

1915–1920

CHEMISTS' CLUB

An Association for the Faculty

When the American Association of University Professors was founded in January 1915, higher education bore little resemblance to the system that exists in this country today. The degrees awarded each year by America's colleges and universities numbered in the tens of thousands rather than in the millions, and the student body was overwhelmingly white, male, and drawn from the social elite. Faculty members did not widely enjoy due-process protections; on the contrary, colleges and universities often operated under governments "of men and not of laws," to quote from the AAUP's first investigative report. Lacking tenure, the majority of faculty members at the time served on what would now be regarded as contingent appointments.

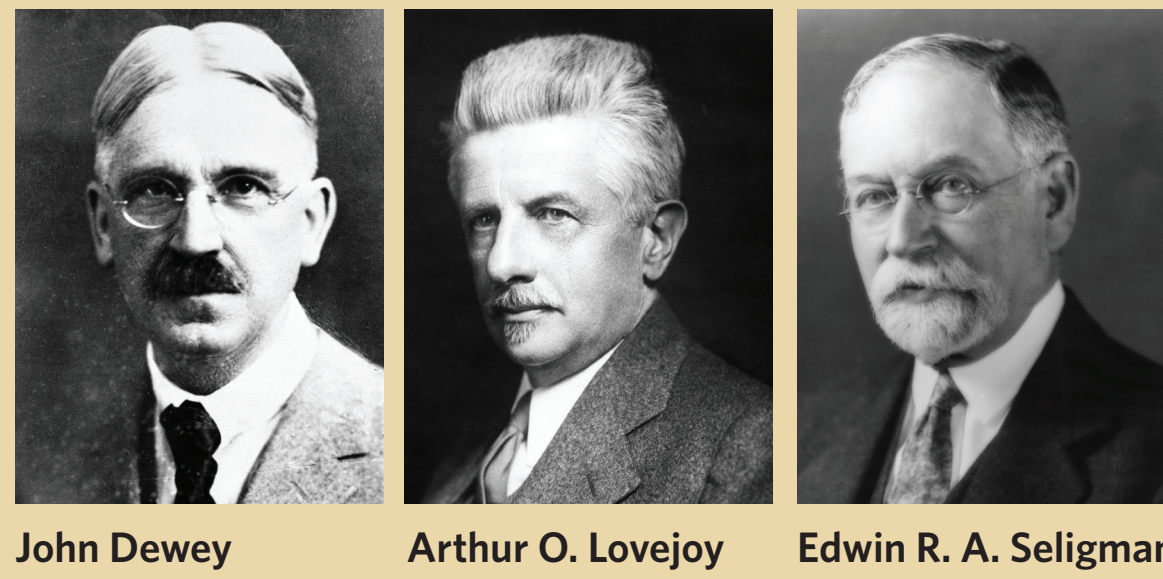
The creation of the AAUP was preceded by an incident that had come to epitomize the perils of this state of affairs: the dismissal in 1900 of Stanford University economist Edward Ross at the behest of Jane Lathrop Stanford, the widow of the university's railroad-magnate founder, after Ross had criticized railroad monopolies and the use of immigrant labor. The Ross case reminded faculty members that their professional autonomy was dependent on the whims of those who ran the institutions that employed them.

More proximate to the AAUP's founding was the work undertaken in 1914 by the Joint Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure, also known as the "committee of nine." This committee, which included three representatives each from the American Economic Association, the American Sociological Society, and the American Political Science Association and was headed by Columbia University economics professor Edwin R. A. Seligman, was charged with examining academic freedom issues and investigating individual cases. The difficulties of undertaking this work through separate disciplinary societies made apparent the need for a more broadly conceived faculty association.

