Berlin, Germany, December 16, 1932.

Dear Mr. Klots:

I hope you did not mind my telegraphing you in such a pressing way concerning the Einstein case. I telegraphed Mrs. Shipley at the same time more briefly and suggested that she get in touch with you. I felt sure that in this way the matter could be brought more effectively to the Secretary's attention, which in view of the wide and misleading and in many ways dangerous publicity seemed desirable. I hope I did not presume too far in asking this very personal service of you. I need not tell you how deeply appreciative I am of all that was done. The Secretary's statement to the press was most effective and I appreciate particularly his generous personal telegram to me informing me that he had made the statement. It was particularly considerate of him to take up with Mr. Himmann his article in the Herald Tribune. It was comforting to get your two telegrams for although we knew we were entirely guiltless in the matter it was causing us all a great deal of concern. I appreciate also your looking into the possible comment which Time might be making and your indication that its article was innocuous was comforting.

I will appreciate your telling the Secretary at a convenient opportunity how much I really appreciate all that he has done and his very courteous consideration of the personal as well as the official aspect of the matter. I am going to write him in the very near future just a word of appreciation. I shall never be able to tell you how much I appreciate all that you did in this matter and in so effective a way.

To
To go into the details of the case would cover many pages and I dictated the other day a despatch, No. 1070 of December 12, 1932, of which a copy will be available in the Department at the same time that this letter reaches you. I doubt whether you will wish to read this despatch as it is quite long, but even at that a great deal more could have been said that is interesting, but I tried to give only the most essential information.

It seems quite certain that the whole difficulty came about through the nervousness of Professor and Mrs. Einstein. They knew that the Professor was not in favor with certain sections of opinion at home because of his left leanings and his affiliations with certain movements and organizations. They feared that if he made an application for a visa there was a possibility, if not a probability, that it would be refused and they therefore hoped to secure a visa without personal appearance at the Consulate. This explains their efforts to get a visa through a steamship company agent which of course is a practice which our law does not permit in any case and which both Prof. Einstein and the steamship company understood.

As soon as the news came over the wire that certain American organizations were protesting against his admission, Prof. Einstein began to conduct his application for a visa through the press and for almost a week before he actually applied or appeared at the Consulate for a visa he had been in touch with the press, or probably we should say more correctly, Mrs. Einstein had given several interviews.

I had made all my plans to go to Breslau to inspect the office there, on December 5 before the Einstein case arose, and the arrangements were such both here and in Breslau, that it would have been difficult to change my trip, and there seemed to be no reason why I should do so as even if I had been here it would ordinarily have been Mr. Geist or Mr. Woodford, the Vice Consul in charge of visas, who would have seen Prof. Einstein. Gordon Kentsealer of the National City Bank if he knew that Mr. Einstein was coming in to cash a check on a certain day would hardly feel that he would have to go into the cashier's cage to cash the check personally for him, and the chances are that had I been here when Prof. Einstein called, either Mr. Geist or Mr. Woodford would have seen him, but as a matter of courtesy I would have probably spoken to him.
him before he left as we often do this with the more important people who come here for a visa.

But Prof. Einstein finally appeared Monday morning, December 5, for his visa and it was obvious to Mr. Geist that he was nervous and the basis of this nervousness was undoubtedly the thought he had that he would be asked certain questions which, if he answered them altogether honestly, might interfere with his being given a visa. It took the greatest tact and courtesy on the part of Mr. Geist to keep the Einsteins in his office as they kept rising every moment when he began to in any way approach the object of their visit. They were afraid to be questioned or to talk directly about the visa, but by the exercise of really extraordinary patience and tact Mr. Geist was able to ask the necessary questions made mandatory by the Department's telegram, and to establish generally his admissibility. They left the office then quite more happy, Mr. Geist informing them that they would hear from him in the morning. He immediately prepared the telegram to the Department which we were required to send in accordance with its specific instructions before we could take action. The same afternoon Mrs. Einstein gave an interview to the press which was one of the main causes of the trouble. Acting under the nervousness and fear that they would be refused a visa she undoubtedly made statements to the press which were utterly without foundation as to their treatment at the Consulate and as to the kind of questions Mr. Geist had asked them. I rather think that in this she may have been more or less helped or guided by a newspaper man here. She called up Mr. Geist that afternoon and delivered an ultimatum to him that if the visas were not granted by the following morning at 11 o'clock, they would abandon their trip and hold him responsible for all damages resulting from the breaking of their contract. I do not wish to cast either suspicion or any aspersion on anyone but I think there is in this the Machiavellian hand of a newspaper man here. We got the Department's answer early the next morning and the visa was immediately granted. Perhaps you may wish to glance hurriedly through the despatch already mentioned as it gives the details and the sequence.

One thing is certain and that is had Prof. and Mrs. Einstein not conducted their application for a
visa through the press, but had simply taken up their application for a visa with us in the usual way, it would have been possible to give them the visa without any fuss at all. They got the newspaper men all heated up on the thing during the week before they applied and as soon as they had applied on Monday, the 5th, they kept in touch with the newspapers, and even after the visa had been granted. When I say "they" it would be more correct to say "Mrs. Einstein" for she insisted on doing all the talking when she and Prof. Einstein were at the Consulate and also to the newspaper men.

