

5650 Ellis Avenue

March 4, 1952

Mr. Max Lerner
Editorial Offices
The New York Post
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Lerner:

While at Brandeis University I was very much struck by the thought that a liberal arts college of this type, located near Boston, might develop into one of America's leading educational institutions if it is flexible enough to take advantage of its opportunities.

I do not know enough about Brandeis University to be able to judge whether my thoughts are applicable to it, but here they are anyway for what they are worth:

The present ratio of staff to students is very high and probably higher than necessary, but if anything like this ratio can be maintained in the long run, then it should be possible to set up two kinds of tutoring system, a "weak" one and a "strong" one.

The "weak" tutoring system would be aimed at the majority of the students for whom the main emphasis would remain on lectures and classes. This weak tutoring system would establish just enough personal contact between the staff and the student to enable the university reliably to allocate grades on the basis of the staff's personal knowledge. It should be thus possible for the university to do away with examinations altogether and yet to furnish the students who wish to transfer to other educational institutions

with transcripts of their credits. The advantage of relieving the students from the need of cramming for examinations is, I believe, self evident.

In order to attract and keep a fair proportion of brilliant students the university should provide a "strong" tutoring system for them. This would enable the serious student to omit most classes and lectures and, with the help of an able tutor, to move very fast in his chosen field of study. I believe it should be possible to make private arrangements with a number of staff members at Harvard and MIT under which individual students could be referred to them for advanced tutoring whenever the staff at Brandeis cannot adequately fulfill this function. This point I discussed yesterday with George Wald of Harvard who happened to pass through Chicago, and he was so enthusiastic about it that I now think the suggestion might be well received by many of his colleagues.

A brilliant student may want to have 20 visits a year with his "tutor" at Harvard or MIT, and if we assume that Brandeis University would have to pay \$20 per visit, a good share of the fee which the student pays to Brandeis would have to be expended for his tutoring. This, however, seems to me to be unimportant compared to the advantage gained, i.e. that Brandeis University could offer the highest degree of education that could be demanded by any of its students. By this means Brandeis University could attract and keep a fair share of really brilliant students on its campus and this in turn could provide attraction, stimulation, and genuine education for the bulk of its students; for on campus the students are educated not only by the teaching staff, but they are educated by each other, and I for one believe that this second factor is the more important one.

Brandeis University has at the moment insufficient space for science laboratories. Just how much emphasis should be put on science in a liberal arts college I do not know, but if science is taught at all, in order to keep able men on the staff and in order to attract able students, some laboratory facilities will have to be provided. It is quite unnecessary, however, to set up fancy buildings for this purpose. Quonset huts make excellent laboratories and if they should mar the landscape perhaps they could be tucked away in a corner of the campus where they are somewhat hidden from the view of potential benefactors of the university. Equipment should be simple and inexpensive. If any of the staff members wants to engage in experiments which require more elaborate equipment, the best way to take care of his problem would be to give him a leave of absence for a term or two and to get him the use of the facilities at Harvard or MIT.

The members of the staff at Harvard and MIT who would agree to serve as tutors could quite naturally be formed into a committee to which Brandeis University could turn for advice and help. The mere existence of such an advisory committee composed of distinguished staff members of Harvard and MIT would be of some moral value, but I believe that good advice and help would in fact be forthcoming.

Sincerely yours,

Leo Szilard

LS/sds

5650 Ellis Avenue

March 3, 1952

Dr. A. L. Sachar
Office of the President
Brandeis University
Waltham 54, Massachusetts

Dear Dr. Sachar:

Many thanks for your very kind letter of February 27th.

It was indeed a very great pleasure for me to visit Brandeis University and I only regret that my stay was so short. As this experimental program, which I had the good fortune to start off, will further develop, it will be very interesting to see what shape it will finally take.

I was very much impressed by the potentialities of your university. Its proximity to Boston is of course a great asset and I hope it will make it possible for you to build it up to a first class educational institution and perhaps to one of the leading liberal arts colleges of America.

With every good wish,

Very sincerely yours,

Leo Szilard

LS/sds

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
WALTHAM 54, MASSACHUSETTS

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

February 27, 1952

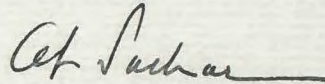
Dear Dr. Szilard:

I have just come back from a extended trip and this is the first opportunity for me to thank you most heartily for all you did for our seniors. You gave yourself very generously to them and I do not think that they will soon forget the impact of your visit. We wanted to get off to an excellent start in this experimental program and we could not have chosen more judiciously.

For days after your appearance, the youngsters were mulling over what you had said and I am sure that the stimulation of your presence will become a permanent contribution.

With all good wishes and many thanks.

