

**U DP217**

**Harold Joseph Laski:  
Letters sent to Maurice Firuski**

**1911-1944**

**Accession number:** 2015/30

**Biographical Background:** Born in Manchester on 30 June 1893, Harold Joseph Laski was a British socialist political and economic theorist, author and lecturer.

He met and married Frida nee Kerry in 1911 and they had a daughter Diana born in 1916. Laski attended Manchester Grammar School and went on to study at New College, Oxford graduating in 1914.

After completing his degree he moved to America and was employed as a lecturer at McGill University (1914-1916). He then became a lecturer at Harvard University (1916-1920 and Yale University (1919-1920).

He returned to England in 1920 and was employed as a lecturer at the London School of Economics where he rose to become a professor of political science. On returning to England he became involved with the Labour Party and served as chairman during 1945 and 1946.

His intellectual approach was inspired by Marxist theory and his convictions led to conflicts with the Labour Party leaders and a decline in his influence after 1946.

He died at St Mary's Hospital in Paddington, London, on 24 March 1950.

**Custodial history:** The item was purchased from Bernard Quaritch Ltd in September 2015.

**Description:** Collection of letters sent by Laski to his friend Maurice Firuski of the Dunster House Bookshop in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The letters were sent in the early years after Laski's return to England to take up a position at the London School of Economics following a period working in the USA.

Correspondence consists of letters from Laski to Firuski (23 items), and includes some letters forwarded to Firuski by Laski but originally sent to Laski (6 items). Correspondence also includes letters requesting an introduction to Firuski by colleagues and friends of Laski (3 items).

Laski comments on books, relates various pieces of family news and current affairs, and comments on key political, literary, intellectual and society figures of the period. These figures include Richard Haldane, David Lloyd George, Winston Churchill, Herbert and Margaret Asquith, Ramsay MacDonald, Bertrand Russell, H.G. Wells, Ezra Pound, Anatole France and Nancy Astor.

Note that the letters have been preserved in a blue cloth covered box with a black leather spine on which is lettered in gold 'Harold Laski Literary and Political Gossip Original Manuscript 1920-1925'.

**Arrangement:** Letters arranged chronologically with letters from writers other than Laski at the end of the catalogue

**Extent:** 32 items

**Related material:** [U DLA] Papers of Harold Laski (and Frida Laski), 1910-1969

[U DES] Papers of Granville Eastwood relating to Harold Laski, 1922-1977

Also various miscellaneous items relating to Laski at the following references: U DCL/2/10; U DCL/100/12; U DNO/6/19; U DPM/4/49; U DSF/1/32; U DSF/2/4; U DSF/5/8; U DSH/1/7; U DX84/31; U DX241; U DX262; U DX268; U DX320; U DX327; U LIB/2/66; U DP173; U DPB/15/1/3; U DP216.

**Access conditions:** Access will be granted to any accredited reader

**Language:** English

- U DP217/1**                      **Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski**                      **20 Jun 1920**  
Manuscript, on headed paper 'The Commodore, forty-second and Lexington Avenue, Grand Central Terminal, Pershing Square, New York', envelope addressed to Firuski at The Dunster House Bookshop, Holyoke Street, Cambridge, Mass., USA. Refers to the following: having seen 'everyone in New York'; visit to 'Byrne's new place'; request that Firuski cancel Laski's order for 'Fish's Civil Service and the Patronage'; asks for information about 'the set of Pater'.  
1 item (1p and 1 envelope)
- U DP217/2**                      **Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski**                      **2 Aug 1920**  
Manuscript, sent from London School of Economics, Clare Market, Kingsway, London, envelope addressed to Firuski at The Dunster House Bookshop, Holyoke Street, Cambridge, Mass., USA. Refers to the following: forthcoming move to new house 40 Onslow Gardens in South Kensington on 10 August; time spent with Roy and Crompt; visit to Manchester to 'see my people'; Haldane; Bertrand Russell; the Webbs; George Lansbury; Lawes Dickenson; Gilbert Murray; Bradford; visit to Oxford; staying with Rivers in Cambridge; post-war England; Lloyd George; Churchill; bookshops; purchase of a folio of Harrington from 1709; no decent coffee in England.  
1 item (2pp and 1 envelope)
- U DP217/3**                      **Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski**                      **10 Sep 1920**  
Manuscript, sent from 40 Onslow Gardens, London, SW7, envelope addressed to Firuski at The Dunster House Bookshop, Holyoke Street, Cambridge, Mass., USA. Refers to the following: Discussion of books and rare editions; Crompt; dinner for 10 Harvard boys at Onslow Gardens; lecture to WEA at Reading on guild socialism; day with Morley; letter from Galsworthy.  
1 item (1p and 1 envelope)

