Abba Ptachya Lerner Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
1997

Contact information: http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact

Catalog Record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm83061499

Additional search options available at: https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms001025

Prepared by Connie L. Cartledge
Expanded and revised by Connie L. Cartledge

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2001
Revised 2010 April
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
Extent: 38 containers
Extent: 15.2 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm83061499

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 LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

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, 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
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.

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

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 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.

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.

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.

Abba Ptachya Lerner Papers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<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>
</tbody>
</table>
1942-1947  Professor, New School for Social Research, New York, N.Y.
1943       Ph.D. in economics, University of London, London, England
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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Series</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 1-2</td>
<td><strong>Family Papers, 1929-1985</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correspondence between Lerner and family members, including attachments and miscellaneous legal papers, writings, genealogical material, newspaper clippings, and printed matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>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 3-4</td>
<td><strong>General Correspondence, 1939-1986</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correspondence and memoranda, including attachments and enclosures, between Lerner and friends, colleagues, acquaintances, and the general public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arrangement is chronological.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 4-21</td>
<td><strong>Subject File, 1930-1984</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correspondence, memoranda, reports, interviews, conference papers and programs, research material, notes, course outlines and examinations, clippings, and printed matter.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Arrangement is alphabetical by topic or type of material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 22-33</td>
<td><strong>Lectures, Speeches, and Writings, 1932-1981</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correspondence, memoranda, lectures and speeches, articles and papers, book drafts, research material, notes, contracts, newspaper clippings, printed matter, and other material.</td>
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<td>Arrangement is alphabetical by type of material and therein alphabetical by type of material or subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 34-38</td>
<td><strong>Miscellany, 1932-1983</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diary and dream notes, drawings, photographic prints and negatives, calendars, address cards and lists, certificates, and other papers.</td>
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<td>Arrangement is alphabetical by subject or type of material.</td>
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# Container List

<table>
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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>
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<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&lt;br&gt; (3 folders)&lt;br&gt;Lerner, Arthur (brother) and family, 1951-1982, undated&lt;br&gt; (2 folders)&lt;br&gt;Lerner, Daliah (second wife) and family, 1956-1974, undated&lt;br&gt; (6 folders)&lt;br&gt;Lerner, Jack (brother) and family, 1960-1982, undated</td>
</tr>
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<td>BOX 2</td>
<td>Lerner, Lionel J. (son) and family, 1943-1982, undated&lt;br&gt; (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&lt;br&gt; (3 folders)&lt;br&gt;Other relatives, 1950-1983, undated&lt;br&gt; (3 folders)&lt;br&gt;Miscellaneous, 1929-1981, undated&lt;br&gt; (2 folders)</td>
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<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>
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<td>BOX 3</td>
<td>1939-1980&lt;br&gt; (8 folders)</td>
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<td>BOX 4</td>
<td>1981-1986, undated&lt;br&gt; (3 folders)</td>
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<td>BOX 4-21</td>
<td><strong>Subject File, 1930-1984</strong>&lt;br&gt;Correspondence, memoranda, reports, interviews, conference papers and programs, research material, notes, course outlines and examinations, clippings, and printed matter.&lt;br&gt;Arrangement is alphabetical by topic or type of material.</td>
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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  
(3 folders)  
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 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 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
"C" miscellaneous, 1939, 1956-1981, undated
(3 folders)
"D" miscellaneous, 1960-1980, undated
(3 folders)

BOX 10
Emeritus letters, 1971
"E" miscellaneous, 1969-1980, undated
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(2 folders)
Florida State University, Tallahassee, Fla., 1968-1980
Forsyth, J. M., 1951-1964, undated
Friedman, Milton, 1947-1979, undated
"F" miscellaneous, 1949-1981, undated
(2 folders)
Grants
1974-1975

BOX 11
1976-1980, undated
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"G" miscellaneous, 1956-1980, undated
(4 folders)
Hansen, Bent, 1965-1978

BOX 12
Hoffman, Hans, 1944, undated
(4 folders)
Inflation, 1971-1974, undated

BOX 13
Interviews, 1978-1980
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(2 folders)
"I" miscellaneous, 1972-1974
Jones, Jean Rhys, 1945-1948, undated
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
(3 folders)

BOX 14
Undated
Liberal Party, 1944-1945, undated
Subject File, 1930-1984

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<td>Lowe, Adolph, 1971-1977</td>
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<td>LSD, 1958-1967, undated</td>
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<td>Makower, Helen, 1962-1971, undated</td>
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<td>BOX 15</td>
<td>Market mechanism anti-inflation plan (MAP), 1978-1979, undated</td>
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<td>Mayer, Thomas, 1972-1979</td>
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<td>Middle East, peace, 1959, 1965-1974</td>
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<td>Minsky, Hyman P., 1972-1976</td>
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<td>Money, international, 1943, 1973</td>
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<td>Morrissett, Ann, 1948-1959, undated</td>
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<td>National Caucus of Labor Committees, 1971-1973</td>
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<td>National Science Foundation, 1974-1979, undated</td>
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<td>Notes, 1955-1956, undated</td>
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<td>&quot;O&quot; miscellaneous, 1969-1980, undated</td>
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<td>Queens College of the City University of New York, New York, N.Y.</td>
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<td>Correspondence, 1939-1941, 1963-1978</td>
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<td>Course outlines, 1971-1977, undated</td>
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<td>Examinations, 1971-1978, undated</td>
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<td>General, 1971-1978, undated</td>
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<td>RAND Corp., 1949-1952, undated</td>
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<td>Rent, 1964, undated</td>
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<td>1938-1939</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Undated</td>
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<td>Reza, Ali M., 1972-1978, undated</td>
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<td>BOX 18</td>
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<td>Robertson, D. H., 1931-1950, undated</td>
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<td>Robinson, Joan, 1930-1978, undated</td>
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<td>Rumney, Rebecca (Riv), 1957-1958, 1977</td>
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<td>&quot;R&quot; miscellaneous, 1952-1980, undated</td>
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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  
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University of California, Berkeley, Calif.  
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General, 1939, 1970-1977, undated  
(2 folders) |
| BOX 21    | "U" miscellaneous, 1969-1980, undated  
"V" miscellaneous, 1971-1978  
Wage and price freeze, 1971  
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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  
(2 folders) |
| BOX 23    | For other engagements  
1937-1974  
(5 folders) |
Lectures, Speeches, and Writings, 1932-1981

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| BOX 24    | 1975-1980, undated  
|           | (7 folders) |
| BOX 25    | Miscellaneous, 1952-1977  
|           | 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, undated  
|           | (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)  
| 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.  
|           | Arrangement is alphabetical by subject or type of material. |
Box 34
Address cards and lists, undated
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Calendars
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(2 folders)
Box 35
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Miscellaneous, 1943-1955, undated
(2 folders)
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Notebooks, undated
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Lerner, Abba, 1980, undated
Miscellaneous
Negatives, undated
Prints, 1962-1980, undated
Box 38
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Europe, 1957-1963, 1976, undated
(2 folders)
Japan, undated
Unidentified, 1962, undated
(3 folders)