Abba Ptachya Lerner Papers

Collection Summary
Title: Abba Ptachya Lerner Papers
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
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Summary: 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.

People
Ben-Shahar, Haim--Correspondence.
Buell, Raymond Leslie, 1896-1946--Correspondence.
Burns, Arthur Edward, 1908-1986--Correspondence.
Colander, David C.--Correspondence.
Ford, Gerald R., 1913-2006--Correspondence.
Friedman, Milton, 1912-2006--Correspondence.
Galbraith, John Kenneth, 1908-2006--Correspondence.
Kahn, Alfred E. (Alfred Edward)--Correspondence.
Khomeini, Ruhollah--Correspondence.
Lerner, Abba Ptachya, 1903-
Lerner, Daliah Goldfarb. Daliah Goldfarb Lerner papers.
Proxmire, William--Correspondence.
Rivlin, Alice M.--Correspondence.
Taft, Robert A. (Robert Alphonso), 1889-1953--Correspondence.

Organizations
Rand Corporation.

Subjects
Art.
Drawing.
Economics--Study and teaching.
Economics.
Iran Hostage Crisis, 1979-1981.
Keynesian economics.
Mobiles (Sculpture)
Money.
Photography.
Wealth.
Welfare economics.

Places
Iran--Foreign relations--United States.
Middle East--Foreign relations.
United States--Economic policy.
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.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Abba Ptachya Lerner are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>Born, Bessarabia, Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Married Alice Sendak (divorced)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>B.Sc. in economics, University of London, London, England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940-1942</td>
<td>Assistant professor, University of Kansas City, Kansas City, Mo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942-1947</td>
<td>Professor, New School for Social Research, New York, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Ph.D. in economics, University of London, London, England</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1944 Published *Economics of Control* (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 *Economics of Employment* (New York: McGraw-Hill. 397 pp.)

1953 Published *Essays in Economic Analysis* (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 *Everybody's Business* (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 *Flation: Not Inflation of Prices, Not Deflation of Jobs; What You Always Wanted to Know About Inflation, Depression, and the Dollar* (New York: Quadrangle Books. 184 pp.)

1975 Published with Haim Ben-Shahar *The Economics of Efficiency and Growth: Lessons from Israel and the West Bank* (Cambridge: Ballinger Pub. Co. 187 pp.)

1978-1982 Professor, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Fla.


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**
- **General Correspondence, 1939-1986**
- **Subject File, 1930-1984**
- **Lectures, Speeches, and Writings, 1932-1981**
- **Miscellany, 1932-1983**
### Description of Series

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<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Series</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| BOX 1-2   | **Family Papers, 1929-1985** | 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** | 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** | 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** | 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** | 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

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

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BOX 4  Academy of Independent Scholars, 1978-1979, undated
        Allocative and distributive efficiency, 1978, undated
        American Professors for Peace in the Middle East, 1968-1979
        Arab refugees, 1958-1959, undated
        Audio-education economic series, 1971

BOX 5  Australian Association for Cultural Freedom, 1961-1964
        "A" miscellaneous, 1941-1982, undated
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        Bab, Herbert J., 1974-1980
        Baumol, William J., 1971-1978
        Ben-Shahar, Haim, 1961-1980, undated
              (3 folders)
        Benoit, Emile, 1957, 1972-1977, undated

BOX 6  Bernstein, Edward M., 1939-1956
        Biographical file, 1943-1982, undated
        Boulding, Kenneth, 1960-1963, undated
        Bourneuf, Alice, 1972-1975
        Buell, Raymond L., 1945, undated
        "B" miscellaneous
              1939-1973
              (3 folders)

BOX 7  1974-1982, undated
              (2 folders)
        Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, Calif., 1960-1979, undated
        Colander, David C.
              Anti-inflation incentives, 1981-1982, undated
        Miscellany, 1978-1984, undated
              (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

        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 Pinchas Sapir Conference on Development, Tel Aviv, Israel, 1978-1980
Rehovoth Conference on Fiscal and Monetary Problems in Developing States, Jerusalem and Rehovoth, Israel, 1965
"C" miscellaneous, 1939, 1956-1981, undated
(3 folders)
"D" miscellaneous, 1960-1980, undated
(3 folders)

BOX 10
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"E" miscellaneous, 1969-1980, undated
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(2 folders)
Florida State University, Tallahassee, Fla., 1968-1980
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Friedman, Milton, 1947-1979, undated
"F" miscellaneous, 1949-1981, undated
(2 folders)
Grants
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BOX 11
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(2 folders)
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(4 folders)
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BOX 12
Hoffman, Hans, 1944, undated
(4 folders)
Inflation, 1971-1974, undated

