LATVIA

REPRESENTATIONS REGARDING ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION AGAINST AMERICAN TRADE IN LATVIA

660p. 1111/7

The Chargé in Latvia (Coë) to the Secretary of State

No. 83

Riga, January 30, 1934.

[Received February 17.]

Sir: I have the honor to refer to the Department’s instruction No. 182, dated April 4, 1933, requesting a quarterly report on legislation tending to discriminate against American trade and a survey of the Legation’s activities in protecting American trade.

In the Valdības Vestnesis No. 282, dated December 14, 1933, the Law Governing The Regulation of Imports was published. A copy of this law and a translation thereof, accompanied the Consulate’s despatch No. 288 of December 10 [16], 1933.

This law does not, in reality, constitute new legislation but rather a compilation of all import regulations previously issued. As pointed out in the Consulate’s despatch, it does not materially change the situation for importers, nor does its text give a clue as to the effects it might have on American trade with Latvia.

On October 19, 1933, the local representative of the Brockway Motor Truck Corporation of New York informed the Legation that he had been trying without success for some time to obtain permission from the Currency Commission to remit the equivalent of 7033 lats to this company. The Legation approached the Commission informally and expressed the hope that a settlement of this matter would be arranged. The Commission shortly thereafter granted the local firm of Otto Schwartz, which has money due it in the United States, permission to pay to the Brockway Motor Truck Corporation the equivalent of 6000 lats, and at the same time it advised the Riga representative of this company to file an application for the transfer of the balance still due.

In a memorandum from the Consulate dated January 25, 1934, the following cases were outlined:

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2 Ibid., p. 602.
3 Not printed.
4* Not found in Department files.

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"On October 20, 1933, the Currency Commission was approached on behalf of Moses Hurwitz of 2885 West 1 Street, Brooklyn, New York, requesting the permission to transmit $1569.40. Permission to remit $300 was granted on October 28, 1933. On September 25, 1933, the Currency Commission was approached on behalf of the Singer Sewing Machine Company, with a request to remit $59,983.20. Permit issued in the amount of $5,000.00 on October 4, 1933, and a further remittance of $14,686 is understood to have been authorized on December 22, 1933. The balance is to be settled, if possible, on the basis of having the Singer Company find local merchants with credits in the United States which can be turned over to the Singer Company on such terms as may be agreed upon between the company and the holders of the credits."

Respectfully yours,

FELIX COLE

RIGA, MAY 14, 1934.
[Received June 1.]

Sir: With reference to the Department’s instruction No. 182, dated April 4, 1933, I have the honor to report that no new legislation tending to discriminate against American trade was enacted in Latvia during the first quarter of 1934.

On January 2, 1934, a law constituting primarily a compilation of regulations previously issued on the subject of foreign currency operations, was issued. A translation of this law accompanied the Consulate’s despatch No. 304 of January 5, 1934.

In Articles 20 and 21 of this law the term “arzemnieks” appears which literally means “foreigners.” As reported in the Legation’s despatch No. 120 of February 15, 1934, the Legation informally requested an interpretation of this word through the Foreign Office and was informed that “according to the opinion of the Currency Commission this word is used in a sense comprising any person residing abroad.”

The regulations governing the operations mentioned in Articles 20 and 21 are, therefore, applicable to any person residing abroad, including Latvian citizens.

On January 22, 1934, the local representative of the Royal Typewriter Company, Inc., of New York City, informed the Legation that his request for permission to transfer $112.00 to New York, in payment of an account then due, had been rejected by the Currency Commission. As is usual in these cases, the Commission gave no reason for its action.

*Not printed.
The Legation immediately asked the Commission for an explanation and was told that the petition in question had not been supported with the proper documents but that on the submission of another petition, the matter would be reconsidered.

The Legation advised the company's representative accordingly and he presented the petition again. Although no further documents were available and the petition was presented in the same manner as on the first occasion, it was promptly approved.

In response to the Legation's request for a review of its activities in protecting American trade interests during the March quarter, the Consulate in Riga reported the following case:

"A letter was received at this office on April 9, 1934, from the Remington Rand International, Ltd., Executive Offices, 465 Washington Street, Buffalo, New York, in which the Company requested that assistance should be extended to the Tirdniecibas Sabiedrība 'Systema', J. Petrovskis & G. Kliandrs, Pasta Kastite #634, Riga, who, it alleged, were not able to obtain the necessary import permit to clear from Customs a shipment of typewriters which arrived in Riga in September, 1933. The consulate, after communicating with the local firm 'Systema', was able to reply to the Remington Rand International, Ltd., on April 12, 1934, to the effect that of the 24 machines, which had arrived in Riga, 14 were standard models and 10 portable. Permission to clear had been granted for seven machines, two standard and five portable. The firm 'Systema' stated that they hoped eventually to receive permission to clear the rest of the shipment; however, they requested that the consulate should not make any direct representation to the local authorities since the firm was of the opinion that this would only increase the difficulties. The consulate informed the Remington Rand International, Ltd., to that effect."

Respectfully yours,

FELIX COLE

660p.116/29a: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Latvia (Cole)

WASHINGTON, December 5, 1934—5 p. m.

55. Please submit as soon as possible comprehensive report on present treatment by Latvia of American trade. Report should be similar in form and content to report No. 43 of October 6, 1934, from American Consul at Tallinn, a copy of which was forwarded to the Legation. Special efforts should be made to obtain comparable information from Latvian officials and importers. You are authorized to request appropriate assistance from Consulate.

