, 1939-1986, n.d.](#)
- [Subject File, 1930-1984, n.d.](#)
- [Lectures, Speeches, and Writings, 1932-1981, n.d.](#)
- [Miscellany, 1932-1983, n.d.](#)

Description of Series

Container

Series

BOX 1-2

Family Papers, 1929-1985, n.d.

Correspondence between Lerner and family members, including attachments and miscellaneous legal papers, writings, genealogical material, newspaper clippings, and printed matter. Arrangement is alphabetical by type of material and therein alphabetical by name of family member, except miscellaneous papers, which are chronological in arrangement.

BOX 3-4

General Correspondence, 1939-1986, n.d.

Correspondence and memoranda, including attachments and enclosures, between Lerner and friends, colleagues, acquaintances, and the general public. Arrangement is chronological.

BOX 4-21

Subject File, 1930-1984, n.d.

Correspondence, memoranda, reports, interviews, conference papers and programs, research material, notes, course outlines and examinations, clippings, and printed matter. Arrangement is alphabetical by topic or type of material.

BOX 22-33

Lectures, Speeches, and Writings, 1932-1981, n.d.

Correspondence, memoranda, lectures and speeches, articles and papers, book drafts, research material, notes, contracts, newspaper clippings, printed matter, and other material. Arrangement is alphabetical by type of material and therein alphabetical by type of material or subject.

BOX 34-38

Miscellany, 1932-1983, n.d.

Diary and dream notes, drawings, photographic prints and negatives, calendars, address cards and lists, certificates, and other papers. Arrangement is alphabetical by subject or type of material.

Container List

| <i>Container</i> | <i>Contents</i> |
|------------------|---|
| BOX 1-2 | Family Papers, 1929-1985, n.d. Correspondence between Lerner and family members, including attachments and miscellaneous legal papers, writings, genealogical material, newspaper clippings, and printed matter. Arrangement is alphabetical by type of material and therein alphabetical by name of family member, except miscellaneous papers, which are chronological in arrangement. |
| BOX 1 | Correspondence Banerji, Hannah (sister) and family, 1940, 1953-1985, n.d. Bornstein, Doris (sister) and family, 1949-1952, 1963-1971 Costello, Bella (sister) and family, 1946-1982 Lerner, Alice (first wife) and family, 1938-1983, n.d. (3 folders) Lerner, Arthur (brother) and family, 1951-1982, n.d. (2 folders) Lerner, Daliah (second wife) and family, 1956-1974, n.d. (6 folders) Lerner, Jack (brother) and family, 1960-1982, n.d. |
| BOX 2 | Lerner, Lionel J. (son) and family, 1943-1982, n.d. (4 folders) Lerner, Morris and Sofie (parents), 1939-1948, n.d. Lerner, Nat (brother) and family, 1939-1949, n.d. Levine, Marion (daughter) and family, 1940-1984, n.d. (3 folders) Other relatives, 1950-1983, n.d. (3 folders) Miscellaneous, 1929-1981, n.d. (2 folders) |
| BOX 3-4 | General Correspondence, 1939-1986, n.d. Correspondence and memoranda, including attachments and enclosures, between Lerner and friends, colleagues, acquaintances, and the general public. Arrangement is chronological. |
| BOX 3 | 1939-1980 (8 folders) |
| BOX 4 | 1981-1986, n.d. (3 folders) |
| BOX 4-21 | Subject File, 1930-1984, n.d. Correspondence, memoranda, reports, interviews, conference papers and programs, research material, notes, course outlines and examinations, clippings, and printed matter. Arrangement is alphabetical by topic or type of material. |
| BOX 4 | Academy of Independent Scholars, 1978-1979, n.d. |

Subject File, 1930-1984, n.d.