BOX 13
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(2 folders)
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Journal of Post Keynesian Economics, 1977
"J" miscellaneous, 1946-1979, undated
Keynes, John Maynard, 1941-1944, 1968-1973
Krehm, William, 1971-1972, undated
Kress, Shirley E., 1972-1976, undated
"K" miscellaneous
1943-1980
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BOX 14
Undated
Liberal Party, 1944-1945, undated
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Lowe, Adolph, 1971-1977  
LSD, 1958-1967, undated  
Makower, Helen, 1962-1971, undated  
Market mechanism anti-inflation plan (MAP), 1978-1979, undated  
Mayer, Thomas, 1972-1979  
"Mc" miscellaneous, 1972-1978, undated  
Middle East, peace, 1959, 1965-1974  
Minsky, Hyman P., 1972-1976  
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Morrisett, Ann, 1948-1959, undated  
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National Caucus of Labor Committees, 1971-1973  
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| BOX 16    | Notes, 1955-1956, undated  
(4 folders)  
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| BOX 17    | "P" miscellaneous, 1948-1980, undated  
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Queens College of the City University of New York, New York, N.Y.  
Correspondence, 1939-1941, 1963-1978  
Course outlines, 1971-1977, undated  
Examinations, 1971-1978, undated  
General, 1971-1978, undated  
RAND Corp., 1949-1952, undated  
(2 folders)  
Rent, 1964, undated  
Resource use, patterns and planning 1938-1939 |
| BOX 18    | Undated  
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(2 folders)  
Robertson, D. H., 1931-1950, undated  
Robinson, Joan, 1930-1978, undated  
(2 folders)  
Rumney, Rebecca (Riv), 1957-1958, 1977  
"R" miscellaneous, 1952-1980, undated  
(3 folders) |
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| BOX 19    | Schmitz, Andrew, 1972-1978, undated  
            (2 folders)  
            Sen, Amartya, 1973-1977, undated  
            Smelker, Mary Wise, 1938-1953, undated  
            (7 folders)  
            Szilard, Leo, 1948, 1960-1964  
            "S" miscellaneous  
            1939-1976  
            (2 folders) |
| BOX 20    | 1977-1980, undated  
            (2 folders)  
            Taylor, Katherine Whiteside, 1958-1959, 1977, undated  
            Tullock, Gordon, 1973-1978, undated  
            "T" miscellaneous, 1953-1980, undated  
            University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, 1972-1974  
            University of California, Berkeley, Calif.  
            Faculty seminars, 1969-1973  
            General, 1939, 1970-1977, undated  
            (2 folders) |
| BOX 21    | "U" miscellaneous, 1969-1980, undated  
            "V" miscellaneous, 1971-1978  
            Wage and price freeze, 1971  
            Welfare economics, 1950-1961, undated  
            (2 folders)  
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            "W" miscellaneous, 1956-1980, undated  
            (3 folders)  
            Yanov, Alexander, 1975-1977, undated  
            "Y" miscellaneous, 1972-1977 |
| BOX 22-33 | Lectures, Speeches, and Writings, 1932-1981  
            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  
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| BOX 23    | For other engagements  
            1937-1974  
            (5 folders) |
### Lectures, Speeches, and Writings, 1932-1981

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| BOX 24    | 1975-1980, undated  
           | (7 folders) |
| BOX 25    | Miscellaneous, 1952-1977  
           | Writings  
           | By Lerner  
           | Articles and papers  
           | 1932-1946  
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| BOX 26    | 1947-1959  
           | (7 folders) |
| BOX 27    | 1960-1968  
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| BOX 28    | 1969-1977  
           | (10 folders) |
| BOX 29    | 1978-1981, undated  
           | (8 folders) |
| BOX 30    | Books  
           | "Capital Theory" (unpublished)  
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|           | Economics of Control (1944)  
           | (2 folders) |
| BOX 31    | Economics textbook (unpublished)  
           | (5 folders) |
|           | Everybody's Business (1962) |
|           | Flation (1972) |
| BOX 32    | Other  
           | Correspondence, 1941-1981, undated  
           | (5 folders) |
|           | Letters to editors, 1943-1980, undated  
           | (3 folders) |
|           | Lists, 1949-1979, undated |
|           | Miscellaneous, 1936-1942, undated |
| BOX 33    | Research material and notes, 1957, undated  
           | Reviews, 1937-1976, undated  
           | (3 folders) |
|           | By others  
           | 1959-1978, undated  
           | (3 folders) |
|           | Unidentified writings, undated |
| BOX 34-38 | Miscellany, 1932-1983  
           | Diary and dream notes, drawings, photographic prints and negatives, calendars, address cards and lists, certificates, and other papers.  
<pre><code>       | Arrangement is alphabetical by subject or type of material. |
</code></pre>
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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</table>
| BOX 34    | Address cards and lists, undated  
           | (2 folders)  
           | Calendars  
           | 1937-1950  
           | (2 folders) |
| BOX 35    | 1951-1982  
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           | Certificates, 1932-1980  
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| BOX 36    | 1955-1971, undated  
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           | Drawings  
           | Miscellaneous, 1943-1955, undated  
           | (2 folders)  
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           | Notebooks, undated  
           | Portraits, 1948-1955, undated  
           | (6 folders) |
| BOX 37    | Watercolors, pastels, and charcoals, undated  
           | Miscellaneous, 1935-1983, undated  
           | Passports, 1950-1980  
           | Photographs  
           | Animals and nature, 1961-1962, 1974, undated  
           | (2 folders)  
           | Family, 1967, undated  
           | Lerner, Abba, 1980, undated  
           | Miscellaneous  
           | Negatives, undated  
           | Prints, 1962-1980, undated |
| BOX 38    | Trips  
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