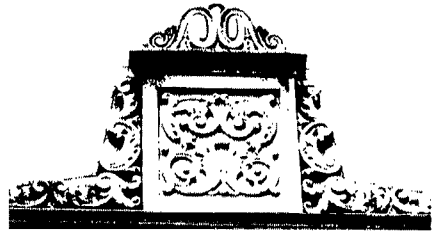


# NEWS



## *of the History Department at Boston University*

March 1998

### **Volume 8 of Albert Einstein Papers to be published**

The eighth volume of *The Collected Papers of Albert Einstein* will be published by Princeton University Press in June 1998. Covering the period of the First World War—Einstein's first four years in Berlin—the 1200-page Correspondence volume will appear in two parts. Editors are Robert Schulmann (of the Department of History), A.J. Kox, Michel Janssen (of the Department of Philosophy), and József Illy. Boston University is home to the publication of the projected 25-volume series of Einstein's writings and correspondence. We are pleased to reprint the beginning of the Introduction, written by Robert Schulmann, who also serves as Director of the BU Center for the Einstein Edition.

#### I.

Referring mockingly to his call to Berlin as the recruitment of a "prize laying hen," who fears that it may never again produce eggs, Albert Einstein makes his appearance in this volume and in the German capital only months

before the outbreak of the First World War. When this volume ends, he has crowned his intellectual achievements with a powerful new theory of gravitation and is about to become a household name. At first glance, it might seem that Einstein's professional and personal isolation have ended when he receives his appointment as a member of the Prussian Academy of Sciences and takes up that post in spring 1914. Yet one of the striking features of the correspondence that is presented in this volume is how Einstein succeeds in replicating for himself in bustling Berlin those conditions of self-absorbed isolation which had, while in Switzerland, thrust him into the limelight of the international physics community. On a personal plane, he acts on a visceral need to work without distraction by banishing wife and children from Berlin soon after his arrival there. The willingness to sacrifice his secondary goals to scientific ambition, coupled with a need for distance from the crush of politics, also underlie his fitful and tentative stance on public affairs throughout the war years.

Einstein's ability to persevere in his singleminded ambition in the face of growing recognition within the European intellectual community and of demands on his time from Berlin society comes at a price. Just as he learns to shrug off the numerous unsolicited requests addressed to him after assuming the directorship of a research institute in autumn 1917, so he adopts a certain callousness in dealings with his closest circle of friends and family. Similarly, he is prepared to sacrifice consistency in his position on political issues dur-

ing the period under discussion. The one constant is his fierce commitment to his work.

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#### II.

The continuity of fierce commitment that Einstein lavished on his research takes very concrete form in his efforts, which run like a thread through this volume, to secure experimental verification of his emerging general theory of relativity. As early as 1911, the astronomer Erwin Freundlich had come to Einstein's attention, while the latter was still Professor of Physics in Prague (Vol. 5, Doc. 281). At the end of 1913, Einstein's interest in Freundlich has advanced well beyond casual concern for the latter's career or independent research interests: Freundlich will be his apprentice. Still in Zurich, he writes to Freundlich that should the Prussian Academy, to which Einstein has recently been elected, refuse to make funds available, he will pay the research costs out of his own pocket (Vol. 5, Doc. 492). About the same time, before his Berlin debut, Einstein entertains high hopes that a proffered directorship of a new Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Physics—one of the negotiating cards that had attracted him to Berlin in the first place—may materialize. Whatever the intent of the committee that is entrusted with its realization, Einstein has already recast more elaborate plans for the institute into a single-purpose safe haven for Freundlich, where the latter may pursue with undivided attention and without financial worries the ex-



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perimental confirmation of general relativity, which is so dear to Einstein's heart. This is borne out by the painstaking stubbornness with which Einstein pursues this goal during the Berlin years. Frustrated by the postponement of his Institute's creation until October 1917, Einstein improvises nimbly to find another research home for Freundlich. In an appeal directed to Freundlich's superior at the Neubabelsberg Observatory outside Potsdam, Einstein requests that the astronomer be relieved of routine meridian observations, something that Director Hermann Struve flatly refuses. For the next two years, Einstein's correspondence is dotted with his attempts to enlist the support of high Prussian government officials and of his colleagues Max Planck and David Hilbert to solve the problem. Einstein in turn pleads for research employment for his protégé in another observatory, tries to help him meet requirements for a teaching post, and finally attempts to maneuver him directly into an academic position, all the while sidestepping the intrigues of Struve's colleague, Hugo von Seeliger.

