

Encounter with Einstein

At a critical and very tragical time in the life of Professor Einstein I had the pleasant opportunity to meet him twice in the years before Hitler came to power and immediately thereafter.

For a long time the great interest of Prof. Einstein for world peace had caught the attention of all those who after worldwar I decided to give their utmost contribution for the prevention of a repetition of such a catastrophe. With gratitude and sympathy they accepted the courageous support of this great man of science with his warm heart for social justice and international peace.

In July 1932 Prof. Einstein invited me to visit him at Caputh near Berlin in order to discuss with him the foundation of an international peace centrum at the Hague. Under the menace of the increasing revolutionary situation (Hitler's brownshirts at that time already operated in Berlin and the surroundings of the house of Prof. Einstein!) I met him coming from his boat-house barefoot and with his unseparable pipe in his mouth.

There we came to an agreement and Prof. Einstein promised, under certain conditions, to ask for cooperation and support of this plan amongst his friends in Europe and America. The original statement signed by Prof. Einstein and the ensuing correspondence I have rescued from a house search during the German occupation.

In the beginning of 1933 Prof. Einstein visited America and returned to Antwerp on 28th March where he was welcomed by the authorities of Antwerp, several professors and some representatives of the peace movement in Belgium and Holland. Alas, the world situation had changed and Prof. Einstein was in great sorrow and danger at that time.

As representative of the Dutch peace movement I was able to welcome him on board of the "Belgenland". After an enthusiastic greeting by the Lord Mayor of Antwerp, Camiel Huysmans, and Prof. de Groot a.o. a reception by the press was held in Century Hotel. Prof. Einstein, when asked about his opinion on the situation in Germany expressly, stated that he had never made an unfriendly declaration about his fatherland and that he judged the situation in itself as a pathological one.

Emphatically he declared that he did not like to return to Germany as long as the freedom of expression of one's opinion and the complete protection of all German citizens were not guaranteed.

After this reception those invited were received by Prof. and Mrs de Groot in their picturesque ancient castle "Chantecroy" near Antwerp (Mortsel), where I had the opportunity to talk again with Prof. Einstein about our plan, that by the sad circumstances was delayed. But nevertheless on the evening of that day I was to be witness of the nobility and the love of peace of Prof. Einstein. In a telephone call from Paris Prof. Einstein was invited to attend a meeting of protest against the Nazi regime and to address the meeting with Ed. Herriot and others.

Never shall I forget how firmly Prof. Einstein refused this invitation because he, as he said, did not like to act against his fatherland... that fatherland that so scandalously ejected its greatest son.

In a letter from Le Cocq, near Ostend, dated 4th April 1933, ~~wrote~~ he wrote me about his expatriation as follows: "The most recent news is that the Germans have charged me with high-treason. I can assure you that I have never believed myself to be so important. Every morning I grab my nose in order to examine whether it is really I; to my satisfaction the outcome of the test has been positive up to now."

In this remarkable letter he reassures a German friend of mine who had fled Germany and wrote: "The boys will not be able to keep it up for long, because they work to primitively. The difficulties will soon grow over their hollow heads."

Alas, this "soon" took ~~thirteen~~ twelve years of ~~murder~~ slaughter, terrorism and devastation of nearly the whole world and ended with the murder of 6 million of the people of Israël, that has given us such a highly gifted

and philanthropic man as Prof. Einstein was.

We, who are all responsible for the fate of mankind, also understand how much a man like ~~N~~ Einstein has suffered from the fact that we men misuse the results of science and the gift of the hidden power of the atom with which God has entrusted ~~all~~ us

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