

Sent to Mrs. Dugdale?
about 26th February 1939

The Warburg Institute started as the private library of Professor A.M. Warburg who, with the very generous help of his brothers in Hamburg and America, contrived to create an Institute which, although it had no official status in connection with Hamburg University, fulfilled the functions of a university institute. Professor Warburg's special field of research, which was the transmission and transformation of the classical heritage in European culture, provided, and still provides, the main lines on which the Institute is run. Hand in hand with this idea, the Institute attempts to provide the means for a visual approach to the humanities, that is to say, its method is concerned with the interpretation of pictorial documents to supplement the modern humanist education, which has hitherto been chiefly based on literary texts. It is clear that for this method of historical research the Mediterranean culture is regarded as the fountainhead of European civilisation. So when in 1933 the Nazi régime came into power, it was obvious from the beginning that the Institute would not enjoy its good graces. Apart from the fact that the founders and benefactors, as well as a number of the staff of the Institute, were Jews, an outlook which tended to minimise the contribution of the Germanic races in favour of the Romanic races could not be welcome to the Nazis. As ^{March} early as/1933, therefore, the present director of the Institute

made the proposal to the Warburg family to remove the Institute from Hamburg, in order to ensure its continued existence and growth. The first negotiations were started with England which, on account of its humanist tradition, seemed the most propitious place, and we met with considerable interest. The Academic Assistance Council had at that time just been constituted, and had launched its first appeal, making the case of German refugees a parallel to the emigration of Greek scholars to Italy after the fall of Constantinople, an event which is generally considered to be the origin of the Renaissance of learning on Italian soil. Two members of the Academic Assistance Council proved to be interested in the Warburg Institute - Professor Constable, then Director of the Courtauld Institute of Art, and Professor Gibson, Head of the Department of Chemistry at Guy's Hospital. At the invitation of the Warburg family, they paid a visit to the library at Hamburg and seemed to like it. But now the question of how to finance the Institute in London arose. Several unsuccessful attempts were made, and our shares seemed to be rather low when an anonymous donor appeared on the scene who, through the mediation of Sir Denison Ross, then Director of the School of Oriental Studies, offered to finance the Institute once and

for all on condition that it should bear his name instead of that of Warburg. This condition could not be fulfilled, not only because the name of Warburg commemorated the founder and his family, but also because it had come to be connected with the particular method and subject matter of research, for which the Institute stood. The interest of Sir Denison Ross was aroused, however, and in the summer of 1933 he too paid a visit to Hamburg. His enthusiasm over the whole scheme carried it successfully through. It was he who at a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Courtauld Institute, when it was just about to break up, placed himself before the exit and asked for the attention of the members for an appeal on behalf of the Warburg Institute. His eloquence seemed to prevail, for at the end of his speech Mr. Samuel Courtauld came forward and offered a substantial sum to be given for three years, in order to make an attempt to transplant the Institute. The Warburg family in Hamburg and in America joined forces. The successful carrying through of the very delicate and complicated negotiations with the German authorities was due to the diplomacy of Mr. Erich Warburg. Some sober-minded people tried to keep the Institute in Hamburg, and it was even proposed that a state subsidy should be granted, but this was cut short by the peremptory verdict of the new Nazi mayor of

Hamburg, who decided that the new state would have no use for what he called "Jewish books". In December 1933 a temporary home was found for the Library at Thames House, through the help of Lord Lee of Fareham, Chairman of the Warburg Board, and shortly before Christmas the books, packed in 561 wooden cases, arrived in London. The Institute was opened at Thames House in the Spring of 1934, and has since carried on its activities in London. It began to interest English scholars, and made many very good and helpful friends among the staffs of the big museums and the University. When the temporary arrangement came to an end after three years, London University offered a new home at the Imperial Institute Buildings. The activities of the Institute have, however, up till now been seriously hampered by a budget which, though it guaranteed the continued existence of the Institute, was still too small to allow it to develop a programme which would make it as useful as possible to the English educational system. Our friends tell us that what may have appeared as a luxury in Germany would not be so in England, because of the characteristic English tradition: firstly, because this tradition has always been to a much greater degree rooted in classical education than was the case in Germany; and secondly, because the English, being an essentially poetic people, have neglected to a certain extent

visual education, so that the combination of these two elements which the Institute has to offer would make it a valuable part of University training in this country.

25 copies sent to the Principal for
circulation to the press. 15/2/39

The Warburg Institute, which was formerly in Thames House, Millbank, re-opened on 16th February at Imperial Institute Buildings, South Kensington, in its new premises generously lent by the University of London. The speakers were: Lord Lee of Fareham, P.C., G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.B.E., Chairman of the Board of the Warburg Institute; ^{Sir Allen Maunsell, Bart., M.P.} ~~H.L. Eason, Esq., C.B., C.M.G.,~~ Principal of London University; and Professor T.S.R. Boase, Director of the Courtauld Institute of Art. The library and the collection of photographs were open for inspection. The library comprises upwards of 80,000 books concerned with the classical tradition in religion, social life, fine arts, science and literature. A series of lectures by members of the Institute, on the theme of the history of encyclopaedias, was announced for the period February to July (programme enclosed). The library and the photographic collection are open to students on weekdays from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.