Container

Contents

| | |
|--------------|---|
| | Afriat, S. N., 1963-1965, 1970-1972, n.d. |
| | Allocative and distributive efficiency, 1978, n.d. |
| | American Economic Society, 1978-1980 |
| | American Professors for Peace in the Middle East, 1968-1979 |
| | Arab refugees, 1958-1959, n.d. |
| | Audio-education economic series, 1971 |
| BOX 5 | Australian Association for Cultural Freedom, 1961-1964 |
| | "A" miscellaneous, 1941-1982, n.d. (3 folders) |
| | Bab, Herbert J., 1974-1980 |
| | Baumol, William J., 1971-1978 |
| | Ben-Shahar, Haim, 1961-1980, n.d. (3 folders) |
| | Benoit, Emile, 1957, 1972-1977, n.d. |
| BOX 6 | Bernstein, Edward M., 1939-1956 |
| | Biographical file, 1943-1982, n.d. |
| | Boulding, Kenneth, 1960-1963, n.d. |
| | Bourneuf, Alice, 1972-1975 |
| | Brazil, 1947-1948, 1970-1974, n.d. |
| | Buell, Raymond L., 1945, n.d. |
| | "B" miscellaneous 1939-1973 (3 folders) |
| BOX 7 | 1974-1982, n.d. (2 folders) |
| | Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, Calif., 1960-1979, n.d. |
| | Colander, David C. Anti-inflation incentives, 1981-1982, n.d. Miscellany, 1978-1984, n.d. (2 folders) |
| | Conferences Abba Lerner Conference, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Fla., 1978-1979 Conference Board's financial conferences, New York, N.Y., 1972-1973 Conference on Policy Formation, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 1972-1973 |
| BOX 8 | Conference on World Affairs, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colo., 1957-1960, 1966, 1980 |
| | Eastern Economic Conference, Bloomsburg State University, Bloomsburg, Pa., 1974-1976 |
| | International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences, Los Angeles, Calif., 1977-1980 |
| | International Economic Association, First Congress, Rome, Italy, 1956 |
| | International Economic Association, Fourth World Congress, Budapest, Hungary, 1974 |
| | International Symposium, Bavaria, Germany, 1980 |
| BOX 9 | Middlebury College Conference on Economic Issues, Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vt., 1978-1979 |
| | 1979 Pinhas Sapir Conference on Development, Tel Aviv, Israel, 1978-1980 |
| | Rehovoth Conference on Fiscal and Monetary Problems in Developing States, Jerusalem and Rehovoth, Israel, 1965 |

Subject File, 1930-1984, n.d.

Container

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| | |
|--------|--|
| | "C" miscellaneous, 1939, 1956-1981, n.d. (3 folders) |
| | "D" miscellaneous, 1960-1980, n.d. (3 folders) |
| BOX 10 | Emeritus letters, 1971 "E" miscellaneous, 1969-1980, n.d. Fisher, Alan, 1971-1982 (2 folders) Florida State University, Tallahassee, Fla., 1968-1980 Forsyth, J. M., 1951-1964, n.d. Friedman, Milton, 1947-1979, n.d. "F" miscellaneous, 1949-1981, n.d. (2 folders) Grants 1974-1975 |
| BOX 11 | 1976-1980, n.d. (2 folders) Gross, Elly, 1956-1972, 1979-1980 "G" miscellaneous, 1956-1980, n.d. (4 folders) Hansen, Bent, 1965-1978 Hasson, Joseph A., 1971-1981, n.d. |
| BOX 12 | Hayek, Friedrich A., 1937-1945, 1962, 1979, n.d. Hoffman, Hans, 1944, n.d. "H" miscellaneous, 1947-1981, n.d. (4 folders) Inflation, 1971-1974, n.d. Institute for Mediterranean Affairs, New York, N.Y., 1967-1975, n.d. |
| BOX 13 | Interviews, 1978-1980 Israel, 1948-1977, n.d. (2 folders) "I" miscellaneous, 1972-1974 Jones, Jean Rhys, 1945-1948, n.d. <i>Journal of Post Keynesian Economics</i> , 1977 "J" miscellaneous, 1946-1979, n.d. Keynes, John Maynard, 1941-1944, 1968-1973 Krehm, William, 1971-1972, n.d. Kress, Shirley E., 1972-1976, n.d. |
| | "K" miscellaneous 1943-1980 (3 folders) |
| BOX 14 | Undated Layard, Richard, 1980-1981, n.d. Liberal Party, 1944-1945, n.d. London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London, London, England, 1936-1939, 1970-1981, n.d. Lowe, Adolph, 1971-1977 |