- U DP217/4**                      **Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski**                      **30 Sep 1920**  
Manuscript, sent from 40 Onslow Gardens, London, SW7, envelope addressed to Firuski at The Dunster House Bookshop, Holyoke Street, Cambridge, Mass., USA. Refers to the following: books to be acquired by Laski for Firuski; Haldane to autograph pamphlets; regular Monday lunch at the Nation and walk with Masterman; tea with Morley on Fridays discussing various politicians; meetings with D. Burns, Wise, Krassin and Gooch; books purchased; forthcoming Oxford trip in November; furnishing 40 Onslow Gardens; going to see 'The Skin Game'; Wells' Outline of History; forthcoming party for Ben Huebach and wife; introduction to Robert Bell and W.J. Turner by Siegfried; Edward Blundell; Cochrane gone to Germany.  
1 item (2pp and 1 envelope)
- U DP217/5**                      **Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski**                      **1 Dec 1920**  
Manuscript, sent on headed paper 'Birrell and Garnett English and Foreign Booksellers, 19 Taviton Street, Gordon Square, London'. Refers to the following: owner of Birrell and Garnett (Motham) being a great friend from time at McGill and recommendation that Firuski do business with Motham.  
1 item (1p)
- U DP217/6**                      Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski                      **2 Nov 1920**  
Manuscript, sent from 40 Onslow Gardens SW7, envelope addressed to Firuski at 26 Holyoke Street, Cambridge, Mass., USA. Refers to the following: visit to Sheffield to speak at WEA meeting; lecture to Society of Civil Servants; weekend with New Statesman crowd; afternoon with G.P. Gooch; day with Redlich; dinners with Morley and Haldane; Nation articles; voluntary lunches at Toynbee; Haldane pamphlet; Morley's resignation; Massingham, Nevinson and Masterman at the Nation Monday lunch; J.H. Thomas; school and student discussion groups; discussion of books and bookshops; Ned Adams; Manley Hudson; forthcoming lunch with Siegfried and Arnold Bennett.  
1 item (1p and 1 envelope)

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| <b>U DP217/7</b> | <b>Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski</b><br>Manuscript, sent from 40 Onslow Gardens SW7, envelope addressed to Firuski at Dunster House Bookshop, 26 Holyoke Street, Cambridge, Mass., USA. Refers to the following: sending a parcel of books for Firuski.<br>1 item (1p and 1 envelope)  | <b>14 Nov 1920</b> |
| <b>U DP217/8</b> | <b>Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski</b><br>Manuscript, sent from 40 Onslow Gardens SW7. Refers to the following: potential visit of Firuski to stay with Laski in Jun 1921; request for news of the book shop 'which has been much talked of these last days'; flu contracted by Laski and Frida; discovery of two booksellers Thomas Baker and Salkeld and discussion of books; dinner with Haldane attended by Austen Chamberlain; visit to Cambridge where saw J.J. Thompson, J.R. M. Butler; lunch with Bryce; discussion of the founding of the London University Labour Association; dining with Pollock of Pollack & Maitland at the Athenaeum Club; student discussion group with Masterman, Massingham, Frank Hodges and E.F. Wise agreeing to attend; discussion of politics and Ireland with reference to Sinn Fein and government opinions; scathing opinion of Lloyd George.<br>1 item (2pp) | <b>15 Dec 1920</b> |
| <b>U DP217/9</b> | <b>Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski</b><br>Manuscript, sent from The London School of Economics and Political Science (University of London), Clare Market, London, envelope addressed to Firuski at Dunster House Bookshop, Holyoke Street, Cambridge, Mass., USA. Refers to the following: thanks for copy of work by H.O. Taylor and comment on the same; enclosure of 'a note of H.G.W.'.<br>1 item (1p and 1 envelope)   | <b>21 Jan 1921</b> |

