

MATHEMATICAL ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC.
ABSTRACT OF PAPER

Title of Paper: Karl Menger's
contribution to ethics

Time: 15 minutes.

Name of Author: Edward S. Allen

Institution: Iowa State University

Address: Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa 50010

Member of Mathematical Association
of America: Yes No

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ABSTRACT

The abstract should be in the form of a brief and concise statement of the main results or points of view of the paper, without demonstrations and with a minimum of formulae. It should not exceed 100 words and should be compressed if possible into a single paragraph. It should be written in the third person. The abstract should be typewritten and in a form suitable for immediate publication in the MONTHLY.

Karl Menger's MORAL, WILLE UND WELTGESTALTUNG (1934) is a noteworthy application of the mathematical way of thought to ethics. Refuting the possibility of a universally accepted morality, Menger concentrates on the classification of men according to their desires and the norms of conduct which they choose. The graphical and tabular analysis even of a simple three-way choice is quite complex. A will-group (Willensgruppe) consists of men sufficiently like-minded to avoid collision within the group. The author envisages, and would hope for, will-groups whose codes, though different, would not prevent mutual toleration.