Cordially,



A. L. Sachar

ALS:rr

Dr. Leo Szilard
5650 Ellis Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

5650 Ellis Avenue

March 3, 1952

Miss Ruth Rudik
Brandeis University
Waltham 54, Massachusetts

Dear Miss Rudik:

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of the check for \$400.00 which you sent me. Since I was---mistakenly-- under the impression that I was supposed to charge for my expenses, I left with your office some data about my expenses including perhaps some receipts. If by any chance you can find these in your files I would appreciate your sending them on to me so that I can use them when I make out my income tax return for the coming year.

Sincerely yours,

Leo Szilard

LS/sds

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
Waltham 54, Mass.

Date February 27, 1952

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Leo Szilard

From: Miss Ruth Rudik

Subject: Check

I am enclosing herewith a check for \$400 which, as per our understanding, will cover both your expenses and honorarium.

RR:rt

Mr Max Lerner
c/o Mrs. Robert Lehman
Nullah Khoti
Acho Rio,
Jamaica, BWI

5650 Ellis Avenue

January 28, 1952

Dear Mr. Lerner:

I just had a letter from A. L. Sachar dated January 25th in response to the letter which I addressed to you to Brandeis University, of which I enclose a copy. Mr. Sachar suggests the date of February 14th, which is quite convenient for me. He also informs me that you are in Jamaica, and so I am writing to you to say that I hope your stay is a pleasant one, and also to get your own comment as to what subject matters you would like me to discuss. Perhaps you can take a few minutes from basking in the sun and jot down a few lines relating to this point.

If you get to Brandeis University on the 14th before the evening, I would like to meet you there sometime in the afternoon so that we can have a chat before my official appearance. There is, of course, time to arrange these details when you get back into circulation.

With kind regards,

Sincerely

Leo Szillard

LS/sds
Enclosure

5650 Ellis Avenue

January 28, 1952

Mr. A. L. Sachar
Office of the President
Brandeis University
Waltham 54, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Sachar:

I am writing to thank you for your letter of January 25th and to say that February 14th is a rather convenient date for me. I have never seen Brandeis University and I appreciate the opportunity to get acquainted with the place on this occasion.

Very sincerely yours,

Leo Szilard

LS/sds

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
WALTHAM 54, MASSACHUSETTS

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

January 25, 1952

Dr. Leo Szilard
5650 Ellis Avenue
Chicago, Illinois


Dear Dr. Szilard:

Max Lerner has gone off for several weeks to Jamaica and will return to his duties at Brandeis just when the new term opens at the beginning of February. I am, therefore, responding to your letter and wish to express our satisfaction that you can be with us for the interesting new course that we are pioneering.

You indicate that you want to come in February and as early as possible. The course will open on Thursday evening, February 7. Dr. Lerner and I will outline objectives at that time and lay the groundwork for the semester. We should very much like to have you come on February 14. And if you stay through Saturday noon, I am sure that our young people will profit immensely from your presence.

Next week, I shall send you some suggested topics and other material relating to the course which will help you to set your own outline. We are eager to have you here and I look forward to your coming.

Cordially yours,


A. L. Sachar

als/eb

5650 Ellis Avenue

January 14, 1952

Professor Max Lerner
Office of the President
Brandeis University
Waltham 54, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Lerner:

I am writing to thank you for your very kind letter of January 9th and say that I should be very glad to come. Your letter does not indicate what kind of topics you would like discussed, and I wonder if you could give me some kind of information about this point so that I could order my thoughts in advance. How would a date as early as possible in February suit you? I could arrive Thursday afternoon and stay until about Saturday lunchtime.

I wonder whether it would be possible to schedule $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours instead of 2 hours for Thursday night so that there should be essentially no limitation on the discussion. This would be particularly important if a subject with political implications is discussed on which it is difficult to avoid misunderstandings unless there is a relaxed atmosphere.

With kind personal regards,

Sincerely,

Leo Szilard

LS/sds

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
WALTHAM 54, MASSACHUSETTS

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

9 January 1952

Dr. Leo Szilard
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Dr. Szilard:

In behalf of President Sachar and myself, I should like to invite you to Brandeis University to meet with the senior class and discuss with them some of your experiences and working philosophy.

This is to be part of a new course which we are planning for the second semester of this year. It is an experimental course, and I don't know of anything that quite parallels it in other Universities. We feel that college education even at its best is fragmented, and we want to help the seniors pull together the strands of what they have been learning, and face some of the intellectual and moral choices they will have to make when they get out of college. For that reason we are asking some eight or ten men and women who have combined a working philosophy with a productive life, to visit the campus and consult with the students. I am sending along a memorandum which discusses more fully the hopes and purposes behind the course.

