11
Seeking Work Again

11.1 Geneva and journalism

However, in the meantime, an urgent professional priority was to secure paid employment. In February 1937 the Rockefeller Foundation approved a six-month extension of Kalecki’s fellowship, taking it up to the end of 1937 and thereby giving him the full two-year term of such fellowships. On 15 November, Kalecki moved from Manchester to Cambridge, where he lodged at 15 King’s Parade, across the road from Cambridge’s most spectacular and wealthiest college, where Keynes was a fellow and, as bursar, responsible for the management of its endowment.

A few days after his move to Cambridge, Kalecki met in London with the Rockefeller Foundation’s assistant director, Tracy Kittredge. He told Kittredge that he had now been offered a six-month research appointment in Cambridge assisting in theoretical research under the direction of Joan Robinson and Dennis Robertson. Kittredge reported that Kalecki ‘stated that he had no definite confirmation from Warsaw of the news that the Business Cycle Inst. had as yet resumed activities’. The institute’s publications had been reduced ‘to the barest minimum.’ At the heart of its inactivity appeared to be a stand-off between the government and the institute’s director, Lipiński, over the dismissal of Breit and Landau. ‘K. understands that Lipinski has personally accepted the invitation of the gov’t to resume direction of institute but that he has not yet been able to obtain the approval of the Finance Minister (Kwiatkowski) for the re-employment of Breit and Landau, whose discharge last year led to the disruption of the Inst. K. apparently has very little hope of an adequate position in Poland in the near future & is therefore looking about for a permanent position in England or elsewhere.’ Kittredge suggested to Kalecki that there may be possibilities in Mexico, and Kalecki said that he
would be delighted to apply ‘for any appointments that may be open’. The Mexican opportunity came with the setting up there of a statistical research institute which the Rockefeller Foundation was supporting.

Kalecki’s move to Cambridge brought him much more directly into the orbit of Keynes’s and Joan Robinson’s friends. While Kalecki used his Cambridge grant to put his papers together for publication as a book, *Essays in the Theory of Economic Fluctuations*, that was to come out in 1939, his new Cambridge friends continued their campaign to find employment for Kalecki. At the centre of those efforts was undoubtedly his most dedicated supporter, Joan Robinson. Unfortunately there is little surviving evidence of her promotion of Kalecki’s employment prospects, as opposed to her well-known promotion of his work. The evidence that survives of the campaign to secure an income for Kalecki is largely from the correspondence of Joan Robinson’s close friend in Cambridge, Richard Kahn, who was also very close to Keynes and was, like him, a fellow at King’s College. This reveals not only the high regard in which Kalecki was now held by Keynes’s followers. It also shows the extent to which Kalecki’s friends were now prepared to go to find him a suitable position. Kahn appears to have coordinated those efforts.

As was mentioned in Chapter 9, Richard Kahn had written to the Rockefeller Foundation in February 1937. Not long after, he appears to have written to Bertil Ohlin at the University of California in Berkeley. Ohlin wrote back on 7 May:

> I am very interested in Kalecki’s plight, as I share your view that he has unusual ability. As to Haberler’s work in Geneva, which is to be continued by Tinbergen with the assistance of D. H. Robertson, I presume that you have long since talked to the latter about it. This work is perhaps too statistical for Kalecki. But I shall be glad to inform Loveday about my opinion concerning Kalecki, if that can be any help. I have recommended him for a job here. But I doubt if there will be any opening this autumn. Perhaps next year K might send some reprints to Prof. Robert D. Calkins, Econ. Dept. University of Calif. Berkeley, Calif.

Kahn communicated this to Kalecki in a letter dated 25 May 1937.

High hopes were attached to the possibilities of employment in Geneva, where the Economic Secretariat of the League of Nation was researching the impact of the Depression on various countries in the world, on trade between those countries and on the international monetary and financial system. But there was also the unnamed research institute in