- U DP217/10**                      **Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski**                      **29 Jan 1921**  
Manuscript, sent from 40 Onslow Gardens, SW7, envelope addressed to Firuski at 26 Holyoke Street, Cambridge, Mass., USA. Refers to the following: Firuski's new catalogue; parcel of books from Hodgsons for Firuski; weekend with Zimmern in Aberystwyth; lecture to 1000 university students on America; comments on standards at the University of Wales; lecture to the Sociological Society on future of parliamentary government; forthcoming talks by Ramsay MacDonald and C.F.G. Masterman to Laski's students; forthcoming lunch at the Asquith's; forthcoming Haldane dinner; lunch at Morley's attended by Burrell and Roseberry; rumours of an election next June.  
1 item (1p and 1 envelope)
- U DP217/11**                      **Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski**                      **11 Feb 1921**  
Manuscript, sent from 40 Onslow Gardens, SW7, envelope addressed to Firuski at 26 Holyoke Street, Cambridge, Mass., USA. Refers to the following: purchase of books for Firuski; enclosure of a letter by Mrs Asquith; purchase of a new house by Laski; visits from the Mastermans, Hammond and Ramsay MacDonald; visits to Morley, Haldane and the Asquith's; lecture to the Sociological Society and the to the Fabian Society; forthcoming lecture in Oxford; recommendation to read Laski's article 'Lampeter'.  
1 item (1p and 1 envelope)
- U DP217/12**                      **Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski**                      **2 Apr 1921**  
Manuscript, sent from 16 Warwick Gardens, W14, envelope addressed to Firuski at The Dunster House Bookshop, Holyoke Street, Cambridge, Mass., USA. Refers to the following: books sent to Firuski; Laski editing a correspondence of E. Burke for the World's Classics series; residence in and description of new house; Frida's work with the Fabian Women's Executive; visit to Manchester to see family; forthcoming party to Lady Phillimore with the Webbs and the Wells; dinner with Asquith and John Simon; lunch with Bryce; talking with Haldane; talking with Mr Justice Sankey; lunch with Lady Astor; recommendation that Firuski read Laski's review of 'Main Street' in The Nation.  
1 item (3pp and 1 envelope)

- U DP217/13**                      **Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski**                      **1 Aug 1921**  
Manuscript, sent from Red Lodge, Parsonage Road, Bath Road, Bournemouth, envelope addressed to Firuski at Dunster House Bookshop, Holyoke Street, Cambridge, Mass., USA. Refers to the following: Minna and Herbert as guests of the Laskis; Laski's piece on Henry James in The Nation; visit of [] and dinners given by Laski to introduce Haldane, Massingham, Beveridge, Ramsay MacDonald and Nevinson; visit to Morley; Reception at H.G. Wells' attended by Minna, Laski and Bernard Shaw; visit by Herbert; weekend with H.G. Wells and the Klishkos at Dunmow; visits to the Asquith's where met Smuts; visit to Haldane's to meet Einstein; discussion of books.  
1 item (2pp and 1 envelope)
- U DP217/14**                      **Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski**                      **25 May 1922**  
Manuscript, sent from 16 Warwick Gardens, London SW14. Refers to the following: Visit to France; Laski as acting Chairman of the British Institute of Adult Education; Laski as chairman of commission to enquire into the educational function of settlements; his work for the Nation; friendship with Bob Cecil; visit to England by the Pounds; lunch with Sam Monson; Ned Adams; discussion of books; forthcoming visit to England by Minna in August; intention to spend part of the summer in Belgium; invitation to Firuski to visit.  
1 item (2pp)
- U DP217/15**                      **Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski**                      **30 Apr 1923**  
Manuscript, sent from London School of Economics and Political Science, envelope addressed to Firuski at The Dunster House Bookshop, Holyoke Street, Cambridge, Mass., USA. Refers to the following: Start of term; Firuski's new catalogue; Roy having left Harvard. Access will be granted to any accredited reader  
1 item (1p and 1 envelope)
- U DP217/16**                      **Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski**                      **1 Sep 1923**  
Manuscript, sent from 16 Warwick Gardens, W14, addressed to Firuski at Dunster House Bookshop, Holyoke Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Refers to the following: Introduction of Laski's colleague Dr H. Finer to Firuski.  
1 item (1p)

