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*Personal & confidential*

Berlin, Germany  
October 21, 1938

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE  
OCT 24 1938  
MR. MESSERSMITH

Dear Mr. Messersmith:

I am very happy to have your letter of October 5th and appreciate the time you took to write to me personally. I know what an immense pressure there is on you day and night; and I assure you that I think of you every day and always with the hope that some how or other you will bear the strain and still not sacrifice your health entirely. When visitors come from Washington and bring greetings from you my first question is regarding your health and how you seem to be; whether worn out or apparently in good health? I trust that you will ever exert the same care about yourself as you do about others. I hope, too, that Mrs. Messersmith is well and happy in Washington. I shall write to her soon about some of her friends here.

I am glad that you found my report about Peter Belin of value. I shall continue to observe the young man; but the more I know him the more I find that he has excellent qualities and I believe the making of a good officer. He is really helping the Ambassador and seems to me to maintain a very good balance in his various relations; I am more convinced than ever that if he has been writing home in a sense which might indicate that he is in sympathy with totalitarian principles he has been posing and not telling the truth.

I can imagine what you passed through during the last few days of September. In all this connection I think you will bear in mind the information which I have given you from time to time. I told you previously that there would be no war; and of all the people here who did not get excited I was the protagonist; and, in fact, at the Embassy when the clouds were the darkest they were questioning me as to the "Geist optimism"; and I still insisted that there would be no war and was the last to tell Americans to place themselves in safety and that only with considerable reserves. During those days I was in touch with people who knew and therefore held strong to my conviction to the end. The political situation here is not so difficult to gauge, particularly if you keep up with it from day to day and hour to hour; as I do. I shall soon write you another report which will give you the forecast for the next six months or year. There is nothing to be optimistic about. The dictators have won and judging from the present position they are going a long way.

You were good enough to write about Vienna and the improvement which has taken place there since Mr. Morris came. In this I believe you are correct. However, there is a tendency at Vienna to continue the "Wiley" traditions somewhat, which I believe is more the influence of Morgan than anybody else. Up to the present writing no political reports have been submitted to the Embassy

directly from Vienna. Mr. Gilbert has called my attention to this several times, and I have tactfully brought the matter to the attention of the Vienna office. Lately the Ambassador has indicated a slight impatience with this failure on the part of the Consulate General in Vienna to submit their political reports to the Ambassador directly and Heath again brought the matter to my attention; and early this month I wrote again a very tactful personal letter to Mr. Morris and sent him a copy of your Memorandum Series A of 1931 regarding "Political Reporting" and stated definitely that the Ambassador was interested in having their reports. I have had no answer to this letter; nor have I seen copies of any reports. It is possible that they are on the way via Paris by courier. I have invited Mr. Morris to come to Berlin and hope to have him here after Mr. Gilbert returns from sick leave about the first of November. Morris works very well with me; and I believe that as soon as Vienna realises fully that it is no longer a legation that the cooperation will be closer and entirely satisfactory. During Wiley's tenure of office I had to intervene a surprising amount, even going down there on one occasion to handle a matter which could only be done locally, - the Professor Freud case. The Hoffmansthal property was handled almost exclusively by me in telephonic communication with Bürckel, the Statthalter in Vienna and the castle at Kammersee. Wiley always seemed a bit at a loss how to handle these cases. Of course, I have the advantage of being in Berlin, where one can get results. The centralized state of affairs in this country makes representation at the capitol very advantageous; and the long experience gives me an advantage which an officer cannot acquire in a short time.

I have, as you can surmise, a pretty heavy burden to carry here ~~da~~ daily; but at the same time everything is going smoothly and to my entire satisfaction. Problems arise, but no matter how serious and difficult I always find a solution; and chief of all I have no fear of taking risks, where the circumstances or extraordinary conditions justify radical measures. If I were timid or too bureaucratic I would easily founder, and much harm could happen. Nazi Germany is like no other country, and the methods of success here are peculiar to the soil and cultivation must be adapted to accordingly. The support that I have from the Ambassador and from Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Heath gives me a great deal of extra courage to go ahead as the nature of the business requires. I am still very happy with the whole set-up here and believe the Embassy was never better staffed. I know now that I have the full confidence of the Ambassador and Mrs. Wilson who has been especially nice to me in every way. She insists that I "saved her life" in helping them to get a suitable home. They are most adequately housed and happy in their place. Both the Ambassador and Mrs. Wilson treat me not only as a member of their staff but almost as a member of the family. After the tea which they gave for Colonel Lindbergh they ask me to stay, and I remained with the Ambassador and Mrs. Wilson until nearly eleven o'clock. I was present at the big dinner which they gave for Göring and

