

Creating Much Out of Nothing: The Relationship between Fritz Haber and Chaim Weizmann

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Abstract: In the early 1930s, as Nazism was gaining strength in Germany, two renowned German-speaking Jewish scientists found themselves on converging paths: Fritz Haber (1868–1934), one of the most influential and controversial of 20th century chemists and Chaim Weizmann (1874–1952), a successful biochemist, leader of the world Zionist movement, and future founder of the State of Israel. In their meetings and correspondence, they reflect on the history, current events, and fate of science and scientists, and strive to create a place where learning and humanism would rise above racism and hatred. This article is adapted from a recently published full-length paper [Bielik and Friedrich, *Israel Journal of Chemistry*, 2020, 60].

1 Prelude

The apparent first contact between Fritz Haber and Chaim Weizmann, dating back to March 1921, was indirect but consequential. As noted in Weizmann's autobiography [1, p.352]:

It will be remembered that when I made my first trip to America, in 1921, I had been fortunate enough to enlist the co-operation of [Albert] Einstein. I learned later that Haber had done all he could to dissuade Einstein from joining me; he said, among other things, that Einstein would be doing untold harm to his career and to the name of the institute of which he was a distinguished member if he threw in his lot with the Zionists, and particularly with such pronounced Zionists as myself.

It would take nearly twelve years and the mediation of Weizmann's brother-in-law, Josef Blumenfeld (1901–1981), as well as Haber's son, Hermann Haber (1902–1946), for the two men to close the distance between them and to meet face to face. When they finally did, in London, Weizmann quickly warmed up to Haber: "I found [Haber], somewhat to my surprise, extremely affable" [1, p.352]. From then on, a rather congenial relationship had developed between Haber and Weizmann that hinged on Weizmann's Zionist project of building academic institutions in British Mandate Palestine and Haber's outstanding ability to help its advancement. In what follows, we follow the timeline of their mutual encounters – and of Haber's changing attitudes in response to the rise of Nazism – that nearly culminated in Haber's resettling to Palestine. Our principal guide will be their mutual correspondence (29 letters retrieved from the Weizmann Archives in Rehovot), as well as correspondence with others. Had Haber's ill health – and death – not cut short his journey to join Weizmann in Mandatory Palestine, Israeli science could have benefited not only from the involvement of Haber's pupils and colleagues, but also from the leadership of Haber himself.



Figure 1. Zionist delegation to the U.S., 2 April 1921. From left to right: Menachem Ussishkin (head of the Zionist Commission and later President of the Jewish National Fund), Chaim Weizmann, Vera Weizmann, Albert Einstein, Else Einstein, and Ben-Zion Mossenson (Member of the Jewish National Council). Wiki Commons.

However, before setting out on a tour along the timeline of their mutual encounters, let us quote what Haber had written to his friend Einstein in connection with Einstein's planned trip to the U.K. and U.S.A. as a member of a Zionist delegation [2]:

It is the friendship of many years that forces me to write to you today. ... If at this point in time you ostentatiously fraternize with the English and their friends, the people [in Germany] will regard it as a proof of the disloyalty of the Jews. So many Jews went into the war [WWI], died, and ended up in misery, without complaining about it, because they saw their service as a [patriotic] duty. Their lives and deaths have not eliminated anti-Semitism, but have relegated it, in the eyes of those who shoulder the honor and greatness of our country, to [the category of] base hatefulness and ignobility. Do you

wish to erase through your behavior what German Jews have achieved with their blood and suffering?

In America, Einstein was treated as a celebrity (Figure 1) [3]. Back in Berlin, Einstein's success abroad was regarded as homage paid to a *German* scientist – and no incidents related to Einstein's trip are on record. However, serious incidents followed not long thereafter, as the anti-Semitic (and anti-socialist) conspiracy theory of a “stab in the back” was taking hold in Germany [4].

2 Timeline of personal meetings between Fritz Haber and Chaim Weizmann

First meeting (London, 1932)

As noted above, Haber and Weizmann were introduced to each other in person as late as 1932 – by their family members (the exact date of the meeting is unknown) [5, p.361]. At their amicable meeting in London, Haber was still the omnipotent German *Geheimrat* (privy councilor) while Weizmann, a British subject, was the leader of the Zionist movement. A year earlier, Weizmann was voted out of office as president of the World Zionist Organization. Disappointed by the disapproval of his liberal political leadership, Weizmann concentrated on establishing a new biochemistry research institute in the town of Rehovot in Palestine, with the support of the British Zionist sympathizers, Israel and Rebecca Sieff [1]. This was far from a mere distraction for Weizmann. As Fritz Stern put it [6, p.231]:

For most liberals at the time, science was an unquestioned good, the fullest expression of human reason and human genius, an obvious instrument of human progress.

