

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF
THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

May 22, 1939

A regular meeting of the Trustees of the Institute for Advanced Study was held at the Princeton Inn, Princeton, New Jersey, on Monday, May 22, 1939.

Present: Messrs. Aydelotte, Edgar S. Bamberger, Flexner, Friedenwald, Hardin, Houghton, Maass, Stewart, Veblen, and Weed.

Absent and excused: Messrs. Louis Bamberger, Carrel, Leidesdorf, Riefler, Straus, and Mrs. Fuld.

The Chairman, Mr. Houghton, presided.

The minutes of the meeting of the Trustees held on January 23, 1939, having been distributed, their reading was dispensed with, and they were approved.

The following report was presented by the Director:

In view of the fact that we are shortly to witness the laying of the corner-stone of Fuld Hall I shall make this report as brief as possible. The report submitted by me at the last meeting, in which I discussed among other things the fundamental differences between the Institute and a college or a university and the ways in which these differences affect the organization of the Institute, was sent to the professors of the various schools who, I am told, met at dinner three times for its consideration. The results of their discussion were in line with

To some extent it is a matter dependent upon the conditions under which they work, their ideals, and the enthusiasm by which they are inspired. I hope therefore that every Trustee will consider it as important to spend at least a day at the Institute as he now regards it as his duty to attend a meeting of the Trustees, for Trustees who have not seen the Institute and who have not felt its impact cannot legislate for it.

There is one thought which I should like the members of the Board as well as the professors to realize, for it is impressed upon me daily. We are living in an epoch-making time. The center of human culture is being shifted under our very eyes. Once it had its home in Athens. A few centuries later it had its home in Italy, a few centuries later in Paris, and thereafter also in Great Britain and Germany. It is now being unmistakably shifted to the United States. The scholars of Europe are refugees driven out of their own countries sometimes for political or religious reasons and sometimes because they are too unhappy and too distracted to pursue the work to which they are giving their lives. They have come to the Institute or have corresponded with the Institute literally by the hundreds. We cannot, of course, undertake either to give them places or to find them places, though we have done something substantial under both heads. Fifty years from now the historian looking backward will, if we act with courage and imagination, report that during our time the center of gravity in scholarship moved across the Atlantic Ocean to the United States. It is a grave responsibility which is thus being thrust upon us all. We cannot afford to be mean or niggardly in respect to it.