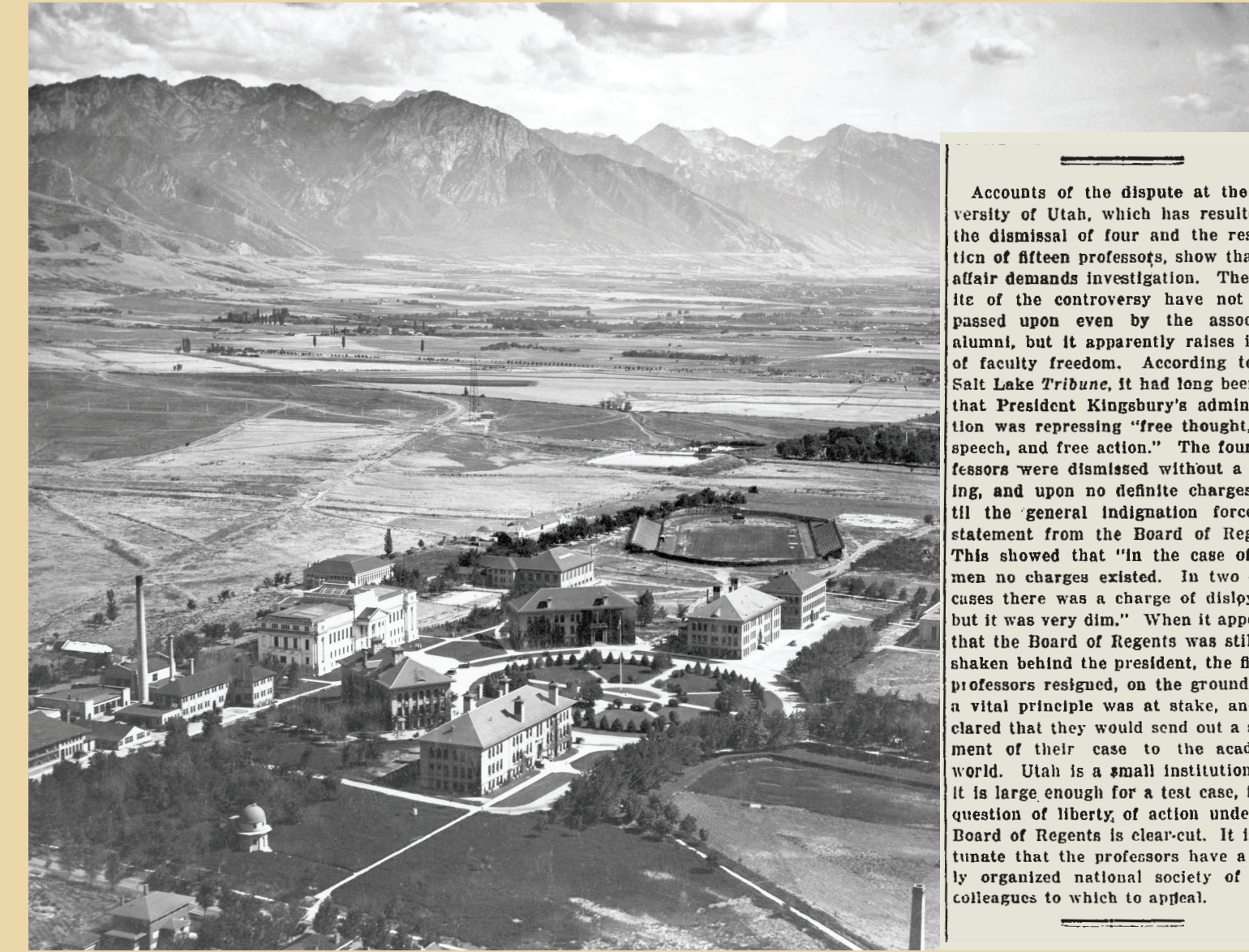
It was against this backdrop, and in the context of a larger movement toward the consolidation of professional identity through representative national organizations, that the AAUP was established. John Dewey, Arthur O. Lovejoy, and the other professors who led the Association in its first years laid the foundation for a century of work in defense of academic freedom, shared governance, and other principles that have come to define the academic profession.

1915

The AAUP is founded at an organizational meeting held at the Chemists' Club in New York City on January 1 and 2. At the meeting, John Dewey, a professor of education and psychology at Columbia University, takes office as the first president, and Arthur O. Lovejoy, a philosophy professor at Johns Hopkins University, becomes the first secretary. Dewey appoints Edwin R. A. Seligman, the economist who had led the joint "committee of nine," to chair a new committee charged with considering questions of academic freedom and tenure—a body that soon evolves into Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure.