At their London meeting, Weizmann outlined his project in Rehovot to Haber, whereupon Haber “invited [Weizmann] to visit him at his research institute [in Berlin]” [1, p.352].



Figure 2. Fritz Haber with Richard Willstätter, in Kloster, Switzerland, in 1929. Archiv der Max-Planck-Gesellschaft.

Second meeting (Berlin, 5 December 1932)

Weizmann accepted Haber’s invitation and visited him at his Kaiser Wilhelm Institute (KWI) for Physical Chemistry and Electrochemistry in Berlin-Dahlem on 5 December 1932 [7], less than two months before Adolf Hitler’s rise to power in Germany. Here is how Weizmann described his visit [1, p.352]:

It was a magnificent collection of laboratories, superbly equipped, and many sided in its program, and Haber was enthroned as dictator ... He was not only hospitable; he was actually interested in my work in Palestine. Frequently in our conversation on technical matters, he would throw in the words: “Well, Dr. Weizmann, you might try to introduce that in Palestine.”

In fact, Weizmann was impressed by what he saw in Dahlem to the extent that he decided to model what was to become the Daniel Sieff Research Institute on Haber’s KWI. The impending political catastrophe in Germany is alluded to a letter that Haber sent to Weizmann on 21 May 1933 from Munich, where he was visiting his bosom friend Richard Willstätter (1872–1942), see Figure 2. Although Haber did not explicitly mention his own predicament under the Nazi rule, he noted that Willstätter was reluctant to even consider moving out of Munich.

And a predicament it was: Soon after the promulgation of the “Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service” – designed to exclude Jews and political opponents from civil service positions in Nazi Germany – on 7 April 1933, Haber found himself under the obligation to dismiss twelve out of his forty-nine coworkers of Jewish descent from the KWI [8, p. 651]. Under a threat from the Ministry of Science, Education, and Culture that the Society would come under a Nazi commissioner should the law not be enforced immediately and a concurrent pressure from the Kaiser Wilhelm Society, Haber dismissed, on 29 April 1933, his assistants Ladislaus Farkas (1904–1948) and Leopold Frommer (1894–1943) [8, p.656]. The law did not apply to Haber himself, as there was a clause that exempted the veterans of World War One who served on the front. The next day, Haber resigned from all his positions in protest against the law. Haber submitted his memorable letter of resignation on 30 April 1933 to the infamous *Kultusminister* Bernhard Rust, in which he noted [9]:

My sense of tradition requires of me that... I only choose staff members according to their professional abilities and character, without regard to their racial make-up.

The resignation was to take effect on 30 September 1933, the day the law entered into force.

Third meeting (Paris, 10 August 1933)

Haber left Berlin on 5 August 1933 – unaware that he would never return. His first destination was Santander in Spain, where the officials of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) were to hold a preparatory meeting on August 9–20, 1933 for the forthcoming 1934 UPAC Congress [10]. Joined on the trip by Richard Willstätter, Haber made a stopover in Paris to see Weizmann again. They met on 10 August, in the presence of Willstätter and Weizmann's assistant, Ernst David Bergmann [11]. This was a key moment in Haber's new life in exile, as Weizmann laid out his detailed plans for the Sieff Institute and offered both Haber and Willstätter leading positions there.

In his autobiography, Weizmann recollects the circumstances and the way he extended his invitation to Haber [1, p.352]:

[I] found [Haber] broken, muddled, moving about in a mental and moral vacuum. ... The shock had been too great. He had occupied too high a position in Germany; his fall was therefore all the harder to bear. ... I began to talk to him then about coming out to us in Palestine, but did not press the matter. I wanted him first to take a rest, recover from his shock and treat his illness [angina pectoris] in a suitable climate.

In addition, Weizmann offered Haber to make use of his connections at the British Foreign Office to help Haber to get out of Germany without having to pay the emigration tax [Reichsfluchtsteuer] [8, p.688] [12]. Haber understood Weizmann as suggesting that, in the coming years, he would spend regularly the winter terms in Palestine, helping Weizmann with setting up the Sieff Institute. But before committing, Haber wanted to see the place and the people first and offered to visit Rehovot at the beginning of 1934.

