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Hotel Royal ,  
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My dear Mr Dierking ,

I received a few days ago your good X-mas wishes which gave us great pleasure and which we sincerely reciprocate ; I often wanted to write to you , but did not know your exact address , tho' I am under the impression , that I addressed a letter to you a good time ago care of the Chicago office and I presume , that it came duly into your possession . You probably were astonished to hear of me as being in Italy ; it will be next month a year that I said good-bye to Vienna , where we went through those great starvation years 1916-1919 and I still shudder in the thought of them ; since middle of February last year , the situation for our staff improved somewhat as then the American food-parcels came , which relieved the situation a great deal , and all honour and gratitude to U.S.A. , whilst others talked , U.S.A. acted spontaneously , and even now good old uncle Sam is still feeding a few hundred thousands of children in Austria; yet this cannot go on eternally , and I often wonder where we are driving at ; perhaps we all have not yet fully grasped all the events that are in fermentation ; one thing is certain , German-Austria by itself can never exist ; with the right of self-determination I thought German-Bohemia would have belonged to German Austria , then I think the latter could have existed , then it had coal , industry and other produce for exchange , but once German-Bohemia without ever having been asked was joined to Czecho-Slovaccia , then I saw no more hope for German-Austria; well you know the conditions ; 2 Million people out of the total population of 6 Million live in Vienna , to live on what the Alpenlander Tyrol, Stiermark, Salzburg, Ober-Oesterreich produce with Nieder-Oesterreich , how long will that last ! I think never more injustice happened in the World's history than in those Peace-treaties, but history also will put that right , only the whole unrest does so affect business all the world over . Here in Italy the situation is anything but good ; not that it ever will be Bolschevic , but the continuous strikes , the differences between the land-owners and the tenants ( they quarrel as to who of the 2 parties should provide the machines ) the field-labourers strikes that prohibited the use of the machines , the higher machine-prices , higher duties , an exchange of 30 Lire for one Dollar instead of 5 Lire , it is one d. thing after another !

Under such conditions it is hard to come to decisions, yet we suffer, that we have no repairs-stock here for the 3000 tractors which the Italian Government bought from us during the war, whereas Case have opened up here some weeks ago, and also the Emerson people have erected a repairs-stock in Rome lately, whereas we depend here on a few jobbers, and the Germans with their cheap rate of exchange undersell us at half the price; I proposed to make use of our Neuss-Factory for the Italian market, to ship Neuss machines into Italy at Mark-prices so as to enable us to hold our own against "Eckert", "Lanz-Wery" "Fahr", but I am told this is impossible, as evidently Neuss cannot make sufficient machines for Germany; I am very disappointed on this situation. Well I will not make you more pessimistic as you already may be, also the Italian Sun will shine again, but at present, Italy seems to be the Austria of the Western Division. Otherwise I cannot complain; the People here are extremely nice and I could tell you such tales that I just would like to sit with you under some palm-tree here or at the fire-side in your home to have all out. Hertz is at Neuss as you no doubt know, poor Eames left us for ever, hard to realize; when I was at Paris end of September, went out to the American church to put some flowers on his coffin, and when I saw it before me, it went through me, thinking that there he was laying with whom I had worked 3 1/2 years in Vienna, those Novarragasse hours, Roesler nearly turning crazy, and now Mrs Eames is back in Washington with Baby. Klaus as you know is my successor in Vienna; Sawall is still in Budapest etc;etc; Krupp's with their 95000 working-people have gone into the manufacturing of harvesting machinery, changes every day, and I see no end to this uncertainty until Russia gets on her feet again. Oh' before I forget, Barrow formerly at Moscow is now looking after the Czechoslovak business with Antelmann as his assistant working the repairs-trade from the Lagerhaus in Tetschen; Loeschke dies suddenly a few years ago, Leibmann, Schuldes, Fehr:Koenigswald, are also gone for ever, but Schüed at Laun is holding out. Well I will close now, my dear Dierking, to tell you all you either have to come to the Eternal City, or I to U.S.A. and we often think of that. Am having Mrs Gottwald with me since October and we both you and Mes Dierking our best wishes for the New Year.

Yours very sincerely

*F. A. Gottwald*