Lindbergh, and the Ambassador asked me to help Göring and Lindberg carry on their conversation which I did for nearly an hour much to the discomfort of Truman Smith who considers that Lindbergh is his special property ( he can have him so far as I am concerned) and that nobody should approach Göring except through his good self. Lindberg was a little too stupid and dull for the conceited and verbose Göring, who wanted to make a great speech; so I encouraged him and let him talk away to me, which he did for an half hour on end to the amazement of the other guests who looked on while the Field Marshall told what might things he could do. It was an interesting evening and I am glad that I had an opportunity to take part. The Ambassador was grateful for my help as I was for his the Saturday before when I gave a lunch for "my devils", the key men in the secret police (Gestapo), Count Helldorff (Regierungspräsident in Berlin) and some important contacts in the Ministry of Justice and in the Foreign Office. Count Helldorff now has the final decision to make as to whether or not a rich or prominent German Jew is to get a passport. There is supposed to be a "black list" of about a thousand prominent and rich Jews who are to remain in Germany indefinitely; and so Count Helldorff has become an important personage to me. Your letter about Mendelsohn-Bartholdy (from your friend Mrs. Nauheim (not Mannheim) in London) brings up this question. I have seen him; and he and I are working on the case. It has been necessary for me to keep on good relations with this crowd, and so I have to entertain them from time to time, otherwise I could have little influence on the gates of the Concentration camps, which now and then I manage to pry open. I am now cultivating a new contact and that is the "secret" head of all the concentration camps in Germany, Gruppenführer Eicke, also head of the famous Deathhead Brigade. I went to see him in Oranienburg Concentration Camp a few weeks ago, still working on the case of young Rabinovitch. You know I never give these things up and continue to follow the leads I get wherever it is possible to go ahead.

Hitler has given the lead about "interference in the internal affairs of Germany" in the attack he made on Lord Halifax; so there is no other way to handle these matters except through personal contact. Naturally we cannot interfere officially in affairs relating to German citizens; so the personal relations continue to be the most important ways of approach in these matters. My personal relations with the Nazi leaders were never better; and I hope to get good results where we are pressed to save the lives of various victims. It is a terrible situation and the plight of the Jews in this country is going to get worse. I am glad that our friends Fritz Eichberg and Emil Baerwald got out in time. Emil Baerwald is now in Switzerland (at Basel) and will not return to Germany. If he comes back there is danger that I cannot get him out again. His wife is leaving here definitely on the first of December. His firm was denounced in the Stürmer and therefore he fears that he might be annoyed if he returns. He is now seventy years old and a few days in a concentration camp would be the end of him; and it is impossible to know what



pretense would be seized upon to annoy him.

The pressure of the immigration work has reached and passed its peak. During September we had to deal with thousands of desperate people, who stormed the Consulate General day after day. At times it seemed that we could not control the situation any longer; but we kept our heads and finally brought the applicants under control and now everything is going smoothly again. The quota is now insufficient to accomodate the applicants who number about 125,000 against the available numbers of 27,300 for the fiscal year. Applicants who newly apply must now wait three or four years. This is a desperate situation for many, who are sure unless they can effect their emigration to the United States, they cannot survive. We can only be sympathetic and kind; in most cases little practical help can be given. I am still hoping the Intergovernmental Committee will be able to open a few doors into other countries.