Following his visit to Spain, Haber returned to a sanitarium [Kurhaus] in Switzerland. Shortly after, he learned that Weizmann was vacationing not far away, in Zermatt, Switzerland. Haber decided to pay him a visit, ignoring the warnings of his doctors, including Rudolf Stern's, that he should avoid high altitudes because of his heart condition (Zermatt is located at the foot of the Matterhorn, at about 1600 m).

Fourth meeting (Zermatt, 25 August 1933)

At and after the meeting in Zermatt, the plan for Haber's involvement in Weizmann's project in Palestine started taking concrete shape [1, p.357] [13]. Haber's high altitude visit with the Weizmanns was happening against the background of the 18th Congress of the World Zionist Organization that was taking place in Prague from 21 August until 4 September 1933. As Weizmann explains in his memoirs, he did not intend to attend the Congress, despite the importance for Jews to speak in one voice during the crisis brought about by the rise of the Nazis to power in Germany [1, pp.353-354]:

I had refused to attend [the Congress], not wishing to be involved in any political struggle. During the dinner [with Haber, Weizmann's wife Vera and their son Michael] repeated [phone] calls came from Prague, and frantic requests that I leave Zermatt at once and betake myself to the Congress. I persisted in my refusal, and though I said nothing to Haber about [the reason for] these frequent interruptions, except to mention that they came from Prague, he guessed their purport from something he read in the papers, and he said to me, with the utmost earnestness: Dr. Weizmann, I was one of the mightiest men in Germany. I was more than a great army commander, more than a captain of industry. I was the founder of industries; my work was essential for the economic and military expansion of Germany. All doors were open to me. But the position which I occupied then, glamorous as it may have seemed, is as nothing compared with yours. You are not creating out of plenty – you are creating out of nothing, in a land which lacks

everything; you are trying to restore a derelict people to a sense of dignity. And you are, I think, succeeding. At the end of my life I find myself a bankrupt. When I am gone and forgotten your work will stand, a shining monument, in the long history of our people. Do not ignore the call now; go to Prague, even at the risk that you will suffer grievous disappointment there.

Haber's speech in Zermatt is often quoted, but seldom with the point about the significance that he attributed to Weizmann's work. Weizmann "did not go to Prague, much to Haber's disappointment," but he [1, p.354]:

took the opportunity to press upon [Haber] our invitation to come out to Palestine and work with us. I said: "The climate will be good for you. You will find a modern laboratory and able assistants. You will work in peace and honor. It will be a return home for you – your journey's end." He accepted with enthusiasm and asked only that he be allowed to spend another month or two in a sanitarium.

What happened next is captured in Rudolf Stern's recollections [14, p.100]:

On leaving Zermatt, Haber suffered a complete breakdown in the little town of Brig; he himself thought it was an apoplectic fit while, from his later descriptions, I was more inclined to consider it a heart failure. Anyhow, he recovered sufficiently to be able to travel to the Swiss sanitarium in Mammern where he spent the whole of September [and October] under competent medical care and in the company of his always helpful and understanding stepsister, Else Freyhan.

Still from Brig, Haber reported about his state to Weizmann [15]:

I'm again in full possession of my body, speech, and mental capacity and have only thoroughly spoilt the summer holiday car trip for my son Hermann and his French friends. No more will I ride up to the elevation of 1600 meters and then down from there again, but I am glad that my last mountain trip has given me the opportunity to meet you and your wife and Mrs. Hadassah

Samuel as well as to see, for the first time in my life, the Matterhorn, which occupies a very special place among mountains, as you do among men. ... I kindly request your permission to stay in touch with you with regard to Palestine and to the eventual help that I may need in order to be able to extricate myself from Germany. I would be most grateful if you could write me a letter inviting me to spend a part of the year in England and the rest in Palestine, should the English climate be too rough for me. I could then use this letter with the lower authorities in Germany in the case the higher authorities make no trouble for me when I will be leaving the country, without the need to involve the Foreign Office. ... I have two fully furnished houses [directorial mansion in Dahlem and a farmhouse in Witzmanns near Bodensee] and the furnishings will have to go either to France [apparently to Hermann Haber] or to Palestine.

