

Berlin, Germany, December 27, 1932.



Dear Mr. Villard:

The copies of the "Nation" of December 14 and 21 have come along in due course and I want to tell you how much I appreciate the paragraphs on the Einstein case. Your handling of the story was very considerate and although I wrote you at some length on December 14 for your personal background on this matter, I cannot refrain from sending you this additional word to tell you how much I appreciate your interest.

I think by this time the situation is a little bit more clear. There are undoubtedly certain things in connection with our immigration practice on which there can be a wholesome and worth while difference of opinion, but that the Foreign Service officers of the State Department have done a remarkably good job in carrying out the law, is to my mind unquestionable, and I am not saying that as a member of the Foreign Service but as one who has seen how this work is done at most of our consular establishments in Europe and in South America. It is no easy task and requires not only infinite patience and understanding, but real skill, and the wonder is not that an occasional incident arises for criticism in the press, but that these are even not more numerous in view of the tremendous pressure there is exerted in certain visa cases.

The fact remains that an American who goes to a foreign Consulate in the United States or abroad is quite uncertain as to the reception he

will

will receive. It depends a good deal on the individuality of the particular foreign Consul as to what his office is like and how people are treated and taken care of. Americans who have travelled abroad know how casually they are treated by consular officers of other countries. In our Service it is a tradition and a requirement that every person who calls at an American Consulate, whether he be a foreigner or an American, must be treated with courtesy and that his business, no matter what it is, must be gone into thoroughly. The consular officer who does not do that does not last very long. Foreigners who have to do with their own Consuls are surprised to find what consideration and prompt treatment they get in American Consulates, and are free to comment upon it. The records of practically every American consular establishment in the Service show such comment by foreigners and yet when an incident such as this Einstein case comes up there seems to be a general willingness at home to crucify our own officers.

There is an aspect of this matter which I venture to tell you about because I know that you do have an interest in these things and are interested in accurate information. At home and abroad it is customary to hold up the United States as a country of very strict immigration practice. Our laws and our visa practice, Ellis Island and all the rest of it, are from time to time held up to public scorn and ridicule both at home and abroad. As a matter of fact our country has the most liberal immigration practice of any first class power. An alien who desires to go to the United States for a bona fide temporary stay can get his visa at an American Consulate without the slightest difficulty or annoyance and he is apt to get much quicker, more courteous and on the whole more considerate treatment at an American Consulate than an American on the same mission will receive at foreign Consulates. In spite of the difficult times at home and that relatively our unemployment is greater than that in any other country, we are letting in thousands

of

of people every year who intend to make their living and take a job. We are almost the only country in the world which during the last few years has been admitting people for more than a temporary stay and whose declared intention it is to earn their living. In Germany, for example, it is as difficult for an American to come in here, whoever he may be if he is going to work, as for the proverbial camel to pass through the needle's eye. It took me months to get the German authorities to permit an American engineer to come to Berlin to the German plant of an important American company, when the work he was going to do was really much more interesting to German industry than to our own. The Germans will not let in anybody who is going to make a living or take a job, stating very frankly and baldly that they haven't got enough jobs for their own people. No one seems to object to this policy or to consider that illiberal, but it is supposed to be perfectly right and proper that they should protect their own people. In England the same situation prevails and even the British branch factories of American firms have had to replace their executives and high class engineers with British subjects in all except a few posts. The skilled workmen and technicians had to be sent home long ago and now in some plants not a single American is left although millions of American capital may be adventured in the plant. I could go through the list with the other countries. On the other hand we will freely let anyone go to the United States, even as an emigrant, if he can show that he will not become a public charge and thousands as I say, are going every year. What seems to be perfectly right and proper for England, France and Germany, and considered merely as a proper measure of self-defense, is made out by the press and by some of our people at home as a crime which we are committing against the world.

Its pretty much the same way about the tariffs and about a lot of other things. We may have been the worse sinners once, but we are

certainly

certainly not the principal sinners today. But whenever one must be nailed to the cross for any of the present day nationalistic excesses, it has to be the United States. Some of our people at home seem to be as eager to indulge in this sadistic operation as a certain element is over here.

I am a liberal, I believe in almost any question you can raise, but what I do object to is that my country should be constantly held up to ridicule both at home and abroad, and crucified as the chief sinner when as a matter of fact in these troublous times, without claiming sanctity, we might even be smug enough to say that we are not as bad as some of the rest. I understand that Nicholas Murray Butler wept once again for his country and was ashamed of it for the way a distinguished savant like Einstein was treated in the Consulate at Berlin. I suppose one must not be concerned about this because he has quite the habit of apologizing for us to the rest of the world. But it would be just as well for him to remember that there are many Americans who are as much interested as he is in the prestige of their country, who have served it in far away and remote places at great sacrifice, who seek no place in the front page of the newspapers and who, by their conscientious and intelligent application to their duty and by their understanding of situations abroad and by the interpreting of our own life to foreign peoples, are really upholding the prestige and good name of our country.

*Integration*

I did not mean to inflict this second long letter on you. I just wanted to thank you for what you have done in the "Nation" with regard to the Einstein matter, and to tell you that in this matter of ~~race~~ practice the record shows that we are really the most enlightened at present, rather than the most backward of the nations.

Very sincerely yours,

Oswald Villard, Esquire,  
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A true copy of  
the signed original.  
*[Signature]*