

25 October 1938

To Mr. Samuel D. Leidesdorf  
100 East 42nd St.  
New York City

Dear Mr. Leidesdorf,

My divorced wife, Mileva Einstein, lives together with my mentally ill younger son Eduard Einstein in Zurich. She is the owner of two buildings, the Hutten St. building and the Hinterberg Street building. The building on Hinterberg Street is passive; that means, the income from rental does not suffice to cover the mortgage interest. Mrs. Mileva is personally liable for the mortgage interest payments. The mortgagees for the Hinterberg St. building are relying on the income from the Hutten Street building. In order to prevent this, I am being urgently asked to assume the building on Hutten Street under my name, paying the transfer costs (about 500 doll.), and to remit the income to my son.

The building on Hutten St. at full rental occupancy generates for Mrs. Mileva E. about 3,000 Swiss francs and furthermore gives her the possibility of living there for free (she lives in one of the apartments, part of which she sublets, however). This statement originates from a reliable expert experienced in real estate management. The profit is calculated by subtracting from the income the mortgage interest of the first three mortgages on the Hutten St. building. In addition, my son Eduard is bearer of a fourth mortgage, in the amount of 40,000 francs. It is furthermore to be noted that Mrs. Mileva E. has a private debt with me of about 34,000 francs, which debt would constitute formal justification for my taking over the building.

Following these preliminaries I come back to our most recent conversation on this subject. I entirely agree with you that the transfer of the building directly to me would be very risky because conditions could very easily occur that would cause the income to sink below the mortgage interest payments, quite apart from the possible danger posed by political circumstances. You therefore suggested the purchase of the Hutten St. building (at my expense) by a trust company, in order to prevent jeopardizing, in such a case, my wealth, resp., my estate. You were so kind as to propose consulting a lawyer experienced in Swiss law regarding this step.

I only know that the approval of the mortgagees is required for such a cession, who otherwise would have the right to lodge legal claim against the transfer.

[TLC]

Sheet 2, to Mr. Samuel D. Leidesdorf, New York

I do not know whether the mortgagees of the Hinterberg St. building have a right to challenge. Both points are important, as the transfer fee could possibly be lost.

This matter is very urgent because Mrs. Mileva is being heavily pressured by the mortgagees of the Hinterberg St. building. For that reason I received the following telegram:

“We recommend purchase of Hutten St. by Professor Einstein at mortgage bond price, stop. Zueblin is applying for proviso of lifelong use for Eduard; notary costs 2,300 francs, wire payment insofar as agreed.”

For the time being, I thereupon sent back the following telegram:

“Purchase only possible through a trust here, otherwise risk considerable. Letter to follow.”

This is why I urgently ask that you quickly provide the promised legal clarifications of the options, since otherwise I cannot provide a definitive answer.

Please forgive me for imposing upon you so much in this emergency and accept my cordial regards

Yours

[verso]