Einstein Waives Consul's 'Joke,' Sails Saturday

Einstein Waives Consul's 'Joke, '
Sails Saturday

Laughs Off 'Inquisition' as a Schoolboy Prank and Accepts Visa to the U. S.

Americans Cable Cheer Patriot Protest Prejudiced,
Liberties Union Declares

By The United Press

COPENHAGEN, Dec. 6.—Professor Albert Einstein, whose mind wrestles with problems far beyond the ken of most of his fellow humans, received a visa to enter the United States today after he had threatened to call off his projected visit because he had been questioned about his political beliefs.

The world's most famous physicist, indignant yesterday when an American consular officer sought his views on communism, rallied his sense of humor today and let the whole matter pass as a joke. He actually, Frau Einstein said, thought for a while that George S. Messersmith, American Consul General at Berlin, was playing a sort of prank when he began plying the professor with "schoolboy" questions.

Einstein was subjected to questioning after the Woman Patriot Corporation in the United States had demanded that the State Department bar him on the ground that he had Communist leanings. At the height of the questioning the scientist pointed out that he was going to America because he had been invited, and if he was not granted the visa within twenty-four hours he would cancel his trip. The visa was signed about an hour before the twenty-four hour "deadline" expired.

Einstein Villa Is Secluded

The Einstein villa here is on a beautiful wooded height overlooking the River Havel. It is an ideal secluded spot for a scientist's retreat, only twenty-six miles from Berlin. The professor and Frau Einstein will leave Bremen on Saturday morning aboard the motor vessel Oakland. The ship will touch at Antwerp on Monday and proceed to the Panama Canal en route to California. The voyage will take eight weeks.

"We have been flooded by cables all day long from our American friends," Frau Einstein, who acts as her husband's liaison officer in contact with a world he desires to shun, said at their home. "They tell us, 'Don't mind those old ladies who caused you all this trouble.'"

"The professor said only today: 'Here I have two honorary keys to the City of New York and it looks as though they would not even give me a chance to use one of them.'"

"The whole incident was ridiculous. The consul general catechized my husband as if he were a little boy, asking him hundreds of questions in a most solemn manner concerning his political affiliation, sympathies and tendencies."

"The professor sat there like a schoolchild, patiently answering all the questions. It took more than an hour, and finally my husband, weary of the inquisition, asked Mr. Messersmith: 'I only wonder whether you are doing this on some supreme authority or for your own amusement?'

"Later at home he told me we would wait until 11 o'clock this morning and after that, if the visa had not been granted, he would cable California that our trip was definitely canceled. "I had to do all the packing—you know what that is!—and it was impossible to get things done if we had to wait until Thursday or Friday before knowing whether we would be permitted to go."

Liberties Union Makes Inquiries

The American Civil Liberties Union, 105 Fifth Avenue, announced last night that its director, Roger N. Baldwin, had written a letter yesterday to Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of State, concerning the Einstein case, which read in part as follows:

"We do not question the department's right or duty to forward pertinent information to consuls abroad concerning any prospective visitor. We do, however, question the obvious lack of common sense shown in forwarding a communication from such a prejudiced source (referring to the Woman Patriot Corporation) concerning a distinguished scientist whose record and activities are so well known throughout the world ..."

"May we ask whether this is the practice of the department to forward communications of this character from ill-informed sources to consuls abroad without checking them up? I am confident that a very large body of Americans will be interested to know whether this is the routine practice of the department, and, if so, whether it will be continued?"