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Vienna, July 11, 1934.

Dear Moffat:

I was very glad to get your letters of June 26 and June 27. I have written recently several times to Mr. Phillips with regard to the situation here and in Germany, and as I am sure you have seen these letters, I shall not go into the things which I covered in them. In my last letter I took the liberty of giving my reactions on recent developments in Germany, as I thought Mr. Phillips and you would be interested in the comment I might be able to make, because I knew so many of these people who have passed out of the picture so well.

I have been able to establish good channels of information and have been getting some what I am sure is quite accurate information with regard to the situation in Germany. I have reread my letter which I wrote to Mr. Phillips on July 5, and it may be interesting to note that all the data which has reached me since then from reliable sources confirms the statements and impressions given therein. The whole performance of the 30th June was so sinister that it is hardly necessary to point out certain things, but to me one of the most horrible features and one of the most significant was the murder of General von Lassow, Oberregierungsrat Dr. von Kahr, and of the former Police President in Munich, whose name I cannot remember for the moment. These were the men who were responsible for putting down the Hitler putsch in 1923. Before the present Government came into power, I asked one of my Nazi acquaintances close to Hitler who some of the men were whose "heads would roll" when they came into power, as Hitler so often said in his speeches. He told me then that these three men would be sure to be among those whose "heads would roll".

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We know that when Hitler came in in February, 1933, it came in an entirely different way from that he had imagined. He came in quietly through the Papen intrigue, and so there was no opportunity to let the heads roll, but it is significant to those of us who know Hitler's unforgettable rancor that at the first opportunity that these men can be got rid of, they go. This is why it is so useless and so dangerous to endeavor to give Hitler qualities which he does not possess, for on the contrary it is unfortunately only too true that he is the small man who will carry out personal vengeance in such a dastardly form.

I am making this observation to you, because it seems pretty clear that Göring himself used the 30th of June to get rid of a few people who may not have been on the common slate. I have seen a reliable correspondent who was present at the press conference which Göring held, and he tells me that they gathered from what Göring said that this was so, and for this reason he is picked upon as being so much worse than some of the rest who remain in the picture. The fact is that he is guilty of no greater crime in this respect than Hitler himself, and this is something I think we must bear in mind.

But the most despicable of all these persons remains Goebbels. We must remember that Goebbels was the intimate of Roehm and Ernst and that he shared their radical views and condoned and praised their barbarities. He was heart and soul with them in all their attitudes and views. I think I have told you that I have heard Göring refer to Goebbels as a "worm", and he seems to have lived up to Göring's opinion fully, for it is unquestionable that he turned against his own friends and intimates in order to maintain his position among the triumvirate. There are some things about Goebbels which Hitler does not like, and apparently Hitler is tremendously upset even with Goebbels now, because he says that by the statements given out by the press through Goebbels, as much harm was done as by the acts themselves. In their haste to defend themselves and explain themselves before the German people Göring and Goebbels and all of the spokesmen certainly did let out more of the truth than they intended to admit.

As I pointed out in my letter to Mr. Phillips, when

the statements which were made officially immediately after the happenings of the 30th June are examined calmly and carefully, they will be the most damning indictment in themselves that has ever been made of a régime governing so many people.

For the time being there seems to be paralysis in the party circles as well as in Germany generally. It seems that the perpetrators of the murders of June 30 are more or less aghast and trembling in their own boots. I am told that Hitler himself is taking unusual precautions to protect himself. If I know anything at all about the German situation, I feel that the triumvirate knows that it is licked. The whole impetus seems to be taken out of the movement. On the other hand, it is quite evident that the opposition elements are also for the time being paralyzed by fear. The horrible fate which was meted out to some of the decent people has apparently spread terror throughout the country. Some of these fine people were undoubtedly murdered in the most cruel fashion, and no one knows where it may strike next. Aside from wounding the susceptibilities of the Catholics, the cremation of the bodies of the victims was a tremendous mistake, because I am told that it is generally whispered in Germany that the bodies were cremated in order to destroy evidence of the horrible murders committed.