Subject File, 1930-1984, n.d.

Container

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| | |
|---------------|---|
| | LSD, 1958-1967, n.d. |
| | "L" miscellaneous, 1949-1958, 1966-1980, n.d. |
| | Machlup, Fritz, 1957, 1971-1977, n.d. |
| | Makower, Helen, 1962-1971, n.d. |
| | Market mechanism anti-inflation plan (MAP), 1978-1979, n.d. |
| BOX 15 | Mayer, Thomas, 1972-1979 |
| | "Mc" miscellaneous, 1972-1978, n.d. |
| | Middle East, peace, 1959, 1965-1974 |
| | Minsky, Hyman P., 1972-1976 |
| | Money, international, 1943, 1973 |
| | Money and wealth, 1969-1971, n.d. |
| | Morrissett, Ann, 1948-1959, n.d. |
| | "M" miscellaneous, 1940-1948, 1962-1980, n.d. |
| | (3 folders) |
| | National Caucus of Labor Committees, 1971-1973 |
| | National Science Foundation, 1974-1979, n.d. |
| BOX 16 | Notes, 1955-1956, n.d. |
| | (4 folders) |
| | "N" miscellaneous, 1946, 1953-1958, 1965-1980, n.d. |
| | "O" miscellaneous, 1969-1980, n.d. |
| | Painter, Mary S., 1946-1948, 1958, n.d. |
| | (3 folders) |
| | Pimsleur, Meira G., 1956-1958, n.d. |
| BOX 17 | "P" miscellaneous, 1948-1980, n.d. |
| | (2 folders) |
| | Queens College of the City University of New York, New York, N.Y. |
| | Correspondence, 1939-1941, 1963-1978 |
| | Course outlines, 1971-1977, n.d. |
| | Examinations, 1971-1978, n.d. |
| | General, 1971-1978, n.d. |
| | RAND Corp., 1949-1952, n.d. |
| | (2 folders) |
| | Rent, 1964, n.d. |
| | Resource use, patterns and planning |
| | 1938-1939 |
| BOX 18 | Undated |
| | Reza, Ali M., 1972-1978, n.d. |
| | (2 folders) |
| | Robertson, D. H., 1931-1950, n.d. |
| | Robinson, Joan, 1930-1978, n.d. |
| | (2 folders) |
| | Rumney, Rebecca (Riv), 1957-1958, 1977 |
| | "R" miscellaneous, 1952-1980, n.d. |
| | (3 folders) |
| BOX 19 | Schmitz, Andrew, 1972-1978, n.d. |
| | (2 folders) |
| | Sen, Amartya, 1973-1977, n.d. |

Subject File, 1930-1984, n.d.