As luck would have it, in early 1917, after Einstein had apparently exhausted his efforts to find Freundlich greater research leverage, Franz Stock, a Berlin manufacturing magnate, commits to the Kaiser Wilhelm Society the annual interest from a capital endowment of one-half million Reichsmark toward the operating costs of a physics institute. Immediately capitalizing on this godsend, Einstein spends the spring and summer of 1917 customizing this prospective creation to his specifications. The institute will be nothing more than a research handmaiden to his needs. ♦

#### OF NOTE:

In late February the department learned that Kirk Hoppe, who received his Ph.D. in African history in 1997 and has held a temporary position at the University of Minnesota, has been appointed to a tenure-track assistant professorship at the University of Illinois, Chicago.



The early registration period for fall 1998 begins in mid-March, with the first day of telephone registration for graduate students set for March 25 and for undergraduates, March 29. History Department faculty will hold special advising appointments from March 16 through April 3; after the latter date, students may see advisors during their regular office hours. As of early March undergraduate history concentrators and graduate students may call the office (353-2551) or stop in (226 Bay State Road, Room 308) to make an advising appointment; this special advising time is also a good occasion for new majors to select an advisor (to learn more about the areas of interest of department faculty, consult the department's Web site: [www.bu.edu/HISTORY](http://www.bu.edu/HISTORY)—select the "Faculty" option). The procedure for admission to restricted classes will be the same as it has been for the past several years: For HI 301 (which is limited to history concentrators), students need not see the course instructor but simply come to the department office. For colloquia (400-level and some 500-level courses) students must first see the instructor, and if permission is given to enroll, the student then comes to the department office, where the registration is handled by computer.

Below are special notes on courses for fall 1998; information on all courses is available on the Web site. A new feature of the site is the ability to search through the courses for fall to find a specific meeting time, instructor, level of difficulty, or general topic.

- There will be three sections of the required core course for undergraduate concentrators, HI 301; the instructors are Professors Diefendorf (Tuesdays and Thursdays 2-3:30 p.m.), Mayers (Wednesdays 3-6 p.m.), and Silber (Mondays 3-6 p.m.).
- Professor Jill Lepore will offer a new research colloquium, CAS HI 457: Boston's Public Past. This will be a hands-on seminar in public history in Boston, with visits to museums, monuments, and parks. The course will introduce students to the tools and methods of public history, including maps, photographs, material culture, and oral history. HI 457 will meet Fridays 12 noon-3 p.m.
- Professor Hugh Thomas will teach a new course in the fall, CAS HI 515: The Conquest of Mexico, which will consider the heritage of ancient Mexico, its religion and art; the Spanish conquest of the Caribbean; Cortés in Mexico, 1519-21; and the aftermath of the conquest, including effects in Europe. A reading knowledge of Spanish is required. The course is open to graduate students and qualified seniors.
- Professor Richard Fox will teach a seminar for Ph.D. students only, GRS HI 763: American Intellectual History. The class meets Tuesdays 6-9 p.m. ♦



During February the department had visits from the three finalists in the search for a historian to teach in the fields of the Middle East and North Africa and to cover the survey course in world history.