That Einstein was treated with every courtesy and consideration by us is unquestionable and I have seen Mr. Geist handle too many situations of this and a similar kind not to be able to depend entirely on his tact, discretion and endless patience. In fact before going to Breslau I talked with Mr. Geist about the Einstein case and told him that I was quite sure that they must be exceedingly nervous about the matter fearing they would be refused, and that under no circumstances must he let them get away from the Consulate without actually making an application for a visa, for if he did let them get away we would never be able to explain to anyone what actually happened as no matter how guiltless we might be even reasonable people would say that we were at fault. It was therefore obviously essential for them to execute an application as otherwise a visa could not have been issued under any circumstances, and to get the application for a visa was really a triumph of tact and patience under the circumstances. Instead of Geist subjecting the Einsteins to a gruelling they subjected him to a real ordeal. You will appreciate that if they had left without making an application so that no visa under any circumstances could be issued, it would have been simply impossible to make anyone understand the circumstances except a very few people.

I have a great many friends among the leading Jews in Berlin whom I see in a social and business way, and a number of them have taken occasion in the last few days to express to me their regret over the personal inconvenience that this comment has caused. Einstein of course is not nearly so highly thought of in Germany as he is elsewhere. That may be because a prophet is often without honor in his own country, but however divergent people may be in what they think
think of Einstein, they are pretty well a unit apparently about what they think of Mrs. Einstein. She is his second wife and is from what I hear unhappy unless she can have his name on the front page in some way every day, and it is undoubtedly she who has had his name put on the membership list and committees of so many organizations of which the Professor is entirely ignorant. She stated here at the Consulate to Mr. Geist that the Professor did not know to which organizations he really belonged as she "handles all the correspondence". I do not wish to go into personalities but the real trouble in this connection may be found in Mrs. Einstein and quite probably in a certain newspaper man here. Mrs. Einstein for example knew very well that she was talking with Mr. Geist because she introduced herself to her very plainly at the outset of their interview and when later in the day she talked with him on the telephone she addressed him very plainly by name, yet when speaking to the newspaper men they stated distinctly that she used my name.

As to the admissibility or inadmissibility of Einstein I do not think there is any question about the harmless nature of his views and no matter what organizations may claim him as a member there is no reason even under our immigration laws why he should not be admitted. From the affiliations which he seems to have it is of course easy to make up a case against him, but we would be subjecting ourselves to ridicule if we were to refuse him a visa.

The newspaper men here in Berlin were not quite as careful about their reports as they might have been and I think they were a bit upset because we could not discuss the case with them. We cannot as a practice discuss visa cases with the newspaper men, but there are times when we can give background and can depend upon the discretion of the newspaper men here. In this case, however, Mr. Geist could not even give background because we had this telegram from the Department which said we were to do specific things, make our decision, report it to the Department and not take any action before we heard from it. This placed a very definite hobble on us. We would have been able to grant the visa to the Einsteins at the close of the half-hour interview which Mr. Geist had with them and that would have saved a lot of trouble, but under the Department's instructions we had to cable first and get its approval.
approval of our proposed action. This meant that naturally during all of Monday afternoon and evening when the cables were the hottest and when the worst of the reports were sent in, we could say nothing as anything which we could have said would have let out of the bag the fact that we had to communicate with the Department which under no circumstances we felt we could say and which the Department obviously did not want us to say as the legal responsibility for the decision rests only with the Consul.

The whole case has at least one aspect that is worth-while and that is that because of the Secretary's statement of the telegram sent in by the American organizations in Berlin and by the fact that the accounts were so obviously distorted and incorrect, the newspaper men and some people at home will be a good deal more slow in criticizing the visa practice by consular officers and the Department in the future. It was rather a heavy price, however, for a few of us to pay for this.

What I resented personally most was Lippmann's article the real text of which I have just seen to-day, and for a man who is supposed to write authoritatively he certainly did go off half-cocked. I have also just seen to-day the text of his statement in the Herald Tribune clearing me, but shifting responsibility to the Department and to others on my staff when I am sure that he must have ample information as to the facts by this time. I thought he was a bigger man, but his article shows that he is not as big as a good many of us thought as he would have been more generous in what he said. Whether I personally am cleared is important to me, but his statement was a rather brutal attack on our visa practice in general and on the intelligence of our officers and on what Lippmann should know is entirely unjustified. I cannot help but feel that there was a certain amount of racial feeling which entered into this Einstein case. The fact that so much of the criticism at home came from people like Mrs. Swope and Lippmann and that a part of the news from here seems to have been written by a correspondent who is a Jew, seems to point in this direction. That, of course, is also silly because if there is any man in the Service who is without prejudices in that way it is I, for I think probably half of my friends and associates
associates in Berlin are Jews and some of the very best and nearest friends I have are Jews. When it comes to a business matter or a matter of friendship the question of Jew or Gentile bothers me much less than most individuals and in fact does not enter into my mind at all. In our office here such a question as discrimination of any kind in this sense is unthinkable. I really think Lippmann should have been more generous, but as the Pope's infallibility must be maintained at all costs I suppose he felt that he could go no further.

I want again in closing to thank you for all that you have done in this connection. I have worked so hard and I hope faithfully in the Government interest for 19 years that I did not want to be branded as an ass and as an ignoramus and as a bigot and as a bureaucrat. I may be all of these things but in any event it hurt to see them in print.

It is really extraordinary how much comment this thing has caused. We are already being inundated with letters from all sorts of persons at home with regard to the case and I am glad that we were in so unimpeachable a position or else it might have done a good deal of harm all around. I would not put it by some of these people to have raised all of the fuss in the Einstein case so as to use it as an opening wedge in attacks on our visa practice generally, but I think that has been frustrated.

I intend to write you at my first opportunity about some of the more interesting developments in the political and economic situation here. Wishing you and Mrs. Klots a very happy Christmas season and a New Year filled with all manner of good things,

Cordially and gratefully yours,

Allen T. Klots, Esquire,
Department of State,
Washington, D.C.