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| | Smelker, Mary Wise, 1938-1953, n.d. (7 folders) |
| | Szilard, Leo, 1948, 1960-1964 |
| | "S" miscellaneous 1939-1976 (2 folders) |
| BOX 20 | 1977-1980, n.d. (2 folders) |
| | Taylor, Katherine Whiteside, 1958-1959, 1977, n.d. |
| | Tullock, Gordon, 1973-1978, n.d. |
| | "T" miscellaneous, 1953-1980, n.d. |
| | University Centers for Rational Alternatives, Inc., New York, N.Y., 1974-1980 |
| | University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, 1972-1974 |
| | University of California, Berkeley, Calif. Faculty seminars, 1969-1973 General, 1939, 1970-1977, n.d. |
| | Untermeyer, Ethel, 1947-1958, 1971-1980 (2 folders) |
| BOX 21 | "U" miscellaneous, 1969-1980, n.d. "V" miscellaneous, 1971-1978 Wage and price freeze, 1971 Welfare economics, 1950-1961, n.d. (2 folders) |
| | Western Economic Association, 1981-1982, n.d. |
| | "W" miscellaneous, 1956-1980, n.d. (3 folders) |
| | Yanov, Alexander, 1975-1977, n.d. |
| | "Y" miscellaneous, 1972-1977 |
| BOX 22-33 | Lectures, Speeches, and Writings, 1932-1981, n.d. Correspondence, memoranda, lectures and speeches, articles and papers, book drafts, research material, notes, contracts, newspaper clippings, printed matter, and other material. Arrangement is alphabetical by type of material and therein alphabetical by type of material or subject. |
| BOX 22 | Lectures and speeches For courses 1942-1980 (4 folders) Undated (2 folders) |
| BOX 23 | (2 folders) |
| | For other engagements 1937-1974 (5 folders) |
| BOX 24 | 1975-1980, n.d. (7 folders) |
| BOX 25 | Miscellaneous, 1952-1977 |

Lectures, Speeches, and Writings, 1932-1981, n.d.

Container

Contents

Writings

By Lerner

Articles and papers

1932-1946

(7 folders)

BOX 26

1947-1959

(7 folders)

BOX 27

1960-1968

(8 folders)

BOX 28

1969-1977

(10 folders)

BOX 29

1978-1981, n.d.

(8 folders)

BOX 30

Books

"Capital Theory" (unpublished)

(6 folders)

Economics of Control (1944)

(2 folders)

BOX 31

Economics textbook (unpublished)

(5 folders)

Everybody's Business (1962)

Flation (1972)

MAP: A Market Anti-Inflation Plan (1980)

BOX 32

Other

American Economic Review, 1960-1979

Correspondence, 1941-1981, n.d.

(5 folders)

Letters to editors, 1943-1980, n.d.

(3 folders)

Lists, 1949-1979, n.d.

Miscellaneous, 1936-1942, n.d.

BOX 33

Research material and notes, 1957, n.d.

Reviews, 1937-1976, n.d.

(3 folders)

By others

1959-1978, n.d.

(3 folders)

Unidentified writings, n.d.

BOX 34-38

Miscellany, 1932-1983, n.d.

Diary and dream notes, drawings, photographic prints and negatives, calendars, address cards and lists, certificates, and other papers.

Arrangement is alphabetical by subject or type of material.

BOX 34

Address cards and lists, n.d.

(2 folders)

Calendars

Miscellany, 1932-1983, n.d.

Container

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| | |
|---------------|---|
| | 1937-1950 (2 folders) |
| BOX 35 | 1951-1982 (3 folders) Certificates, 1932-1980 Diary and dream notes |
| BOX 36 | 1943-1948 1955-1971, n.d. (2 folders) Drawings Miscellaneous, 1943-1955, n.d. (2 folders) Mobiles, n.d. Notebooks, n.d. Portraits, 1948-1955, n.d. (6 folders) |
| BOX 37 | Watercolors, pastels, and charcoals, n.d. Miscellaneous, 1935-1983, n.d. Passports, 1950-1980 Photographs Animals and nature, 1961-1962, 1974, n.d. Art, 1954, 1961-1965, n.d. (2 folders) Family, 1967, n.d. Lerner, Abba, 1980, n.d. Miscellaneous Negatives, n.d. Prints, 1962-1980, n.d. |
| BOX 38 | Trips Europe, 1957-1963, 1976, n.d. (2 folders) Israel, 1954-1955, 1965, 1974, n.d. Japan, n.d. Unidentified, 1962, n.d. (3 folders) |