We are anxious to have you as one of the visiting consultants for this initial and experimental year. The course starts early in February and runs until the middle of June. Our hope is that you can come on a Thursday and meet with the entire senior class (of around 100 students) on Thursday evening. We also hope that you will be able to stay over for Friday and Saturday, so that the seniors will be able to talk with you in small groups about some of their special concerns. I know that this is asking a good deal of you, and I do it only because the students can learn so much more from such direct and informal discussion than from a single lecture.

We shall be delighted to take care of your accommodations here at the University, and we offer in addition an honorarium of \$400 which will include your travel expenses. If you find you can come only for one day - either Thursday or any other - I am sure we could still fit it into our schedule. We are most anxious to have you here.

Sincerely,

Max Lerner

Max Lerner

ML:emb

7 January 1952

MEMORANDUM ON GENERAL EDUCATION F: "CONTEMPORARY LIVING"

This is an experimental course in General Education, for the whole senior class, to run during the second semester. It is intended to help the seniors round out the outlines of their work during the four years, and apply what they have learned in their courses to the problems of value and action that lie ahead for them after graduation.

Even at its best college education is fragmented, and one of the students' aims in the senior year should be to get a sense of himself as a total person making intellectual and moral choices in a going society. The assumption of the course is that he can do this best by example, rather than only by precept. To provide him with such examples, we propose to bring to the Brandeis campus a small number of men and women who embody in their lives and careers a fusion of a working philosophy with an effective and productive life. Ideally, they should come not just for a day but for two or three days, and be available for students in small groups who will consult with them and fire questions at them. But where the speaker's schedule makes it impossible for him to stay more than a day, we shall have to be content with that.

The total number who will thus visit the campus should be small -- no more than eight or nine, thus allowing for one every two weeks. There will be a regular scheduled session of two hours between the speaker and the whole senior group, which will allow a chance for general questioning. In addition there will be a scheduled hour session of the whole senior group with the members of the faculty committee, and a third hour in which the class will break up into four smaller discussion groups, each headed by a faculty member from one of the four major areas of interest, the humanities, the creative arts, the sciences, and the social sciences. This will average out to three hours, of which a two hour session each two weeks will be devoted to a meeting with the visitor, and the other two hours each week to a discussion of some of the issues and problems that were raised with them, and the light that he shed on them. There will also be assigned and suggested reading and several essays during the semester.

The emphasis throughout should be on the possibilities for productive living: for citizenship in the community, for an effective life in government, labor, business, or the professions; for productive work in scientific or social thinking, or creative work in the arts and in writing; for mature living in the family and in the community.

This means that the course will not be "problematic" in the sense of dealing with national or world problems. Nor will it be another "Great Issues" or "Great Ideas" course, since both areas have now been well canvassed by experimental courses in other universities. It involves the basic questions of the students' choice of values in a real world. It involves also a knowledge of both the limits and possibilities of effective living, and some insights into the ways of personal fulfillment. To an extent we can guide the student by the experience of the past and the life of reason. But best of all he can guide himself by the study of effective models and their living philosophies.

Since this will mean breaking new ground in teaching, the direction of the course will be kept flexible, and faculty members from every branch of the university will have a hand in shaping it. President Abram L. Sachar and Professor Max Lerner will be in immediate charge, along with a faculty representative from the sciences, the humanities, and the creative arts. At the end of the year we hope to draw up a summary of our experiences with the course and circulate it among interested people in the other universities.

Founded 1801

New York Post

75 WEST STREET • NEW YORK 6, N. Y.

May 25, 1953

Dear Leo,

It has been a long time since we have had a chance to talk together. You are mentioned at Brandeis almost every week, because the series of General Education visits which you inaugurated two years ago has proved most successful, and both students and faculty still comment on the talks you gave then. You may recall that we had a little conversation at that time about the direction that Brandeis growth would take in the fields of science. We had not moved far enough to raise many problems when I talked with you but now we have. I would love to discuss some of those problems with you. In addition to other things I have the job of organizing the work of the Graduate Faculty, and you could be very helpful to me.

Could you possibly take the trouble to let me know when you are planning to be in New York next, and perhaps we can sit down over lunch or a drink.

As ever,


 Max Lerner

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Southampton L.G.

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Mr. J. J. [unclear]

9545 R

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University of [unclear]

June 30, 1955

Mr. Max Lerner
New York Post
New York, New York

Dear Max:

I think I mentioned to you before Karl Polanyi, whom I believe you know in connection with the possibility that Brandeis University ought to be interested in him.

You probably read his book "The Great Transformation" which incidentally might be published also in a paper edition by the Beacon Press in Boston. He is either near or past the age limit which many universities enforce, but both physically and mentally he is exceedingly young and vigorous. From my own point of view the fact that he follows current political events, is most perceptive about them and has a mind of great originality in the political field, represents his greatest attraction. As you know, I personally am not interested in Economic History.