From Mammern, Haber continued exchanging letters with Weizmann about plans for Palestine while Weizmann was implementing these plans on the Palestine side, as attested to by his correspondence with Haber and with his colleagues in Rehovot. The plans included setting up Haber's laboratory and finding a suitable accommodation for him [16] [17]. Weizmann was able to report to Haber on the progress achieved [18]:

I am happy to inform you that the outer shell of the building is ready, and the people there are beginning with the inner outfit. ... I am assured that the laboratory will be in working order on January 1st, so that if we all get there during December, we shall find a great deal to do. I have instructed Palestine to look for accommodation ... and would be glad to know approximately what accommodation you will require. Who will be travelling with you? Of course, at the beginning accommodation will be rather scanty, and perhaps Spartan, but we shall soon have comfortable quarters for you. Will you be taking some of your Library with you? And will your sister and your secretary be accompanying you?

Haber replied [17]:

In any case, my situation requires further consideration, before I can make a final decision about whether to undertake such a long trip ... For such a trip I would need the company of my sister, Ms. [Else] Freyhan, as my health situation is uncertain ... I have considerably recovered since my breakdown [in Brig] ... but I don't think I can take upon myself to travel to the Near-East on my own. I intend to stay here until mid-October ... and then to travel to Orsellina [in the Locarno area of Switzerland] and stay there for a while, and from there continue by ship from Genoa either to Alexandria and from there to Cairo and Jerusalem to visit you and your wife; or should a suitable ship be available, sail directly from Genoa to Haifa.

Haber further ventures to recommend Ladislaus Farkas as his most suitable assistant – and potential successor should Haber assume the chair of physical chemistry at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem – and suggests to Weizmann to invite Farkas for a visit in London (Farkas was just about to start a fellowship in Cambridge). In the letter, Haber goes on to describe his disappointment about the outcome of the 18th Zionist Congress that did not result in re-electing Weizmann as WZO's President:

I certainly understand that under the [adverse] circumstances in Prague you could not have accepted the presidency. However, I was highly disappointed that the Congress participants could not, in light of the present situation, set aside their differences and unite in voting for you. They are lucky that the National Socialists in Germany give them more time – in that that they are not softening their position toward people of different views than theirs, but rather sharpening [their position] to the extent that my colleagues of purely Aryan descent are beginning to see the situation as unbearable and started looking for new jobs in foreign countries.

Finally, Haber vents his views on what the rise of Nazism in Germany means for German and European chemistry and chemical industry and outlines his vision of the opportunity the decline on the European continent may open for Palestine and Turkey:

German chemistry dislodged, in about 1870, English chemistry from the leadership position, whereupon French chemistry, which in the time of Liebig had a great weight, dropped out as well. Now, I assume, the German position is up for grabs and the question is who will take it. ... The continuation of a great project with the help of people who were chosen in the first place according to their political views seems hopeless to me in Germany. And even if Palestine is not strong enough to take the place of Germany, your reorganization of the University of Jerusalem and the ongoing restructuring of the University of Istanbul will ignite a light in the east that has all it takes to become a bright light for the whole world.

At the beginning of November, refreshed by his sojourn in Mammern, Haber, accompanied by his stepsister Else, set out for Cambridge. They reached their destination, after stopovers in Paris and London, on 7 November. Weizmann did his best to support Haber during the time in Cambridge. Upon Haber's arrival there, Weizmann wrote the following [19]:

I somehow feel that you are perhaps a little bit uneasy during these first few days at Cambridge, and I would like you to know how much I understand and sympathize with you; the first few days in strange surroundings are always difficult. But I am sure that that feeling will pass very soon, and that you will shortly be finding the atmosphere a congenial and friendly one in which you can carry on your work under really happy conditions.

During his nearly three-month stay in Cambridge, Haber had been visited by many of his former coworkers and colleagues, among them Michael Polanyi (1891–1976), Paul Harteck (1902–1985), Ladislaus Farkas, and Max Born (1882–1970). A happy moment was a colloquium given by Haber's Dahlem coworkers in his room at the University Arms Hotel. As Haber's former "chief of staff," Hartmut Kallmann (1896–1978), recollected "a scientific discussion [unfolded] more wonderful than you can imagine" [5, pp.610-611]. In addition to all the activities reflected in his correspondence, Haber worked hard on his science in Cambridge: he wrote there his last paper, on catalytic decomposition of hydrogen peroxide [20], a paragon of

thoroughness and ingenuity, nineteen printed pages long. According to Haber's stepsister Else, it cost him the "last ounce of his strength" [5, p. 612]. The co-author was Haber's Berlin assistant Josef J. Weiss (1905–1972). It was also in Cambridge where Haber would give his last lecture, on 23 January 1934 [8, p.691]. For his 65th birthday on 9 December 1933, Haber received a great number of congratulatory letters, among them one from Carl Bosch (1874–1940), then Chairman of the Board of IG-Farben.