John Dewey Arthur O. Lovejoy Edwin R. A. Seligman

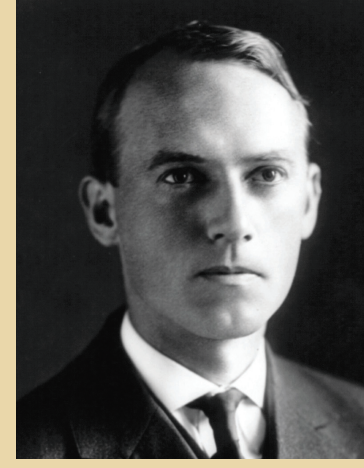


The University of Utah campus (left) and an item in the New York Evening Post that prompted Lovejoy to propose the first investigation

In March 1915, seventeen faculty members at the University of Utah resign in protest after the appointments of four of their colleagues are abruptly terminated by the president and board of trustees. A month later, the AAUP, at Lovejoy's urging, launches an investigation into violations of principles of academic freedom and tenure at Utah—the first of five investigations that the new Association will undertake in its first year as it puts its principles into practice.

A list of "charter members" published in May 1915 includes the names of more than nine hundred professors from sixty-one institutions. Membership is by nomination and election.

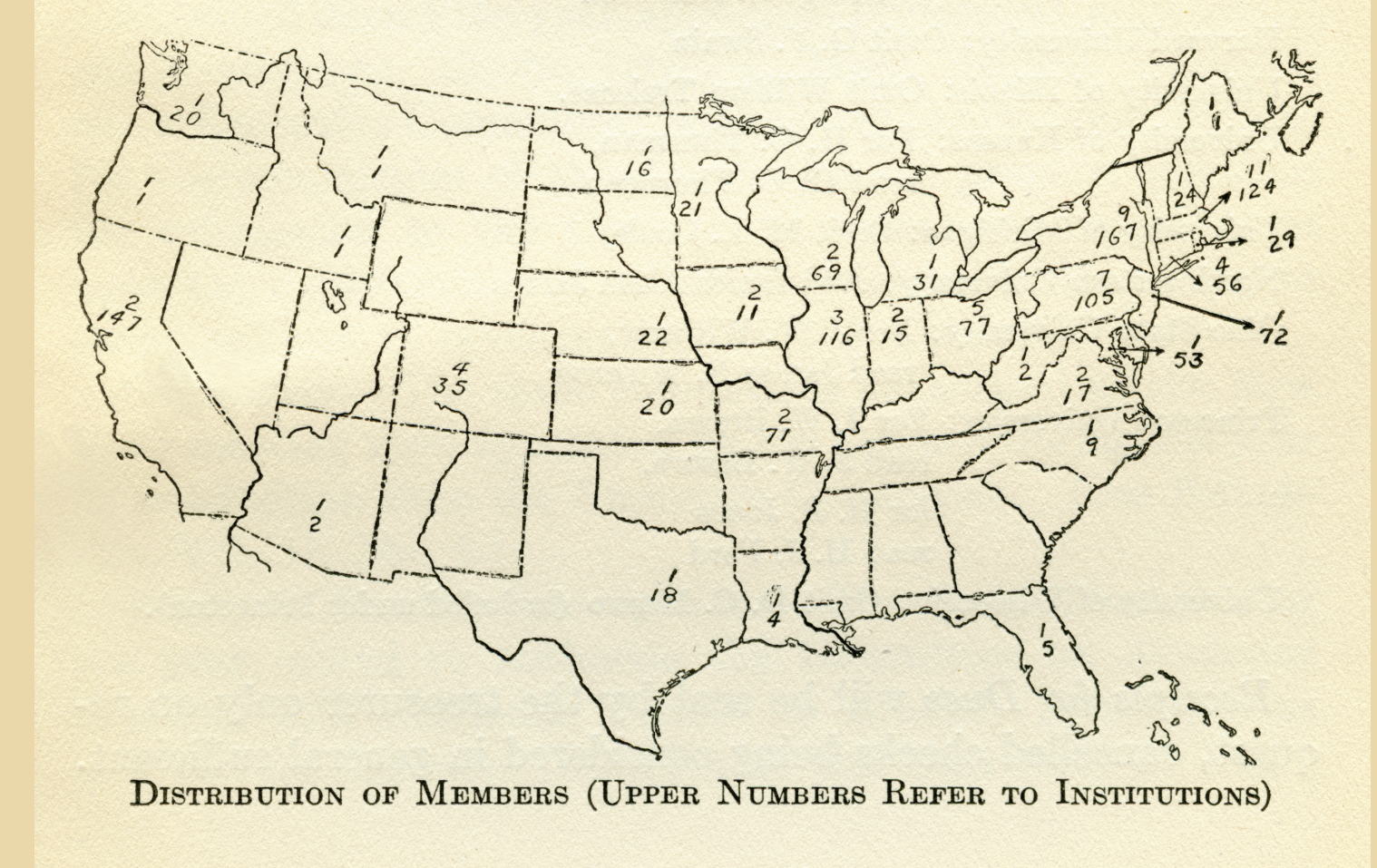
Scott Nearing, an economics professor at the University of Pennsylvania, came under fire from conservative alumni for his public opposition to child labor. Nearing became the subject of the AAUP's fourth investigation after the board of trustees—overruling the recommendation of the dean, department chair, and faculty—chose not to renew his appointment.



