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JAMES T. SHOTWELL, DIRECTOR

Woodstock, New York
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Dr. Edmund E. Day
5 South Park Street
Hanover, N. H.

Dear Day

I am sorry to have missed seeing you before you left the city but I only got back from my various travels this week and have now retreated to the hills myself, although near enough the city to run in from time to time.

I have so much to tell you that I hardly can get it into a letter. I fear that what goes in will be more or less of a jumble. First of all, let me say that both the meetings I attended were decided successes, the one in Milan, of the Conference of Institutions for the Scientific Study of International Affairs, (some less imposing title will have to be found for this body) and the Pacific Coast Branch of the Social Science Research Council. I am glad to be able to start my statement this way because, as you know, I was much in doubt as to whether it was worth my while to go to either one of these meetings.

On my way back from Europe I dictated a report on the Milan meeting, a copy of which I am sending you. As you will see from this report, I think that my proposal of two years ago for an Institute of Europe has at last been realized. If the meeting in London next year, which provides for three round tables, is as much of an improvement over the Milan meeting as the Milan meeting was over that of previous years, this conference will play a very definite part in the organization and stimulation of the social sciences in the field of international relations. I am sure that Gunn will bear out my impression of the possibilities of this conference. The Milan meeting was a test in more ways than one. We were the guests of the Fascist government in Italy, which presented us with a whole string of Fascist professors who had obviously been assigned the task of getting some cudos for Mussolini by some kind of incautious resolution passed by a conference which could have been characterized in the Italian press as containing the leading political scientists and economists of the world! This was side-stepped at every stage. The Germans and Austrians, as well as the British, played the game with absolute political and personal independence. The Germans and British were especially given to disagreeing among themselves, which was all to the good. In short, the discussion was as free as in the Institute of Pacific Relations and the fact that it met under the ultimate auspices of the League of Nations played no part whatever in the actual carrying out of the program. The League and Bonnet's institute were merely useful secretarial agencies in arranging the

meeting which henceforth has a life of its own and as the next meeting is to be in London the influences surrounding it will all be of the right kind.

The more I have studied this situation, the more I am convinced of the soundness of my first proposal to proceed by the dual method of autonomous organization in each country and the stimulation of an international discussion. The point that I had not fully realized was the place that discussion played in research. I am inclined to think that discussion of this kind is really nothing short of a continuance of research itself. It is the critical scrutiny of method, data or conclusions by competent critics and associates. Add to this the stimulus of social pressure from the meeting together, of men interested in common tasks, and the conference becomes an essential part of the whole structure. Indeed I am inclined to think that these international conferences are working out a technique which should be applied to our national bodies so as to give more life and more reality to the annual meetings of the historians, political scientists, economists and others. Organized and planned discussion with definite agenda, and not resolutions or formal conclusions to be voted on, would be a welcome relief from the program of formal papers read to audiences already half asleep and submitting to the ordeal more for the sake of their academic reputation than from any real good that comes of it.

However, I am wandering from the point. The Conference on Institutions for the Scientific Study of International Affairs needs an American coordinating committee in order to have the American institutions work into it as effectively as the Germans and British have organized their supporting institutions. Gay is, I think, prepared to help put this through. I suppose I shall be having a hand in it as well because on my way back through Geneva, with the success of this conference in mind, I was asked by the head of the Department of the League of Nations Secretariat, which has to do with Intellectual Cooperation, if I would accept nomination as the American member on the Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, and I consented to do so. However, the British, in their economy campaign, have proposed to do away with the Committee on Intellectual Cooperation altogether! In that case the conference would be as unofficial in form as it is in substance and I should be relieved of any other connection with it than that which has yet to be established under the Social Science Research Council.

You will be glad to know that Chamberlain, who was with me in Geneva and Paris, has come back from a trip through Germany and Hungary, having organized the whole study of international communications in a most promising way. This is now a purely S.S.R.C. task, for my plan for having research committees set up in Hungary, Poland etc. will have to give way to the plan of the Conference. Practically the same people are involved. The coordinating committee in Poland, for instance, is the very one that I have used in bringing out my Polish series of the Economic History of the War. So with a slight change in personnel, the Paris Institute has got under way and organized very similarly to the one I had proposed setting up. I think you will agree with me that, as it has turned out, the present method of organization is the most economical and the best fitted to go on in the future. It is also my conviction that this is the thing for your foundation to support. Upon the whole, I think there is less danger of the funds being turned aside from their original purpose by endowing the central body, than by endowing the separate national organizations.

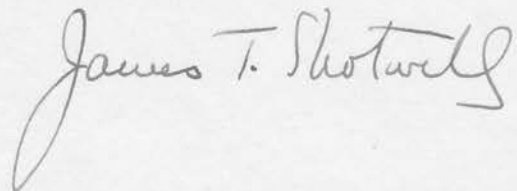
In course of time the national organizations, if left to themselves, may become reactionary or responsive to local political tendencies. The international body can correct this tendency better than anything else. In the field of international relations we should, I think, be making a serious mistake to carry through to the other extreme the perfectly sound principles (which I have always emphasized) of having effective national organizations on the job. If those national organizations have no international corrective, they will almost inevitably develop as the Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques in Paris has developed, - once a shining beacon of liberal thought and now a placid center of reaction. For this reason I was especially glad to find Mr. Gunn sympathetic with the idea of supporting the conference at the critical moment in its development. I feel perfectly sure that this is the most important single thing to do in the European scene at present.

This is a long letter but there are some other points still. You will recall my proposal about the study of the Polish frontier. I found Wolfers very much interested in it and ready to cooperate cordially. So was Mendelssohn. (In confidence let me tell you that Mendelssohn told me he was sorry he had broken loose from the German Coordinating Committee and would get back into it at the earliest moment.) On my return to New York I at once got in touch with Professors Abel and Znanietzki and they told me that Dr. Chalasinski, who is a Rockefeller Fellow this year and next at the University of Chicago, would be glad to spend next year, if you permitted it, back at the University of Poznan on this particular task. He is Znanietzki's substitute as temporary head of the Sociological Institute in Poznan and Znanietzki thinks that he would do better work there than in Chicago this next year. I have no opinion about this matter; but, looking at it solely from the standpoint of the success of the research itself, it would be a good thing for my plans if Chalasinski were permitted to spend this next year testing his method in Silesia instead of in Illinois. It is the Thomas-Znanietzki method applied to the question of what Polish peasants in the frontier area think about their German neighbors, how they get along with them in their daily work in the market place and in their business dealings, and the whole social complex. I am not enough of a sociologist to have a final opinion on the method which Znanietzki has worked out but it seems to have had satisfactory results in the surveys which he has made in the past.

I am now busily working on the problem of Canadian-American Economic Relations and hope we can get something really worth while under way in their field.

With kind regards,

Sincerely yours



P.S.-

I find that there is no copy of my report up here. I will have to ask the office send it to you.