In his key letter to Weizmann [21], Haber made clear, on the one hand, that he will not be able to come to Palestine in the near future, and, on the other, that he has embraced the Zionist cause. As for the former, Haber informed Weizmann about the lack of progress concerning his emigration from Germany: the visit by the British Ambassador at the German ministries in Berlin "on whose effect [Haber] built a skyscraper" was to no avail and "has contributed more to [Haber's] modesty than to [his] success." Haber's deteriorating health added a reason of its own for the need to postpone his trip to Palestine:

Meanwhile, the condition of my heart is changing with the coming winter and increasing anxiety, and the thought that seemed self-evident to me, namely that I could take off for and reach Palestine in order to recuperate, has now changed due to my state of health into its very opposite. ... I presumed that you would travel to Palestine for Easter [sic] and inquired here with a physician about the possibility of going to Madeira this month. He warned me against this journey as too great an undertaking and has thereby implicitly forbidden my trip to Haifa. Added to the concern that the German authorities will cause me trouble when I'm far away is a new and greater fear that the trip would not improve but rather worsen my condition.

As for the latter, Haber offered the following reflections on Weizmann's project, Jewish history, and Zionism:

In truth, I do not envy you your great project. I feel with increasing urgency every day that only those things are worth doing that we venture to do out of a higher consideration. But for that we need strength and confidence in our

physical endurance, and it seems to me that the conditions for your success depend increasingly on overcoming an inner deficiency of the Jews in my homeland that has not yet been stamped out by Hitler's Germany. [The German Jews] feel closer to the German state than to Zionism and [live] without the purity and simplicity of a spiritual direction of their own. Since Hitler's economic policy was met with success, the days of the Jewish prophets faded in the fog of a forgotten past and the overrating of a physically bearable existence has moved into the foreground of their interests again. No one who preaches from his desk about the Maccabees can escape being laughable, but no one who expects peaceful citizens to turn into Maccabees can escape a madhouse. I have known the wartime battlefields on which French and English Jews shot German Jews, just as French and English socialists shot German social democrats and that left behind strains of mortality that are painful to bear [a paraphrase of Goethe's Faust, verse 11954].

The Russian Jews are ahead of us, because they suffered during the days when in Germany we were seeking honor and respect. If the Americans recover economically, they will become Zionists again, as they had been before the Hitler-days. But if their system of private capitalism fails, Palestine will have to make its ascent not with the help of [American] means but, in accordance with Bismarck's dictum, by means of blood and iron. I'm writing all this not as an opinion of a man who feels responsible but from the perspective of the age that the year 1933 has bestowed on me and with the wish to be as useful to you as my strengths allow and with my all best wishes for your success and the well-being of your family that has instilled a feeling of true friendship in my tired soul.

No record of Weizmann's reaction to this letter from Haber has been found. In his next letter to Weizmann, Haber recounted the emotional problems he faced when submerged in a foreign culture in Cambridge – with repercussions for his ever more distant plans to move to Palestine [22]:

I'm afraid I haven't made myself sufficiently clear about what it means to move at my age to a land with a foreign language and way of life. I enjoy here all the conceivable formal friendship in the circle of fellow chemists. But I miss all those natural leadership activities that I had developed at home over 40 years. Whether I will be able to step out of this circle, in which you still enjoy a great deal of respect since your Manchester days, during this winter and conceive of anything else than a sojourn in a foreign sanitarium is as uncertain as crossing a lake on thin ice.

Before his departure from Cambridge, Haber wrote a letter addressed to the vice chancellor of the University in which he stressed that the "chivalry from King Arthur's time still [lived] among [English] scientists" and expressed a "strong hope" that he "will be able to return within a few weeks" to Cambridge [5, pp. 615-616]. At this time of humility and contrition, Haber also drafted his testament. In it, he expressed his wish to be buried alongside his first wife Clara, in Dahlem, if possible, or elsewhere "if impossible or disagreeable" [5, p. 630].

