

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://lcn.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://lcn.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, Abba P. (Abba Ptachya), 1903-1982.

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.
United States--Foreign relations--Iran.

Occupations

Economists.
Educators.

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

Date	Event
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](#)
- [General Correspondence, 1939-1986](#)
- [Subject File, 1930-1984](#)
- [Lectures, Speeches, and Writings, 1932-1981](#)
- [Miscellany, 1932-1983](#)

Description of Series

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

Container List

Container	Contents
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 1	Correspondence Banerji, Hannah (sister) and family, 1940, 1953-1985, undated Bornstein, Doris (sister) and family, 1949-1952, 1963-1971 Costello, Bella (sister) and family, 1946-1982 Lerner, Alice (first wife) and family, 1938-1983, undated (3 folders) Lerner, Arthur (brother) and family, 1951-1982, undated (2 folders) Lerner, Daliah (second wife) and family, 1956-1974, undated (6 folders) Lerner, Jack (brother) and family, 1960-1982, undated
BOX 2	Lerner, Lionel J. (son) and family, 1943-1982, undated (4 folders) Lerner, Morris and Sofie (parents), 1939-1948, undated Lerner, Nat (brother) and family, 1939-1949, undated Levine, Marion (daughter) and family, 1940-1984, undated (3 folders) Other relatives, 1950-1983, undated (3 folders) Miscellaneous, 1929-1981, undated (2 folders)
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 3	1939-1980 (8 folders)
BOX 4	1981-1986, undated (3 folders)
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.

Subject File, 1930-1984

Container	Contents
BOX 4	Academy of Independent Scholars, 1978-1979, undated Afriat, S. N., 1963-1965, 1970-1972, undated Allocative and distributive efficiency, 1978, undated American Professors for Peace in the Middle East, 1968-1979 Arab refugees, 1958-1959, undated Atlantic Economic Society, 1978-1980 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 Brazil, 1947-1948, 1970-1974, undated 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
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

Subject File, 1930-1984

Container

Contents

	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
	Fisher, Alan, 1971-1982 (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 (2 folders)
	Gross, Elly, 1956-1972, 1979-1980
	"G" miscellaneous, 1956-1980, undated (4 folders)
	Hansen, Bent, 1965-1978
	Hasson, Joseph A., 1971-1981, undated
BOX 12	Hayek, Friedrich A., 1937-1945, 1962, 1979, undated
	Hoffman, Hans, 1944, undated
	"H" miscellaneous, 1947-1981, undated (4 folders)
	Inflation, 1971-1974, undated
	Institute for Mediterranean Affairs, New York, N.Y., 1967-1975, undated
BOX 13	Interviews, 1978-1980
	Israel, 1948-1977, undated (2 folders)
	"I" miscellaneous, 1972-1974
	Jones, Jean Rhys, 1945-1948, undated
	<i>Journal of Post Keynesian Economics</i> , 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
	Layard, Richard, 1980-1981, undated
	Liberal Party, 1944-1945, undated

Subject File, 1930-1984

Container

Contents

	London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London, London, England, 1936-1939, 1970-1981, undated
	Lowe, Adolph, 1971-1977
	LSD, 1958-1967, undated
	"L" miscellaneous, 1949-1958, 1966-1980, undated
	Machlup, Fritz, 1957, 1971-1977, undated
	Makower, Helen, 1962-1971, undated
	Market mechanism anti-inflation plan (MAP), 1978-1979, undated
BOX 15	Mayer, Thomas, 1972-1979
	"Mc" miscellaneous, 1972-1978, undated
	Middle East, peace, 1959, 1965-1974
	Minsky, Hyman P., 1972-1976
	Money, international, 1943, 1973
	Money and wealth, 1969-1971, undated
	Morrissett, Ann, 1948-1959, undated
	"M" miscellaneous, 1940-1948, 1962-1980, undated (3 folders)
	National Caucus of Labor Committees, 1971-1973
	National Science Foundation, 1974-1979, undated
BOX 16	Notes, 1955-1956, undated (4 folders)
	"N" miscellaneous, 1946, 1953-1958, 1965-1980, undated
	"O" miscellaneous, 1969-1980, undated
	Painter, Mary S., 1946-1948, 1958, undated (3 folders)
	Pimsleur, Meira G., 1956-1958, undated
BOX 17	"P" miscellaneous, 1948-1980, undated (2 folders)
	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
	Reza, Ali M., 1972-1978, undated (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)

Subject File, 1930-1984

Container	Contents
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 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, undated Untermeyer, Ethel, 1947-1958, 1971-1980 (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) Western Economic Association, 1981-1982, undated "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	(2 folders) For other engagements 1937-1974 (5 folders)

Lectures, Speeches, and Writings, 1932-1981

Container	Contents
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) <i>Economics of Control</i> (1944) (2 folders)
BOX 31	Economics textbook (unpublished) (5 folders) <i>Everybody's Business</i> (1962) <i>Flation</i> (1972) <i>MAP: A Market Anti-Inflation Plan</i> (1980)
BOX 32	Other <i>American Economic Review</i> , 1960-1979 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.

Miscellany, 1932-1983

Container	Contents
BOX 34	Address cards and lists, undated (2 folders) Calendars 1937-1950 (2 folders)
BOX 35	1951-1982 (3 folders) Certificates, 1932-1980 Diary and dream notes 1943-1948
BOX 36	1955-1971, undated (2 folders) Drawings Miscellaneous, 1943-1955, undated (2 folders) Mobiles, undated 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 Art, 1954, 1961-1965, undated (2 folders) Family, 1967, undated Lerner, Abba, 1980, undated Miscellaneous Negatives, undated Prints, 1962-1980, undated
BOX 38	Trips Europe, 1957-1963, 1976, undated (2 folders) Israel, 1954-1955, 1965, 1974, undated Japan, undated Unidentified, 1962, undated (3 folders)