The first candidate was **Heather Sharkey**, who visited the department on February 6. She received her Ph.D. from Princeton in 1997, with a dissertation on "Colonialism and the Culture of Nationalism in the Northern Sudan, 1898-1956." She has spent a year as a lecturer in Middle Eastern history at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

On February 23 **Sheila Katz** was on campus for interviews. She earned her Ph.D. from Harvard in 1993 in History and Middle East Studies; her dissertation was entitled "Founding and Con-founding the Boundaries: Women and Gender in Jewish and Palestinian Nationalisms before 1950." Her teaching experience includes a year as lecturer at Tufts and positions as tutor and lecturer at Harvard; since 1996 she has been Assistant Professor of History at Berklee College in Boston.

On February 26 the final candidate, **Abdelmajid Hannoum**, came to Boston. He received his Ph.D. from Princeton in 1995 in Near Eastern Studies; earlier he earned a Doctorat ès lettres from the Sorbonne in Arabic Literature and Semiotics. His dissertation at Princeton was entitled "The Legend of the Kahina: A Study in Historiography and Mythmaking in North Africa." He has taught as a lecturer at the College of New Jersey and as an instructor of Arabic at Princeton. His manuscript, "Mythology and Memory. The Legend of a North African Heroine: The Kahina," has been submitted to Cornell University Press for publication.

The department is scheduled to meet on February 27 to select a candidate to recommend for appointment. ♦

## Latin American search begins

At the end of January a search proposal for a new member of the Institute for the Study of Economic Culture (ISEC) was approved. In discussions with History Department Chairman William Keylor, Professor Peter Berger, Director of ISEC, generously suggested that the appointee also be a historian, and the two of them settled on modern Latin American history as the field; departmental approval followed quickly. The individual selected will be a research fellow at ISEC and will also teach half-time in the Department of History—as is the case with Professor Marilyn Halter. The tenure-track position (with the tenure process taking place in the department) is for a scholar with "special expertise in the linkages between contemporary market processes and social, cultural, and moral change," able to "address historical issues relevant to an understanding of

contemporary economic change."

Chair of the search committee is Professor Halter; other members include Professor Robert Hefner of Anthropology and ISEC and Professor Dietrich Orlow of the History Department. The closing date for applications is February 28, and finalists will be visiting campus during March. Those interested in this search may contact the department office (353-2551) for details of the visits. ♦

The following students received the B.A. in history in January 1998:

- Jason Frank Capone
- Kevin William Kaufhold
- Patricia Erin Ridge (with a Bachelor's degree from the College of Communication)
- Timothy Peter Williams

### The 1998 Merle Goldman Lecture

**David H. Donald**

Professor Emeritus of History, Harvard University

will speak on

"Education Defective:

**Abraham Lincoln's Preparation for Greatness"**

Thursday, April 9, 5 P.M.

Room 313, 725 Commonwealth Avenue

*The Merle Goldman Lecture Series, endowed in honor of Professor Goldman, brings a distinguished lecturer to Boston University each year.*

Department of History  
Boston University  
226 Bay State Road  
Boston, MA 02215



Announcing the 1998

Gaspar G. Bacon Lecture

*"The Dilemma of Declaring Rights"*

presented by

**Jack N. Rakove**

Coe Professor of History and American Studies

Stanford University

Monday, March 16, 5:15 P.M.

Room 202, 725 Commonwealth Avenue

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#### About this year's Bacon lecturer

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Jack Rakove received his A.B. from Haverford College in 1968 and his Ph.D. in history from Harvard University in 1975. He spent five years on the faculty of Colgate University, then moved to Stanford University, where he is now William Robertson Coe Professor of History and American Studies (he also holds a courtesy appointment as Professor of Political Science).

In addition to many articles and edited works, Rakove is the author of *The Beginnings of National Politics: An Interpretive History of the Continental Congress* (1982), *James Madison and the Creation of the American Republic* (1990), *Original Meanings: Politics and Ideas in the Making of the Constitution* (1996, winner of the Pulitzer Prize in History), and *Declaring Rights: A Brief History with Documents* (1997). At present he is co-editing a volume to be titled *Constitutions and Constitutionalism*; another work in progress is *After Two Centuries: The American Constitution*.