Fifth- and last- meeting (London, 26 January 1934)

Haber departed from Cambridge on 26 January 1934. During a break in London the same day, he met Weizmann for the last time. Haber's son Hermann and Weizmann's brother-in-law Josef Blumenfeld were also present, as at the first meeting between Haber and Weizmann in London less than two years earlier. Not much is known about what was discussed at this meeting. Haber was weak and exhausted and Weizmann must have realized that Haber would not be joining him in Palestine any time soon. Following their final meeting, Haber took off for Orsellina in southern Switzerland. At a stopover in Basle, he was joined by his son Hermann and his wife Marga as well as by Rudolf Stern and his wife. Haber passed away, as a result of heart failure, in the evening of the same day, 29 January 1934, in his room at Hotel Euler in Basle [14, p.102].

In his condolence telegram addressed to Hermann Haber, Weizmann stated [23]:

Deeply shocked and distressed sad news your dear father's death science and humanity lose in him one of their greatest sons.

Einstein noted in his letter to Hermann and Marga that Haber's was "the tragedy of the German Jew: the tragedy of unrequited love" [24].

On 3 April 1934, the Daniel Sieff Research Institute was inaugurated, with Weizmann as its founding director [25]. Richard Willstätter gave the inaugural speech, in which he extolled Weizmann's accomplishments and remembered his friend Haber. The next day, on 4 April 1934, a cornerstone was laid for the institute's library building. Among those in attendance were, apart from the host Chaim Weizmann, Ladislaus Farkas, visiting from Jerusalem, and possibly Haber's stepsister Else Freyhan. The new library building would provide a home for Fritz Haber's book collection, bequeathed to the Sieff Institute by Hermann Haber. The original library of the Sieff Institute, named after Fritz Haber, was inaugurated on the second anniversary of Haber's death, 29 January 1936 [26]. Today, the Fritz Haber Collection is a part of the main library of the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot. It consists of science classics from Haber's time, often with a personal inscription by the author.

3 Postlude

In his autobiography, published fifteen years after Haber's death, Weizmann characterized Haber as someone "who was [our emphasis] lacking in any Jewish self-respect. He had converted to Christianity and had pulled all his family with him along the road to apostasy" [1, p.352]. We wonder whether Weizmann, after witnessing at close range Haber's "reconversion" to Jewish secularism and his growing sympathies for Zionism, did not mean to say "had been" instead of "was." As Stefan Wolff pointed out, Haber in fact never stopped caring for Jews – and anti-Semitism remained his major concern. However, he had additional concerns and identities. Haber's conversion, at age twenty-three, happened in the aftermath of the public

debate between an overt anti-Semite, Heinrich von Treitschke (1834–1896), and a liberal, Theodore Mommsen (1817–1903). The latter called upon Germans to abandon “those loyalties and affiliations that divided them” [27]. Haber’s embrace of Protestantism, to which he was exposed since high-school, may have also been motivated by Greek philosophy, which he studied passionately, especially Plato, with his emphasis on the spirit [28]. According to Rudolf Stern’s testimonial, “one has no right to throw doubt on the integrity of [Haber’s] motives [for conversion]. It would be ridiculous to interpret his conversion as caused by ambition and opportunism, for it was performed at a period when Haber did not dream of an academic career but was firmly resolved to take over and enlarge the family business” [14, p.88].

However, Willstätter rebuffed conversion for whatever reason, on principle: “One has to refrain from conversion to Christianity, ‘because it is connected with rewards’ [quoting Walter Rathenau]” [29, p.396]. Regardless of their differences – between them and with him – Weizmann cherished the memory of both Haber and Willstätter: In his office at the Sieff Institute, he kept, displayed side by side on his desk, their photographs, see Figure 3. Their silent presence speaks volumes to curious visitors of Weizmann’s quarters, now that they have been converted into a historic site.



Figure 3. Chaim Weizmann in his office at the Sieff Institute in Rehovot. Seated at his desk, Weizmann is flanked by photographs of Fritz Haber and Richard Willstätter. The picture was taken at Weizmann's press conference on 26 February 1945. P. Goldmann, Weizmann Archives.

Note on availability:

The letters held at the Weizmann Archives are available online at <https://www.weizmann-archives.org.il/>.

Note concerning translations:

All translations from German into English appearing in this article are our own.

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