I have conferred with the Ambassador at length regarding the plans to have Mr. Rublee come to Germany. You know my views about this matter; I have been fearful that Rublee would be received and sent away with a few regrets and that the matter would end there. I was glad to see the Department's telegram indicating that the Germans should be informed that Mr. Rublee was coming only for information and not to get a final answer as to the German attitude and scheme of cooperation. I feel that it very important that the matter should be approached with the utmost caution, and particularly that Hitler be not approached, as he is now in the mood to defy any group of nations which desired to do something to help the refugees. I am of the opinion that it would be better to let the moderates around Hitler get some approval of a reasonable proposition than to approach him directly. This is a very grave business and the success of the enterprise is a matter of life and death for thousands of worthy and innocent people. I shall certainly help Mr. Rublee in every way I can.

You suggested to Mr. Davis that he write to me a personal letter regarding the organization of the Blucher Palace. I have received that letter and will reply after I give thorough consideration to all phases of the matter. I am completely familiar with your views as you discussed them with me in times past, and I think we shall have no difficulty in getting the organization compact and effective.

I appreciate your kindness and frankness in bringing up the question of additional consular title for me. I do not believe that I suffer any hindrance officially without the title of Consul General in the present set up, as everybody calls me Consul General, even the Ambassador. The designation of First Secretary has been of immense help to me and has given me the added prestige (so far as official titles are concerned) where I have most needed it. The situation only becomes a little troublesome in connection with the supervisory functions, as I have nine Consuls General to deal with. From these gentlemen I receive only the most loyal cooperation and therefore I do not

*This was probably the worst case.*

believe that it is essential so far as they are concerned. I have the feeling that my position as First Secretary gives me the added prestige in their eyes, as they know that I am an immediate member of the Ambassador's staff. They realize that I work closely with the Ambassador and that very often my views also express his, when it concerns a matter in which the Embassy has an interest. So far as I am personally concerned I do not believe the title of Consul General would make me any happier. I am only happy when I accomplish successfully what I have to do. But I do not want my personal reactions to interfere with any step which would be of benefit to the job itself or add prestige to the importance of a position so vital to our interests. The force of circumstances has already placed the title pretty well in practice; and that has all come about without my aid. I would not, of course, want to say that it is not a matter of any importance, for prestige in Germany today is not a secondary matter; though I believe experience, understanding and force count for more. In short, I believe it would in some cases help, give me added prestige in supervisory functions, but is not essential to my success.

I am always glad to receive your letters written on behalf of friends and acquaintances who wish you to do something on behalf of persons in Germany. In every case I do my best to accomplish something; but often it takes a long time to get any results as in the case of Emil Ludwig's friend, Raoul Aurenheimer. Visa cases are more difficult now as the registered demand is overwhelmingly great and sufficient to exhaust the present quota for years. However, even in such cases I am hopeful of being able to get such people out of Germany, so that they can spend their waiting time in other countries, and bring them up on the waiting list as fast as it can be done. I had a desperate case today of a man who could save \$60,000 if he got out in the next month, but whose turn would not come about for six months. My friend, Foley of the British Passport Bureau gave him a visa and permit to remain in England until his turn came. I am hoping to be able to extend this system, particularly for people who are in danger of being taken into the concentration camps. Many of these worthy people are on the verge of suicide, and one cannot close the door on the last ray of hope. I am sure that I have saved a number of people from self-destruction merely by telling them they could come to see me at any time. In cases where you write to me at the request of somebody in the United States you can depend upon me to write them immediately directly (through the pouch, if it is strictly confidential) giving them such information as I am able to obtain or reporting what steps I contemplate taken in behalf of the person named. I shall be glad to send you copies of such letters merely for your information and by way of check so that you know such communications have come safely to my hands. This will also save you the trouble of transmitting the information which I would otherwise send you in the normal course of events.

I appreciate very much your personal letter and send you and Mrs. Mesersmith my warmest regards and affections. Your friendship means so much to me and I assure you that it is a source of

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happiness every day as well as real inspiration. I know that you are terribly overworked, but the contribution you are making to the welfare of many people and the great service you are rendering to our people and Government and to the general cause of humanity and civilization must remain your great reward.

Believe me ever,

Faithfully yours

Raymond

P.S. I am glad that my sister is slowly improving. It is possible, if she succeeds in having the operation on the thyroid gland, that she may be well enough again to join us. It all depends upon whether or not she can get strong enough to have the operation.