HULL

*Ante, p. 130.
PROPOSED TREATY OF NATURALIZATION AND MILITARY SERVICE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND LATVIA

711.60p4/6

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Latvia (Cole)

No. 51 Washington, May 15, 1934.

Sir: Reference is made to the Department’s instructions Nos. 584 and 632 of December 1, 1928, and May 29, 1929, respectively, in regard to the negotiation of a treaty between the United States and Latvia providing that persons born in the United States of Latvian parentage, and naturalized American citizens of former Latvian nationality, shall not be held liable for military service or any other act of allegiance during a stay in territory subject to the jurisdiction of Latvia while citizens of the United States under the laws thereof.

You are requested to inform the Department at an early date of the present status of the negotiations initiated by the Legation with the Latvian authorities under the provisions of the above-mentioned instructions. As soon as circumstances will permit, the Department would appreciate receiving a report setting forth in detail the attitude of the Latvian Government towards the provisions of the draft of the proposed treaty which was forwarded to the Legation under cover of instruction No. 584 of December 1, 1928, and toward the several proposals with regard to this matter outlined for the guidance of the Legation in the same instruction.

The Department attaches importance to the early conclusion of a treaty of naturalization and military service between the United States and Latvia, and it is hoped that the Legation will endeavor to facilitate in every appropriate manner the negotiations, which have already been undertaken for that purpose at Riga.

Very truly yours,

Wilbur J. Carr

The Chargé in Latvia (Cole) to the Secretary of State

No. 349 Riga, June 13, 1934.

[Received June 26.]

Sir: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the Department’s instruction No. 51, dated May 15, 1934, requesting a report on the

*Instruction No. 584 not printed, but see instruction No. 583 of December 1, 1928, to the Chargé in Estonia, and footnote 50, ibid., 1928, vol. I, p. 500; instruction No. 632 not printed.
present status of the negotiations for a treaty of naturalization and military service, initiated by the Legation with the Latvian authorities in compliance with the Department’s instructions Nos. 584 and 632 of December 1, 1928, and May 29, 1929, respectively.

The action taken by the Legation with reference to these instructions was reported in its despatches Nos. 6220 and 6254 of June 18, 1929, and July 9, 1929, respectively.

According to these despatches, no reply was received to the notes which the Legation addressed to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs on January 7, 1929, and June 10, 1929. However, as reported in despatch No. 6254 of July 9, 1929, the matter was discussed with the Minister for Foreign Affairs a few days prior to that date. On that occasion the Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that objections had been raised to the proposed treaty by the Ministries of War and Interior. At the same time he expressed his willingness to obtain from these Ministries their specific objections. Unfortunately, no further action appears to have been taken by the Legation.

On receipt of the Department’s instruction No. 51 of May 15, 1934, the Legation prepared a note with a view to expediting the conclusion of a treaty of naturalization and military service. This note was personally delivered by me to Mr. Ludvigs Seja, Chief of the Administrative and Juridical Section of the Foreign Office on June 1, 1934. A copy of the note, No. 57, dated May 31, 1934, is herewith enclosed.

Mr. Seja promised to give the matter immediate attention and the Legation hopes to be able to submit a report on the attitude of the Government of Latvia toward the provisions of the draft treaty in the near future.

Respectfully yours,

FELIX COLE

711.60p4/8

The Chargé in Latvia (Gallman) to the Secretary of State

No. 378

RIGA, July 5, 1934. [Received July 18.]

SIR: With reference to the Legation’s despatch No. 349, dated June 13, 1934, concerning the present status of negotiations for a treaty of naturalization and military service, I have the honor to enclose herewith a copy of a note from the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs dated June 28, 1934.

In this note the Ministry states that the Government of Latvia regrets that it is unable to accept the proposal contained in the Legation’s note of January 7, 1929.

11 For despatch No. 6220, see Foreign Relations, 1929, vol. i, p. 449; despatch No. 6254 not printed.

12 Not printed.
The Legation’s note of January 7, 1929, contains the observations appearing in the Department’s instruction No. 584, dated December 1, 1928, and with it the draft treaty which accompanied this instruction was enclosed as reported in the Legation’s despatch No. 6220 of June 18, 1929.

In the enclosed note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs it is stated that the point of view of the Government of Latvia was expressed in paragraphs II–V, section three, of its note of September 21, 1933. A copy of this note was forwarded with the Legation’s despatch No. 1628, dated September 28, 1933.28

Respectfully yours,

W. J. GALLMAN

[Enclosure]

The Latvian Ministry for Foreign Affairs to the American Legation

No. J.3.19/34 17210

In reply to the note of the Legation of the United States of America No. 57, dated May 31, 1934 and to the foregoing correspondence bearing on the matter, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the honour to inform the Legation as follows.

The Latvian Government regrets not being able to accept the proposal contained in the note of the American Legation, dated January 7th, 1929, and to conclude the treaty of naturalization between Latvia and the United States of America in conformity with the presented draft. The reason of this attitude of the Latvian Government is the following.

The acceptance of the proposed text of the treaty by the Latvian Republic would necessarily involve a modification of the principal clauses of the Latvian Law on Nationality and also of the Military Service Law. Considering, however, the geographical situation of Latvia and the peculiarities of its legislation which entails compulsory military service, such modifications of the above laws cannot be consented to by the Latvian Government.

The point of view of the Latvian Government in the respective question has already been exposed in the paragraphs II–V of the 3rd section of the note verbale of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to the American Legation No. J.1.25/33/21233, dated September 21, 1933.

The Ministry begs to draw the Legation’s attention to the principles laid down in the last mentioned note that hold good, as regards the point of view of the Latvian Government, also at present.

RIGA, June 28, 1934.

28 Not printed.