In December, the AAUP publishes the inaugural volume of the *Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors*. Included in the *Bulletin* is the document now known as the 1915 Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure, the AAUP's foundational statement on the rights and the corresponding obligations of members of the academic profession.

1916

The AAUP adopts a resolution to create Committee T on the Place and Function of Faculties in University Government and Administration. This committee (now the Committee on College and University Governance) becomes central to the Association's effort to promote a strong faculty role in the governance of higher education institutions.



Geographical distribution of AAUP members in early 1916

1917

The United States enters World War I.

The annual meeting votes to establish Committee W on the Status of Women in College and University Faculties "to report upon . . . the appointment of women to the higher academic positions; upon the opportunities for advancement now offered and that should be offered to women of ability and scholarship in the various fields of college and university teaching; and upon all other problems involved in the determination of the present or the desirable status of women in college and university faculties."



Women's suffragists march in New York City in 1917.

1918

World War I ends.

1919

Writing in his president's message that economic circumstances in the United States following World War I had made it impossible "that this, the only general professional society of university teachers, should any longer ignore the economic side of the teacher's calling," Arthur O. Lovejoy announces the creation of the Committee on the Economic Condition of the Profession.

1920

The Nineteenth Amendment is ratified, giving women the right to vote.

Once appointed, the scholar has professional functions to perform in which the appointing authorities have neither competency nor moral right to intervene. The responsibility of the university teacher is primarily to the public itself, and to the judgment of his own profession.

—1915 DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND ACADEMIC TENURE

CALL FOR THE MEETING FOR ORGANIZATION OF A NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS*

PROCEEDINGS OF NEW YORK MEETING

1. Name.—After the consideration of a number of alternatives, it was voted that the name of the society be The American Association of University Professors.

2. Eligibility for Membership.—It was voted that any person may be nominated for membership who holds and for ten years has held a teaching or research position in any one or more than one, American university or college, or in a professional school of similar grade; provided, that no person not having teaching or research for his principal occupation, and no administrative officer not giving a substantial amount of instruction, shall be eligible. Nominations for membership may be made to the council by any three members of the Association; nominations thus made, and approved by the council, will be voted upon at annual meetings, a two-thirds vote being required to elect. For the guidance of the council in acting upon nominations, it was voted, upon motion of Professor Janeway, that "it is the sense of this meeting that the Association shall be composed of college and university teachers of recognized scholarship or scientific production." It was voted that all persons to whom invitations to the first meeting had been sent by the committee of organization may become members of the Association, subject to the secretary their desire to do so, within a month from January 1, provided that they hold positions of collegiate or university grade and that their appointments are not solely administrative.

