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Berlin, Germany, December 27, 1932.

Received

Dear Mr. Fletcher:

Your card of December 15 with the clipping from the Herald Tribune has just been received. It is very good of you to write me about this and to have written to Walter Lippmann. If I had not already known it, the Einstein incident would have had at least one virtue, and that is of showing me once again that friendships are the finest things in the world and the most precious thing we can acquire.

I am not going to bore you with details concerning the Einstein case because of course there was no Einstein incident. While Einstein was in the United States he got mixed up with all sorts of organizations some of which are not in good odor, largely through Mrs. Einstein who is a great publicity seeker. When the time came for him to go back to our country he and she were very nervous because he knew that he had somewhat violated the laws of hospitality in mixing up in things at home which as a foreigner he had no business to associate himself with. Instead of coming to the Consulate at once and applying for a visa where he would have gotten it I need not assure you without difficulty, he conducted his application in the press for at least a week before he came here. It so happened that I was at our Breslau Consulate when he did apply, but my second man, Geist, who is a very fine officer and very understanding, received him personally and facilitated the granting of the visa in every possible way. I need not tell you that we did not ask him any of these silly questions

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which one read of in the newspapers and he was treated with all the consideration one would ordinarily show as a matter of courtesy to a man with his reputation. I think probably Mrs. Einstein, to put it very kindly, was rather careless about what she said to the press but even at that from the many clippings which I have seen there is no question but that things were put into the mouth of the Einsteins which they could not have said. What really happened was that anything with regard to Einstein is of course first class news and certain people not friendly disposed towards our immigration laws used this as a splendid opportunity to attack our whole immigration and visa practice. What of course was particularly unfortunate was the almost rabid and vicious personal attacks on me, and it looked for a time as though they might destroy the effects of 19 years faithful and I hope intelligent service. Of course, behind it all was a certain amount of racial feeling because some felt that Einstein had been mishandled on account of his being a Jew. This, of course, is the most ridiculous of all for if there is one officer in the Foreign Service who is without race prejudice and who holds liberal views on the question of immigration practice, it is myself. In a big city like Berlin and anyone who has had to lead the life that I have in various parts of the world knows that people must be measured by what they are and not by who their parents were or by their race, and for that reason I have Jewish friends in every part of the world and some of my best friends are Jews. In matters of our immigration practice, generally, while I am a believer in restricted immigration as a matter of ordinary protection to us, I have been one of those who have worked for liberal interpretation of the laws and for enlightened practice. It was really almost tragic that this criticism should be directed against me now.

I am deeply grateful to all my friends who came to the rescue. The Secretary made a very splendid statement to the press of which I send you a copy and he personally interested himself in this matter at a time when he had really very serious things on his mind, and he showed by what he did what a fine sportsman he is and that most of us have known him to be. I am also sending you a copy of the statement which the American organizations here in Berlin gave to the press and a copy of their telegram to the Secretary. It was particularly good of you to write to Lippmann

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and I think he has heard from quite a number of people, but I wish that he had been more generous in the reparation he made. He is big enough to be generous and it is quite probable that the incident may have done him more harm than me.

One of the curious things about this incident is that it emphasized how quick we are to apologize for ourselves at home for everything we do as though we were so much worse than the rest of the world and so much less liberal, when as a matter of fact in this particular instance it is unquestionable that our visa practice is the most liberal of any country. Anyone who has traveled knows, whether he be an American or a foreigner, that foreigners get much better treatment in American Consulates than Americans get in foreign consulates. During the 19 years I have been in the Service I have had many foreigners express surprise at the uniformly courteous treatment which they received in American Consulates which they said they did not get in their own offices. Any person who wants to go to the United States for a temporary stay can get a visa without difficulty at an American Consulate, and even in these difficult times when we have more unemployment relatively at home than there is in any other country, we are letting in people by the thousands every year who come to us to make a living. England, France and Germany, for example, will not let in an American or any foreigner as a matter of fact who comes to make his living. Here in Germany it took my two months to get the German authorities to permit their Consul General in New York to give a visa to a high class engineer who was coming over here to the Berlin plant of an American company and whose coming here was of more interest to German industry than to us. In England the branch plants of American companies have had to get rid of practically all of their American executives and engineers and replace them by British subjects. Our policy with regard to German branch plants in the United States is most liberal and we let their engineers and skilled workmen go in without any difficulty, and yet our newspapers are quick to apologize for our immigration laws and practice when they are really the most liberal of any first class countries to-day. It is all very hard to understand but it seems that some of our people are suffering from an inferiority complex.

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I am very much interested in what the new administration will do with regard to some of the more pressing problems. I do hope that there will not be any settlement of the debts until some of the major questions such as the limitation of armaments, tariffs, exchange and trade restrictions such as quotas and some of the political problems in Europe and in the Far East will be adjusted through general agreement. I am not at all suspicious by nature and do not believe in large scale conspiracies and I have a very sympathetic understanding and appreciation of the problems of other countries, but I am convinced that there is a concert of action among our debtors to endeavor to bring about a settlement of the debts now and before these other matters are settled so that with the debts out of the way they can proceed to do as they please about these other things and make regional agreements leaving us very much out in the cold. There is I believe no doubt that some arrangements will have to be made with our debtors. We may again have to give them a complete moratorium for a year and at the end of that for another year, but the principle of the debts should be maintained until these other problems are settled. It is not only that they want the debts settled now so that they can have a free hand about these other things which they want to settle through us, but also because they know that any settlement which they can force us into now will be more favorable to them than any which they could get a few years hence. The situation in Germany has already tremendously improved, more than is generally understood and more than a good many wish to admit, and I have the conviction that recovery in Germany will be more rapid than in our own country. The importance of the debts in the economic machinery has been much exaggerated, but all with a purpose. I do not believe we shall ever get very much in the way of money out of the debts. Perhaps we may not wish to, but we must play this game as it is being played abroad, with our eyes wide open and not falling for propaganda. This is not the time for another generous gesture because we cannot afford it in the first place, and second, because such a generous gesture at this time would affect our prestige and influence as nothing has in our history. I have the feeling that the new administration will handle this situation very effectively and I am delighted that we are going to have an administration at Washington with the executive and legislative branches

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of the same political color. The Democratic Party has an unusual number of first class men at its disposal and I am sure that Mr. Roosevelt is going to use them and that the policy of the Government is going to be definite so far as international matters are concerned in the protection of what are really our vital interests.

I am still hoping that we may see you in Berlin some time this next year and will be delighted to see you. I hope the New Year will be filled with all manner of good things for you, and remain with sincere appreciation of your note,

Cordially yours,

Mr. Andrew Fletcher,
St. Joseph Lead Company,
250 Park Avenue,
New York City.