

IN REPLY REFER TO

FILE NO.



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
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January 22, 1939

Dear Dad:-

I'm sorry that you got worried about me due to my failure to write. When I got your cable, I was afraid that my Christmas wire had not arrived, but I am glad to note from your letter which arrived yesterday (dated Jan. 6th) that it was received. You should have been relieved rather quickly, as my letter of December 27th should have arrived shortly after the cable. You see, during the winter most of the fast ships are taken off either for repairs or for southern cruises, so we have to expect the mails to be a little slower. To be sure that all my letters were received, I will go over the dates:

November 16th addressed to you
December 4th addressed to Janie
December 27th addressed to you
January 8th addressed to Dorothy

I also wrote to Betty January 17th, and a letter to Grandpa is lying on my desk waiting to be mailed. While I realize that I haven't written as often as I should have, you are really not so badly off, as since November I have received letters from almost everybody I ever knew, and until last week none of them have been answered. Last Saturday I went to the office in the afternoon and dictated three letters to a German girl who wants to get some practice in English stenography. While it was much faster than I could have done alone, it wasn't too satisfactory, as it took her about three days to finish them. We have recently taken on a new German clerk who was educated in the United States and who is supposed to be a marvelous stenographer. I am going to proposition him some day and see how much he would want to do some private letters for me; that is the only possibility I see of working out of the jam. Of course, only certain~~xx~~ less intimate letters can be written in this way, but I think I could get rid of a lot of them that way.

I hope you will believe me when I say that it is extremely difficult for me to find time and energy for writing. Far from bringing an improvement, the New Year began with tremendous complications for us, this time inside the office instead of outside, as before. As everything is not yet settled, I'm absolutely unable to tell you what they are, as any publicity resulting from a possible opening of the letter might be very embarrassing. But to show how busy we were, I will tell you that I spent Dec. 31st, which was supposed to be a holiday, in the Consulate until 7:30 P.M., and went back the next day and stayed until 8:15 P.M. Several other night we were there until

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almost 11 o'clock, and finally gave it up because people simply couldn't stand it any longer. The Saturday afternoon I dictated the letters was the first I had not worked on official business since the November crisis, with the exception of the day before Christmas. Yesterday I worked most of the afternoon again. It's no joke, and I hope under the circumstances you will not be too worried if you do not hear very often from me - for the time being, at least. The only hope I see for an improvement is in May and June, when we will not issue any visas, the quota being exhausted, but even that is problematical.

Right now I must admit that I am sick of the whole business, and I would give anything to get away from Germany for just one week. I want to go to England some time and see Frechtling before he goes back to the States, and I also want to see Mardi Smith when and if she comes over. She was supposed to take her exams sometime in January, but I will not hear from her until I write myself, so I will not know when she is coming. But the main thing is to get away. If not England, Switzerland would do almost as well, although my friend Clark has been called back to the School in Washington. However, another old Fletcher School acquaintance has been sent there to take his place, so I still have an entree in Zurich. As far as I know, Highley is still in Geneva, as I had a Christmas card from him. I am wondering if he got the permanent berth he was hoping for; Clark said he had heard that they were reducing the staff at the International Labor Office, and that Highley feared he might be one of the victims. In any case, I feel sure that after all his experience, and the fact that he already has his doctor's degree, he will have no great difficulty getting a job teaching when he returns to the U.S.

The situation now with the Jews is temporarily a little better, but it augurs badly for the future. Beginning in the latter part of December thousands were released from camps, but in most cases only after signing a statement that they had "voluntarily" agreed to leave Germany by a certain date - usually approximately one month after the date of release. So far extensions of time have been granted to those who have been unable to leave, but they may be picked up at any time. Many of them have succeeded in getting permission for temporary residence in England, France, Holland, Belgium or Switzerland, provided they have relatives there who will support them without working. Also, in most cases, they have to prove that they are registered for immigration to the United States and a provisional statement as to whether their papers are in order. During November and December we nearly broke our backs issuing thousands of these conditional statements and examining thousands of documents as the basis thereof. In all cases they were warned that new papers might be required if the old ~~were~~ became too old before the applicant's turn on the waiting list was reached.

This system was very helpful to the Jews, but it has been stopped for two reasons: first, we simply could not keep up with the work; and second, it was felt that giving such a statement

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even though conditional, appeared to create an obligation on the part of the United States eventually to take all these Jewish people and so might tend to make them shirk their responsibility even more than they are now, if possible. The decision on this last point was not made by us, but by the Consulate General in Berlin, in conjunction with Washington, and so is final as far as we are concerned. The poor Jews are, therefore, out of luck. Our quota is filled for at least ten years to come, and it seems absolutely impossible for them to stay in Germany ten years more. The only possibility is for real concerted efforts to settle these people in the waste places of the earth. There are said to be many places in Africa of such altitude as to be entirely suitable for white settlement and which are at the present time practically devoid of population. It is up to the British and French to find such places and open them up. ~~If necessary wealthy Jews all over the world and especially in the United States can be counted upon to give financial backing. We cannot be expected to take on more than 27,000 yearly; that is enough for any one.~~

On another ground, too, the plight of the Jews seems to be worse. Up to the present time, most of them have had enough money to live on, even though they were not permitted to work. At present, from the way this indemnity of a billion marks is being collected, there are very few who are going to have enough for themselves, much less contributing to the support of those who are absolutely destitute. I could go on for pages about how the Jews are being swindled, cheated and robbed out of everything they have: property sold for a fifth of its worth; factories sold for a tenth, and three quarters of the remainder immediately collected as "taxes". It's enough to make any fair minded person see red, and it is generally believed that the deliberate intention of the German government is to reduce these people to such straits that they will have to be supported by their relatives abroad, thus bringing in more devisen. I shudder to think what the situation will be a year from now, and when one thinks that, as far as the U.S. is concerned, it will be at least ten years before our present waiting list is exhausted, the only conclusion is that there must be concerted efforts, not to get people out, ~~xxx~~ by the hundreds or by the thousands, but by the tens and hundreds of thousands.

I believe that is about all I have for today. Oh yes. I forgot to say that I am corresponding with the Park National Bank about opening up a checking account, and as soon as I have it in working order, I am going to send you a check for \$100 as my share of our contribution toward the church. I shall be very glad to do this, and it will cause me little or no inconvenience. Hop^e that you and the rest of the family are well. Please give my love to all. Tell Mrs. E. I have just been eating a slice of her cake, and that it is still in fine shape - nice and moist, rich and fruity. It certainly is good to have it around.

With all good wishes,

William