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N°	Date d'envoi
3616	8.2.37
Remise à M	le
H.	
Reçu le	9.2.37
<i>Messersmith</i>	

*Reçu du
le 19/2/37
Ry.*

Personal & Confidential

Vienna, January 25, 1937.

Dear Friend:

I received your letter of January 20th on Saturday morning, which gave me the opportunity of reading carefully the first draft of the preamble of the next "Sofina" report at leisure. I read it very carefully yesterday and it is indeed a splendid document of vital immediate interest, and I do not see how you could devote the preamble to a more urgent and important matter or how the subject could have been more effectively covered.

I need not tell you with what interest I always read the "Sofina" reports, especially the introduction, in which you have so often reviewed in a clear manner basic economic aspects of our only too troublous problems these days. You have chosen, I think, very properly and at the same time very strikingly, one of the most dangerous ills of our economic structure. The disappearance of private rights and of juridical security arose with the development of the dictatorships in great states. We had had this in smaller states in certain parts of the world before and for a long time, and knew how to deal with it, and we know how this situation kept these states in a backward condition. Now it has extended to great states and threatens further extension to smaller states where juridical security had been firmly established, as well as private rights. The subject has been ably covered in the draft preamble, and, as I have already said, I do not see how it could be done better. There can be no progress towards economic reconstruction and no permanence of peace unless

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we have private rights and juridical security generally re-established. In laying emphasis on this in the "Sofina" report preamble you will be doing a great service and particularly as it has been done so well. I hope you will leave word that when the report is issued in English that a few copies may be sent to me, as I should like to send them to some friends at home.

May I make the suggestion that, as the "Sofina" report is a rather bulky document and as this preamble is so interesting and timely and important, that it would be well worth while to have it printed in pamphlet form in English and in French, for I am sure that there would be a very wide interest in it and that the wider circulation which it can have in a pamphlet will serve a very useful purpose.

I refrain from comment on specific parts of the draft preamble, as, after a most careful reading, I do not see anything which you might wish to change and it would be difficult to improve on the text.

I wonder whether you have seen Hamilton Fish Armstrong's new book "We or They". I do not want to burden you while you are on a holiday, but I am taking the liberty of sending you an extra copy which I have and which you need not return. I think you will be very much interested in it, for it is one of the best and one of the strongest expositions of the basic issues which we have had. John Gunther did a valuable service with his book "Inside Europe", and reached hundreds of thousands of readers. Wheeler-Bennett did a great service with his book "Wooden Titan", in which he covers certain phases of the life of Hindenberg. He reached a smaller, but to a large extent, different audience than Gunther, but in a very effective way. Now we have Armstrong's book, "We or They", which will, unfortunately, reach only a small audience, for it can only be appreciated by those who have a considerable background. This fact alone, however, is important, for some of these people with background and who are supposed to think have not been doing very much thinking and have not been keeping proper perspective. This book of Armstrong's will reach thinking people, and will unquestionably set a good many of them straight. And this is most important

right now in England, France and in the United States.

We passed through a real crisis in November and December and up to January 10th. The temptation for Hitler to take provocative action which might bring about a general war was real and great. The factors which influenced him not to do so were internal and external. But that war did not come through this provocative action by Germany is, I think, a very great reason for encouragement. There will be other crises in Germany during 1937, brought about by the increasingly difficult internal and external situation of the country, but I believe that the power of Germany to make war is growing increasingly less, instead of greater. There is, therefore, reason to believe that the most serious crisis has been passed through without war, and increasing reason to believe that this danger will be less in the crises to follow, although it would be dangerous to believe that the danger is already completely gone.

There are a number of hopeful factors, but I still remain of the conviction that there can be no peace in Europe until the present government in Berlin is replaced by one more representative of the German people and one with which binding agreements can be made and one which will be able to establish private rights and juridical security in Germany again. It is for this reason that I look with a certain amount of apprehension to the next months. The present government is going to make every effort to maintain itself and to save as much for itself as it can. It will be prepared to make concessions in the East, as well as in the West and to the Southeast, but these will be more illusory than real and all for the purpose of getting that financial and other assistance from England and France and from us which is becoming so urgently necessary. I feel that this is not yet the time for negotiation or for any help or for any change of policy. Perhaps negotiation - if it is only for the purpose of letting things take their course in Germany until the change comes there. There is going to be a tendency in England and in France in certain quarters to believe that now is the time, not only to negotiate, but to make concessions, as Germany is unquestionably weaker. It is not a question of Germany, which no reasonable person

wants weak. It is a question of the régime, which must disappear before anything can be done to help the German people. Once the régime in Berlin is changed, we have no more to fear from dictators or dictatorships any where, for we will see rapid accommodation all around to a democratic order and a return to private rights and juridical security.

I am convinced that it is no time yet for a change of policy, and I am hopeful that we at home will do what we can to keep a stiff attitude in England and in France. These and many other things I would like to have the opportunity of talking over with you. I feel so much that we are entering the decisive stage.

I am sorry to hear that you will not be able to stop here on your way back to Brussels from Arosa, but I would love to see you before you sail for home. I am planning myself to go home, sailing from Hamburg on the MANHATTAN on April 7th, even though I may be able to stay only a short time. My mother is eighty-eight and always expects me this time of the year. And as she is slowly but steadily losing her sight, I feel that I must go.

I do not know what there will be in the way of changes in the Foreign Service. I have heard no gossip or rumors of real interest, but am told that Gibson is very anxious to get Dodd's post at Berlin. I heard from Rio the other day that he had left there indicating that he would not return and that he hoped to get Berlin. I think it would be not a good change from Dodd to Gibson. I think in fact it would be a change for the worse instead of for the better. Gibson has many good qualities and there are posts where he can be very useful, but Berlin is not the post for Gibson for many reasons. The principal reason is that he would not know how to handle the situation effectively and he does not have either the wide sympathy or the understanding of the financial and economic problems necessary. I only mention this because I know we are both friends of Gibson's and it would be no service on the part of his friends, either to him or to our interests, to facilitate that appointment.

I say the above with a good deal of reserve, because there are those who are mentioning me for that post. I have no interest whatever in the Berlin post

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or in any other post, and am perfectly happy where I am. My present post gives me ample opportunity for the employ of any capacities or industry I may have and I have no ambitions whatever. If the President and the Secretary should want me to go to Berlin, I would do so out of my loyalty to them and to the Service, but I would not, under any circumstance, take any initiative to get that or any other post, and I would not ask my friends to do anything. I think the post at Berlin is so important that it is one which should seek the man and not the man the post.

Apropos of the foregoing, I send you a copy of a syndicated article by Oswald Villard that has just reached me in the mail today and which may interest you.

I do hope we may see each other before you go home, and Mrs. Messersmith joins me in wishing you and your family a happy and restful stay at Arosa.

Cordially yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "H. Messersmith", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending from the end of the signature across the page.