It will take a little time for the German people to get back their poise and to recover from the shock of the events of June 30, but it is going too far to impute to the whole German people barbarities and characteristics which some of their present governors have shown. There is in the German character a cruelty and callousness which I certainly did not believe was there, but the last few years particularly in Germany have shown me that it is there. There is, however, a lot of decency still left in the country, and while the Germans have shown a docility which I find anything but admirable, I cannot help but believe that the events of the 30th June will result in the complete elimination of the National Socialist movement as well as the elimination of the men who are still nominally directing affairs. It is inconceivable to think of the decent business men and the decent Germans who must be brought into power if the country is to be saved, working with men like Hitler and Göring and Goebbels and the whole

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outfit of secondary leaders like Darré, Ley, Mutschmann, von Killinger, etc. The next phase may come tomorrow and it may not come for several more months, but it is bound to come. I do not have any too great confidence in the intelligence and moderation of some of the Reichswehr generals, but, on the other hand, my knowledge of them leads me to believe that they do not have any desire to govern themselves. They know that Germany is going to have a hard road to travel, no matter how good a government she may have, and I always gathered the impression that they felt that their role was to bring in and to give a chance to such a government, but that they had no desire to run things themselves. If the desire is there, and it is not impossible, at least they have the intelligence and the sense to apparently wish to exercise their power to back others rather than themselves. Blomberg, because of his attachment to Hitler, may prove a certain obstacle towards rapid development, but I do not see how he can withstand eventually pressure from the Reichswehr generals who do not share his admiration for and friendship with Hitler.

Your letter of June 26 with its comment regarding the possibility of our negotiation of a trade treaty with Germany is very interesting, and I am delighted that the Department is taking the attitude it has. I am confident that it is the correct attitude and the wise one in the end. It was good of you to write me as fully with regard to Hanfstängel's visit as you did. Once again our people have shown their good sense, and Hanfstängel is coming back to Germany a wiser but, I am sure, a sadder man. He felt that he could carry through with that arrogance and blandishment that characterize him, but he must have had some bad moments. As the visit passed without any real trouble, perhaps it was just as well that he went, for he certainly comes back a good deal wiser.

I am delighted to know that Geist has written some interesting letters, and I am sure he will continue to give you very valuable information. I suggested to Geist that he write to you from time to time, and we worked together so closely that in the course of time he got to know practically all my best contacts, and during the last year of my stay particularly I took special pains to see that he had approach to worth



while places which ordinarily I should have cultivated only myself. I am delighted to see your splendid comment with regard to the work he is doing. It makes me very happy, for I have a real interest in him as a worth while officer. I wrote a despatch the other day to the Department, which I hope you will see (No. 34, of June 26), in which I call special attention to the good service Geist has been rendering and to the advisability of his being given special consideration for advancement in grade when the opportunity offers. In the meantime, as promotion may not be so easy, I suggest the advisability of the Department writing him a nice letter about what he has been doing. I know what that sort of thing means to an officer, and it would be a tremendous encouragement to Geist if he were sent such a letter. I hope something of this kind will be done.

Gray has arrived, and I am delighted to have him here. We have moved into our new house and are getting quite comfortably settled. I am going down to Budapest tomorrow for the afternoon to see Montgomery before he goes home. It is only a few hours ride down there by car, and Montgomery is giving a party on a river boat, which I promised to go to. I shall look forward to meeting Mrs. English, as I know Mrs. Moffat's other sisters, but not Mrs. English. I hope the summer in Washington is not going to be too hot, but I can assure you that here too the days are pretty warm.

Mrs. Messersmith joins me in all good wishes to you and Mrs. Moffat.

Cordially and sincerely yours,

George S. Messersmith

GSM/LGW