<b>U DP217/17</b>	<b>Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski</b> Manuscript, sent from National Liberal Club, Whithall Place, SW1, addressed to Firuski at The Dunster House Bookshop, Holyoke Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Refers to the following: Introduction of Laski's friend Dr T.E. Gregory to Firuski. 1 item (1p)	<b>1 Sep 1924</b>
<b>U DP217/18</b>	<b>Letter: Th. J [Thomas Jaeger?] to Maurice Firuski</b> Manuscript, sent from Queen's Hotel, Montreal, Canada. Refers to the following: Enclosure of letter of introduction from Laski; request that the writer be allowed to meet with Firuski before leaving for Berlin. 1 item (1p)	<b>16 Sep 1924</b>
<b>U DP217/19</b>	<b>Letter: Herman Finer to Maurice Firuski</b> Manuscript, sent from Colonial Club, Cambridge. Refers to the following: Term spending in USA; request by Laski that Finer look in on Firuski when in Harvard; enclosure of letter of introduction from Laski. 1 item (1p)	<b>22 Apr 1925</b>
<b>U DP217/20</b>	<b>Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski</b> Manuscript, sent from 16 Warwick Gardens, W14, envelope addressed to Firuski at Dunster House Bookshop, 26 Holyoke Street, Cambridge, Mass., USA. Refers to the following: Meredith letter given to Felix as a birthday present; thanks for kindness to Finer; sending maximus opus in July. 1 item (1p and 1 envelope)	<b>28 Jun 1925</b>
<b>U DP217/21</b>	<b>Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski</b> Manuscript, sent from 16 Warwick Gardens, W14, addressed to Firuski at Dunster House Bookshop, Holyoke Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Refers to the following: Introduction of Laski's friend and colleague K.B. Smellie to Firuski. 1 item (1p)	<b>3 Sep 1925</b>
<b>U DP217/22</b>	<b>Letter: K.B. Smellie to Maurice Firuski</b> Manuscript, sent from Hotel Puritan, Commonwealth Ave, Boston, USA. Refers to the following: Enclosure of letter of introduction from Laski; Smellie studying at Harvard Law School during coming term; hope that Firuski might meet him. 1 item (1p)	<b>21 Sep 1925</b>



<b>U DP217/23</b>	<b>Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski</b> Typescript, sent from London School of Economics and Political Science. Refers to the following: Parcel received by Laski from Firuski; arrival of Laski in Boston 27 March [1926?]. 1 item (1p)	<b>24 Nov 1925</b>
<b>U DP217/24</b>	<b>Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski</b> Manuscript, sent from 16 Warwick Gardens, W14, envelope addressed to Firuski at Dunster House Bookshop, Holyoke Street, Cambridge, Mass., USA. Refers to the following: Thanks to Firuski for books; visit of Ben Huebach to stay with Laski; Marriage of Minna; arrangements for Laski's forthcoming trip to America. 1 item (1p and 1 envelope)	<b>27 Dec 1925</b>
<b>U DP217/25</b>	<b>Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski</b> Manuscript, sent from Harvard Club, 27 West 44th Street, [New York?], envelope addressed to Firuski at Dunster House Bookshop, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Refers to the following: Request that Firuski send copies of Harvard and Columbia Law Review and the US reports for 'the School' [LSE]. 1 item (1p and 1 envelope)	<b>18 Apr 1926</b>
<b>U DP217/26</b>	<b>Letter: Harold Joseph Laski to Maurice Firuski</b> Manuscript. Refers to the following: Request that Firuski send Pound's Trade Union Lectures over tonight for return in the morning. 1 item (1p)	<b>n.d.</b>
<b>U DP217/27</b>	<b>Letter: Karl Pearson to Harold Joseph Laski</b> Manuscript, sent from High Nest, Keswick. Refers to the following: Thoughts and advice on economic and social statistics and calculations, including death rate and fertility; Edinburgh C.O.S. report; unpublished appeal literature for circulation to potential supporters. 1 item (2pp)	<b>24 Aug 1911</b>
<b>U DP217/28</b>	<b>Letter: A.L. Smith to Harold Joseph Laski</b> Typescript, sent from Balliol College, Oxford. Refers to the following: Offprint from Yale Law Journal; Laski's former tutor Mr Herbert Fisher. 1 item (1p)	<b>29 Jan 1917</b>

<b>U DP217/29</b>	<b>Letter: Mrs Margaret Asquith to Harold Joseph Laski</b> Manuscript, sent from 44 Bedford Squarre, WC1. Refers to the following: Invitation to tea; opinions on the Labour Party; Belgian working classes; opinions re politics in England; writer's book. 1 item (1p)	<b>5 Feb 1921</b>
<b>U DP217/30</b>	<b>Letter: John Sankey to Harold Joseph Laski</b> Manuscript. Refers to the following: Arrangements for an introduction of a friend to Sankey. 1 item (1p)	<b>19 Jul 1921</b>
<b>U DP217/31</b>	<b>Letter: Charles F.G. Masterman to Harold Joseph Laski</b> Manuscript, sent from Gillingham Street, SW. Refers to the following: Possible arrangements for lunch with Laski; absence from London. 1 item (2pp)	<b>22 Dec 1922</b>
<b>U DP217/32</b>	<b>Letter: H.M. [Herbert Stanley Morrison?] to Harold Joseph Laski</b> Manuscript, sent from Whitehall, London, SW1. Refers to the following: Thanks for suggestions for future speeches. 1 item (1p)	<b>22 Mar 1944</b>