His Ford grant ends as of June 30 and it turns out that he will not go to Manchester, England because of the rules under which that university operates, he is not eligible.

Copies of letters of recommendation from Merton, McIver and Lynd concerning his work at Columbia University which were written in support of his taking a position as a professor at

- 2 -

Manchester will be sent to me and I can make them available to you if you would care to have them. I think his presence on the Brandeis campus at least part of the year would greatly strengthen the School of Social Sciences.

What do you think about it?

If you wish to pursue this matter further, I would suggest you write to Professor H. Zeisel, The Law School, University of Chicago, who can let you know how to contact Karl Polanyi.

Sincerely,

IS:srr

Leo Szilard

cc: A. Sachar

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
CHICAGO 37 • ILLINOIS
THE LAW SCHOOL

June 28, 1955

Dr. Leo Szilard
Park Sheraton Hotel
Washington, D. C.

Dear Leo:

Following your suggestion, I am sending you under separate cover, three letters from Merton, Mc Iver and Lynd concerning Karli's work at Columbia. These were written in support of a position as visiting professor at Manchester.

The position, although it was almost assured, did not materialize in the end because of a newly introduced age limit rule.

Karli, as I now understand it, is definitely beyond the age limit. He only looks and thinks and acts much younger, as you saw.

You know, of course, his personal circumstances. They would suggest an appointment ~~as~~ visiting professor on a part-time basis. His job might be envisaged as nursing in the students on a congenial campus a sense for the methods of approach to the social sciences that pertain to an up-to-date liberal philosophy.

Karli would not expect, of course, to be paid a full salary. His Ford grant, incidentally, ends as of June 30.

I should like to mention two more collateral points. One, that if money should play a part in the decision, Karli's friends would be able to make a contribution to Brandeis in form of a grant-in-aid. But you will realize, that this is a possibility which we would like to consider only if all else fails - because we are looking many years ahead.

Secondly, negotiations are on to have Karli's "The Great Transformation" published in a paper edition by the Beacon Press in Boston. This would mean, of course, a considerable circulation. If occurred to me that if your plan came to pass, one should not fail to insure that Karli's new connection with Brandeis is mentioned in the book.

It is difficult to tell you how much I appreciate your sharing this concern. Kindest regards,

Yours, *Law*

The Quadrangle Club
The University of Chicago
Chicago 37, Illinois
July 24, 1956

PERSONAL

Please Forward

Mr. Max Lerner
Editorial Office
The New York Post
75 West Street
New York City 6, New York

Dear Max,

I heard from Dr. Sachar, with whom I talked over the telephone a few days ago, that you are vacationing on Long Island. I hope that you are having a pleasant time.

Enclosed is a copy of a letter to Dr. Sachar which I wrote some time ago and which I am sending on for your information. Enclosed also is a letter I have written to Saul Cohen, with a copy to Dr. Sachar, a few days ago which might perhaps interest you. My letter to Sachar gives you also some information about what I might be doing next year.

With kind regards to you and Edna,

Yours,

Leo Szilard

m
Encl.

MAX
Lerner

90, Sundar Nagar
New Delhi, India
February 23, 1960

Dear Leo -

It was only when Marquis Childs' column reached me here, thousands of miles away, that I learned of your sickness. I scarcely need to say how sad it has made me, and how it brings out what Albert Camus always contended was the basic absurdity and injustice at the core of things. I wrote a piece about some of my memories of you when we first met. I hope you won't mind, especially since Mark Childs indicated you would not.

It doesn't surprise me that you face death, as you have faced life, with a clear-eyed ironic directness. Nor does it surprise me that you should have been working all along to avert the world disaster against which you bring so many resources of mind and will.

Edna joins me in sending you our love as well as our admiration, and in saying that we both feel the richer for knowing you.

As ever

Max

Dr. Leo Szilard

Founded 1801

New York Post

75 WEST STREET • NEW YORK 6, N. Y.

Max Lerner

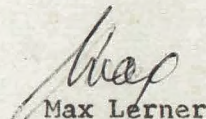
September 6, 1961

Dear Leo:

I understand that President Sachar, at Brandeis University, is anxious for you to accept his invitation to receive an honorary degree at a special convocation in October. I do hope you will say yes to him. It will mean a good deal to the University, and I will myself be quite delighted to have it honor itself in honoring you.

From everything I hear you are getting along well. I am happy about that. Edna and I, also my son Michael, are about to go off to Europe for a few months. I shall be taking a leave of absence from Brandeis for the first semester and so I shall miss you if you come to the University for the Convocation. We send our best regards to your wife and yourself.

As ever


Max Lerner

Dr. Leo Szilard
Dupont Plaza Hotel
Dupont Circle
Washington, D. C.