3. Officers.—It was voted that the officers of the Association shall be a president, a vice-president, a secretary, and a council consisting of the foregoing officers and such other members as the president and vice-president may determine by a majority vote for a term of one year. The president and vice-president shall be elected for three years, the secretary for one year. The council shall be elected for three years, the members to be elected for one, two, and three years, respectively.

The scientific and specialized interests of members of American university faculties are well cared for by various learned societies. No organization exists, however, which at once represents the common interests of the teaching staffs and deals with the general problems of the teaching profession and a society, comparable to the American Bar Association and the American Medical Association in kindred professions, could be of substantial service to the ends for which universities exist, members of the faculties of a number of institutions have undertaken to bring about the formation of a national Association of University Professors. The general purposes of such an Association are: to promote a more effective co-operation among the faculties of the profession in the discharge of their special duties; to act as custodians of the interests of higher education in this country; to promote a more general discussion of problems relating to education; to create means for the expression of the public opinion of college and university faculties on the standards and ideals of the profession; to make collective action possible and to encourage activities in which these general purposes are best expressed. This is, in brief, the purpose of the organization of teachers an international organization of departments and institutions of instruction; to promote the possibility of co-operation among the schools; to promote the possibility of co-operation among the schools; to promote the possibility of co-operation among the schools.

100 YEARS OF DEFENDING ACADEMIC FREEDOM

My dear Colleagues:

This notice, together with a report of the first meeting of the American Association of University Professors, and the introductory address of the chairman, is sent to all who were invited to the meeting by the Committee on Organization. By a vote of those attending, all who received such invitations from the Committee—provided they hold teaching or research positions in institutions of university or collegiate grade—may become charter members of the Association without further formality, by signifying to the Secretary their desire to do so, before April 1, 1915. Persons holding solely administrative positions are ineligible.

January 1, 1915.

L. H. Haney (economics) University of Texas
R. G. Harrison (zoology) Yale University
W. H. Hobbs (geology) University of Michigan
A. R. Hohfeld (German) University of Wisconsin
Theodore Hough (physiology) University of Virginia
G. E. Howard (history) University of Nebraska
Morris Jastrow (Semitic) University of Pennsylvania
W. T. Magruder (engineering) Ohio State University

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

On March 18, 1915, and within the five weeks following, seventeen members of the faculty of the University of Utah resigned their positions in protest against certain acts of the President of the University (Dr. J. T. Kingsbury) and of the Board of Regents. Sixteen of those who resigned concur in summarizing as follows the reasons for their action:

The immediate cause of our resignations was the dismissal of certain of our colleagues and the demotion of others by a method so unfair and so arbitrary as to make it impossible to retain our self-respect and remain in the University. It is our firm belief that the changes made by the administration are but the expression of a general policy of encroachment on our academic rights and duties by certain interests which are seriously threatening the efficiency of the University.

In view of the large number of university teachers concerned in the case, in view, also, of the fact that teachers' associations were involved, and that an inquiry into the

MEETING FOR ORGANIZATION OF THE ASSOCIATION*

NEW YORK, JANUARY, 1915

The meeting called for the purpose of organizing this Association was held in the auditorium of the Chemists' Club, New York City, on the afternoon and evening of Friday, January 1, and the morning of Saturday, January 2, 1915. Over 250 were in attendance in the course of the three sessions. Professor John Dewey, of Columbia University, called the meeting to order and delivered an introductory address upon the purpose and possibilities of such an association, as conceived by the committee on organization, of which he had served as chairman. Nominations for the chairmanship of the Association were made by Professor Gutherie, of Michigan, and by Professor Kingsbury, of Princeton. Professor Kingsbury was elected permanent chairman, and Professor Overstreet, of the College of the City of New York, recording secretary. Addresses in support of a motion to proceed to the organization of the Association were made by Professor Howard of Michigan, and by Professor Kingsbury of Princeton. Professor Kingsbury was elected permanent chairman, and Professor Overstreet, of the College of the City of New York, recording secretary. The consideration of the report of the committee on organization was postponed until the next day, when it was carried over to the following day. The consideration of the report of the committee on organization was postponed until the next day, when it was carried over to the following day.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO THE CASE OF PROFESSOR SCOTT NEARING OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA