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The Riga Mission: The Reports of the First American Outpost on the Soviet Border, 1924-1933

Jeffrey Acosta
Old Dominion University

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THE RIGA MISSION: THE REPORTS OF THE FIRST AMERICAN OUTPOST ON THE SOVIET BORDER, 1924–1933

by

Jeffrey Acosta
B.A. May 1981, Old Dominion University

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Approved by:

Lorraine M. Lees (Director)
ABSTRACT
THE RIGA MISSION: THE REPORTS OF THE FIRST AMERICAN OUTPOST ON THE SOVIET BORDER, 1924-1933

Jeffrey Acosta
Old Dominion University, 1992
Director: Dr. Lorraine Lees

From 1917 to 1933, the United States did not recognize the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In 1920 the United States established conditions for recognition. First, the Soviet Union had to pay all debts owed to the United States government and its citizens by previous Russian and Soviet governments. In addition, all propaganda and subversive activities sponsored by the Soviet Union in the United States had to cease. During this period, the Division of Eastern European Affairs (DEEA) studied and collected data about the Soviet Union from its main "outpost" at the United States Mission in Riga, Latvia. The Russian specialists of the DEEA in Riga and Washington used the data collected to write scholarly reports about the Soviet Union and the Communist International. This thesis will analyze the reports written by the Russian specialists at the Riga mission and illustrate that the reports successfully defended the policy of nonrecognition by accurately demonstrating the Soviet Union's support of subversive propaganda activities in the United States.
To My Wife, Celeste,
Who Supported Me,
and
Mr. Edward J. Boone, Jr. and Dr. Lorraine Lees,
Who Taught Me to How to be a Historian.
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INTRODUCTION

In December 1918, President Woodrow Wilson approved a recommendation by Secretary of State Robert Lansing that the United States not grant the Bolshevik government of Russia "de facto" recognition. The United States was opposed to the communist ideology of the Bolshevik government led by Vladimir I. Lenin which advocated a violent proletarian world revolution. Within four years however, the Soviet Russian government had changed its foreign policy to one of peaceful coexistence with the capitalist nations until economic and political conditions were ripe for the inevitable socialist revolution. Until that time socialism would be built within the Soviet Russia. The United States government also gradually changed its position concerning Soviet Russia. In 1920 Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby indicated that the United States would recognize the Soviet Union provided three conditions were met. First, the Soviet Union must pay all debts owed to the United States by previous Russian governments. Second, the Soviet Union must compensate American citizens for private property lost as a result of the Bolshevik revolution. Finally, the Soviet Union had to cease its support of all propaganda and subversive activities

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sponsored by the Communist International in the United States and its territories. As a result of the Soviet government's refusal to accept these conditions, a policy of nonrecognition existed between the United States and the Soviet Union until 1933.

Throughout the period of nonrecognition, the United States government remained interested in the activities of the Soviet Union and its revolutionary agent, the Communist International (Comintern). The Division of Eastern European Affairs (DEEA) was established within the State Department to observe the Soviet Union and the Comintern and to defend the policy of nonrecognition until the Soviet government was prepared to meet United States conditions for recognition. An "outpost" or "window" was established by the State Department near the Soviet Union from which a specialist corps of foreign service officers (FSOs) could observe and study the Soviet Union. The "outpost" was located in Riga, Latvia close to the Soviet Union border. The Russian experts at the Riga mission studied in a scholarly manner all aspects of the Soviet Union. The subject of their reports included, but was not limited to, politics, economics, religion, industry, agriculture, the Soviet armed forces, foreign policy, and foreign trade, as well as the Soviet Union's control of the Comintern.

In response to a variety of domestic and international political pressures, President Franklin D. Roosevelt decided
to recognize the Soviet Union in 1933, and called on the Riga
experts for advice during the recognition negotiations. After
normal diplomatic relations were established, the Riga
specialists continued to serve in the government throughout
the 1930's, the Second World War and the Cold War.

According to the Cold War specialist Daniel Yergin, there
are two axioms which could be used to describe the historical
relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States.
The first he called the Yalta axiom in which the United States
"downplayed the role of ideology and the foreign policy
consequences of authoritarian domestic practices, and instead
saw the Soviet Union behaving like a traditional Great Power
within the international system."\(^1\) The second axiom he dubbed
the Riga axiom in which the United States treated the Soviet
Union "as a world revolutionary state, denying the
possibilities of coexistence, committed to unrelenting
ideological warfare, powered by a messianic drive for world
mastery."\(^2\) The Yalta axiom, which Yergin believed guided the
policy of Franklin D. Roosevelt, led to Soviet-American
cooperation, while the Riga axiom, followed by Harry S. Truman
and his successors, both caused and prolonged the Cold War.

Yergin and many other scholars agree that after 1945 the

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1 Daniel Yergin, Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold
War, (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, Co. 1977; Penguin Books,
1990), 11.

2 Ibid.
Riga specialists, particularly George F. Kennan, Charles F. Bohlen, Loy Henderson and Robert F. Kelley, were influential in the development of the policies implemented by the United States to contain the Soviet Union and its communist allies.³ Yergin claimed however, that the above named specialists based their recommendations on the anti-Bolshevik attitudes they had adopted as a result of their service at Riga; an experience which had simply "confirmed predispositions and reinvigorated what had been the dominant American diplomatic response to the Bolshevik revolution."⁴

It can be demonstrated that as a result of their studies between 1919 and 1933, the Riga specialists were hostile to the political ideology of the Soviet Union. They believed that the Soviet government's support of the Comintern and its subsidiary organization, the Communist Party of the United States, constituted illegal interference in the internal affairs of the United States. In order to be treated as a legitimate government, the Soviet Union had to acknowledge its international responsibilities. However, as an examination


⁴ Yergin, 35.
of the Riga reports will demonstrate, the purpose of their studies between 1922 and 1933 was not to develop a policy to contain the Soviet Union and world communism, but to insure that the Soviet government met the three conditions established by Colby for recognition. In addition, they wanted to insure that when recognition occurred it would be on terms favorable to the United States. The DEEA and the Riga mission which served it was created to provide a scholarly view of the Soviet Union, in service of American policy, and it served that function well.
Chapter 1

THE ROAD TO NONRECOGNITION

Formal diplomatic relations between the United States and Russia began in 180. In 1832 the two nations signed a commercial treaty. Relations between the United States and Russia were distant but correct; with each country knowing little of the other. The sale of Alaska in 1867 and the first wave of Russian immigrants to the United States resulting from the Tsarist pogroms increased American interest in Russia by the 1880's. In 1885, the renowned American explorer George F. Kennan traveled across Russia. When Kennan returned to

1 For the purpose of this thesis "Russia" designates the country that existed until November 8, 1917. After that date Russia will be called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or the "Soviet Union."

2 The Russian government sanctioned attacks against the Jews in 1881, 1903 and 1906.


4 In this thesis there are two George F. Kennans who were related. The elder George F. Kennan (1845-1923) had a younger cousin, Kossuth Kennan. On February 16, 1904 Kossuth's son
the United States, he wrote a book about his journey to Russia which was very critical of the Russian government. The book was entitled Siberia and the Exile System. Kennan wrote numerous articles about Russia for the next three decades. By the end of the 19th century, he and Dr. Samuel Harper of the University of Chicago were recognized as the leading experts in the United States on Russia.5

The elder Kennan’s writings about Russia under the rule of the tsars sparked interest in the United States about this distant country. Many prominent native-born American liberals, inspired by Kennan’s work, formed an anti-tsarist group called "The Friends of Russian Freedom." This group included the elder Kennan and Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain).6 The organization supported Russian political activists and minority groups in Russia. They also lobbied Congress not to support treaties which would open trade relations with Russia until democratic political reforms were enacted.

A second group of anti-Tsarist lobbyists was also formed

was born and was named after the elder George F. Kennan. The elder Kennan did not have a family and after a visit with his cousin Kossuth, developed a close relationship with his young namesake. Inspired by the elder George Kennan’s stories of Russia, the younger George F. Kennan pursued a career as an American diplomat and leading scholar on the Soviet Union.


6 Other American liberals who were members of "The Friends of Russian Freedom" included: Samuel Gompers, Robert M. LaFollette, Lynn Abbott, Jane Addams and William Lloyd Garrison.
during this period. This group consisted of Russian immigrants to the United States. Like the native-born group, they worked to block commercial treaties with the Russian government. However, there was a fundamental difference between these two groups concerning the type of political and social changes they wanted for Russia. "The Friends of Russian Freedom" hoped to see a political revolution in Russia. They envisioned a government assuming power which would convert Russia into a democratic republic similar to the United States. The immigrant lobby, by contrast, hoped to see a social revolution occur, during which the peasants, workers, and oppressed minorities would seize power from the ruling aristocratic and bourgeois classes of Russia.⁷

As result of this difference, the two groups supported two different revolutionary factions in Russia. The immigrants supported the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. The Social Democrats were adherents of the economic and political philosophies of Karl Marx. Party members included Georgi V. Plekhanov and Vladimir I. Lenin. Between 1885 and 1898, under the umbrella of the Social Democratic Party, Marxist groups organized and became active in Russia. These groups supported strikes in Russia's factories. The secret police quickly learned of the activities of the Marxist

groups. In 1897, Lenin was arrested and sent into exile in Siberia for his political activity. When the Marxists convened a secret congress in Minsk in 1898, the secret police learned of the congress and arrested others in the Marxist leadership, rendering the Social Democrats inactive.

In 1903, a second Marxist congress convened in London out of the reach of Tsar Nicholas II's secret police. At the congress Lenin took control of the Social Democrats and sought to restrict the party's membership to a small group of well indoctrinated Marxists. This small group would guide and lead the revolution in Russia. The leadership of the Social Democrats was to be centrally controlled by this smaller elite of Marxist revolutionaries. The orders of the central authority would be obeyed without debate. Plekhanov supported Lenin's platform which was accepted by a small majority attending the congress.

The minority members who refused to accept Lenin's platform wanted the party membership to be more open and objected to Lenin's proposed centralized control of the party. By the end of the second congress, the Social Democrats had become irreconcilably split into two groups. Lenin's group was known as the Bolsheviks (larger or majority group) and the minority group was called the Mensheviks (smaller or minority group).  

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The second revolutionary group to emerge in Russia was the Socialist Revolutionary Party (SRs) founded in 1902. The political philosophies of the SRs combined the ideals of the Russian populist movement with those of Karl Marx. This party advocated the socialist style redistribution of the land, a federal state government, self-determination for non-Russian minorities, freedom of political expression, and the use of terrorist tactics to achieve its objectives. Between 1902 and 1905, the SRs carried out several political assassinations and were considered by the secret police to be more dangerous than the Social Democrats. The SRs received support in the United States from liberal groups such as "The Friends of Russian Freedom."  

At the same time, official relations between the United States and Russia remained correct. The only controversy arose in 1911 when the Russian government decided to deny visas to Russian-American Jews who wanted to visit family in Russia. The two anti-Tsarist groups lobbied the Congress to abrogate the Commercial Treaty of 1832 in retaliation for the Russian government's action. The resolution to abrogate the treaty was passed by Congress.

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9 John Paxton wrote that Russian Populists "sought to transform society by basing it on traditional peasant mir (community). Inspired by Michael Bukharin in 1873-74, the nadrodnik (populists) adopted the tactic of going to the people (khohldeniye v narod) with the aim of educating the masses with revolutionary ideas." Paxton, 322, 371.

treaty passed in the House of Representatives but not in the Senate where the issue died.\footnote{Filene, 11-14; Paxton, 322, 371; MacKenzie, 388-90.}

On the eve of the Great War, the American people and government as a whole knew very little about Russia and were apathetic towards the political repression of Tsar Nicholas II's autocratic government. George F. Kennan (the younger) summarized American understanding of Russia and its people during this period when he wrote:

> There was nothing in the traditional American political philosophy to make Americans aware of such virtues as the Tsarist system may have had or to cause them to doubt that the removal of the system would be followed by rapid progress in the direction of parliamentary democracy. It had never occurred to most Americans that the political principles by which they lived might have been historically conditioned and might not enjoy universal validity.\footnote{Kennan, Russia Leaves the War, 12.}

Woodrow Wilson was elected President of the United States in November 1912. Prior to entering politics, Wilson was a professor of history and political science, a writer and president of Princeton University. He was not well-traveled and had written very little about diplomacy, which he considered a minor aspect of government.\footnote{Daniel M. Smith, The Great Departure: The United States and World War I, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), 16.} Wilson was an intellectual and a moralist who expected the leaders of foreign governments to act morally, adhere to international law and meet international obligations. He was also a
nationalist who believed that world peace could be achieved if the nations of the world accepted democracy. Consequently, Wilson viewed the autocracies of the world, including Imperial Russia, as abhorrent.

Wilson did not trust the diplomats and other bureaucrats of the State Department to negotiate and implement his foreign policy objectives. He considered himself the best secretary of state. Wilson also kept the State Department and its ambassadors uninformed about his foreign policy objectives. During his presidency, Wilson often used special envoys instead of State Department personnel to negotiate and head diplomatic missions. These special envoys, more often than not, had no previous diplomatic experience, and did not speak the language and had never studied the history, culture and politics of the country to which they were dispatched. As a result, they often gave the president a false assessment of the situation in the country to which they were sent.14

However, an argument can be made that Wilson’s special envoys were no worse than the men who made up the consular and diplomatic corps of the State Department. Salaries did not cover all of the expenses which diplomats and counselors incurred. As a result only men from upper middle class and

wealthy families could afford to serve in the State Department. Many department personnel were alumni of private and Ivy League schools. Senior members of the department were often retired financiers, industrialists, or politicians. Most diplomats and counselors received their positions through political patronage. As a result the United States embassies and consulates were staffed by amateurs who learned the art of diplomacy on the job.  

In addition, the United States missions in Europe were unprepared to help the thousands of American citizens trying to leave Europe when the Great War began. These problems were compounded because the embassies and consulates were understaffed and had no provisions to hire more personnel. American diplomats, as neutrals, were requested to represent the interests of the belligerent nations and to insure that prisoners-of-war received adequate care. In 1914 the Wilson administration also instructed department personnel to send reports on the military, political and economic conditions of the countries in which they were stationed. The diplomats and counselors were not trained for this task and the reports received in Washington were inaccurate and often delayed. Most of these problems were not rectified until the passage

of the Foreign Service Act of 1924.\textsuperscript{16}

All of this greatly concerned Robert Lansing, who became Secretary of State in July 1915. Lansing was born into a distinguished New York family and served for twenty-two years as an international lawyer. He entered public service in 1914 as the Counselor for the State Department. Lansing has been described by historians George F. Kennan and Daniel M. Smith as a man of keen insight, who was very meticulous and had a precise legal mind. He respected and understood international law and had a great respect for the diplomatic process. Like Wilson he believed that nations should be governed by moral laws; idealism had its place provided it was adapted to common sense. Lansing believed that the purpose of diplomacy was to preserve the interests of the United States, and that it should be conducted carefully and coordinated only through the State Department. Wilson’s practice of using special envoys through the State Department would lead to conflicts between the president and Lansing.\textsuperscript{17}

The United States Ambassador in Russia during this period was David R. Francis, the former governor of Missouri, who received his assignment as a result of political patronage.


\textsuperscript{17} Kennan, \textit{Russia Leaves the War}, 28-31, 150; Smith, 18.
He was held in low esteem by the diplomatic corps in Petrograd. He knew little about Russia and did not speak the language. Like Wilson and Lansing, he had little respect for the Tsarist government. When the United States entered the Great War in 1917, Francis became much more active in his diplomatic duties. The ambassador was assisted by two men who had a great deal of experience in Russia, Maddin Summers, the American Consul General in Moscow, and Colonel William V. Judson, his military attache. Although they were not trained as Russian specialists, they had a great deal of service experience and were astute observers of Russia. When

18 Prior to 1914, Petrograd was known as St. Petersburg and was the capital of Russia. The Tsar’s government changed the name of the city when Germany and Russia went to war. The Soviet government later changed the name of the city to Leningrad in honor of Lenin and moved the capital to Moscow.

19 Maddin Summers was the most experienced and respected American diplomat in Russia in 1917. He was a career diplomat who was married to a Russian National, Natalie Gorainoff Summers, a member of the Russian aristocracy. Like many of his peers he knew little about Russia when he arrived, but took advantage of his wife’s linguistic capabilities and liberal social contacts to learn about the political situation in Russia.

20 Colonel William V. Judson was the military attache’ to Ambassador Francis. Like Summers, he was an experienced Russian observer. In 1905 during the Russo-Japanese War, he was a foreign observer attached to the Russian Army. He returned to Russia in June 1917.

21 Kennan, Russia Leaves the War, 16-17, 35-40; Smith, 137; Edward M. Bennett, Recognition of Russia: An American Foreign Policy Dilemma (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 15-17.
one considers the poor training of most foreign service officers in 1917, Francis was fortunate to have them on his staff.

On 15 March 1917, Tsar Nicholas II was forced to abdicate due to a revolt of Russian workers and soldiers. A Provisional government took control of Russia. On 17 March, Francis recommended that the Provisional government, led by Prince Georgi Y. Lvov, be granted "de facto" recognition. Lansing and Wilson approved Francis' recommendation. The United States was the first country to recognize the new Russian government.

When a second revolution occurred on 7-8 November 1917,

22 The chief reasons for the March revolution were: hunger, the enormous casualties inflicted on the Russian army by the Germans and the inefficiency of the government rigidly controlled by Tsar Nicholas II and his wife, Alexandra. The Provisional government formed after the abdication consisted of the non-socialist parties which made up the Duma (Russian Parliament). The exception was Alexander Kerensky, a Social-Revolutionary and future leader of the Provisional government.

23 Traditionally the United States granted "de facto" recognition to a government which controlled the administrative machinery of state, ruled with the acquiescence of the people and had the ability and willingness to carry out and discharge international and conventional obligations of the state. A "de facto" government can rule with or without the popular support of the people. Regardless of its popular support, a "de facto government" is not automatically entitled to "de facto" recognition. The criteria for granting "de facto" recognition varied from country to country. Black's Law Dictionary, 5th ed., s.v. "De Facto Government" and "Government de facto"; Bennett, 12-13.

24 W. Bruce Lincoln, The Romanovs: Autocrats of All the Russias (New York: The Dial Press, 1981), 713-26; Kennan, Russia Leaves the War, 13-19; Smith, 18-24; Paxton, 13, 280.
the United States was both surprised and disapproving. Why
this occurred and the views which served as the basis for the
administration's reaction to the Bolshevik Revolution is the
subject of George F. Kennan's two volume history, Soviet-
American Relations, 1917-1920. Kennan observed that, in
general, between 1917 and 1920 Wilson's foreign policy
concerning Russia was confused and uncoordinated. The day
after the Bolsheviks seized power, Lenin announced his "Decree
of Peace." In his appeal, addressed to the workers and
soldiers of the belligerent powers, Lenin demanded the
immediate opening of peace negotiations and an end to the war
without annexations or indemnities. Since the appeal was made
directly to the people over the heads of their governments,
Wilson and Lansing believed it constituted direct interference
in the internal affairs of nations.25 Kennan wrote that the
Decree of Peace was:

the first example of demonstrative diplomacy, i.e.
diplomacy designed not to promote freely accepted and
mutually profitable agreements as between governments,
but rather to embarrass other governments and stir up
opposition among their own people.26

On 22 November Lenin took control of the Russian army and
initiated negotiations with Germany which would take Russia
out of the Great War. After difficult negotiations and a

25 A. A. Gromyko and B. N. Ponomarev, eds., Soviet
Foreign Policy 1917-1945, vol. 1 (Moscow: Progress
Publishers, 1981), 30-32; Kennan, Russia Leaves the War, 74-
77.

26 Kennan, Russia Leaves the War, 75-76.
major military offensive by the German army, the Bolsheviks signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on 3 March 1918, and ended the war on the eastern front. Wilson and the Allied heads of state felt betrayed by the treaty, since thousands of German soldiers were transferred to the western front, prolonging the war and increasing casualties.27

In addition, Lansing believed that the Bolsheviks were a serious political threat. On 4 December 1917, Lansing, with the consent of the president, issued instructions to Francis that the United States would not grant "de facto" recognition to the Bolshevik government. United States representatives in Russia were to have no contact with the Bolsheviks. However, Francis was instructed to continue his diplomatic duties in Russia and hold the Bolsheviks responsible for the safety of the Americans in the country. Since the United States had not recognized the Bolshevik government, they were under no legal obligation to protect American interests in their country.28

In January 1918, Lenin abolished the Constituent Assembly. This assembly had been democratically elected just prior to the Bolshevik Revolution. Wilson and Lansing believed that the assembly would rule Russia effectively. Lenin's actions were used by the administration to justify its

27 Kennan, Russia Leaves the War, 85-98, 364-77; Smith, 97; MacKenzie, 546-50.
28 Kennan, Russia Leaves the War, 80-84.
position that the Bolsheviks did not rule Russia with the support of the Russian people and to buttress the policy of non-recognition, which would remain in effect until a democratic government took power. At the same time, both men retained the hope that by abolishing the assembly, Lenin had so angered the Russians that they would eventually rise up and overthrow the Bolsheviks in a counterrevolution.²⁹

That same month, Consular Dewitt C. Poole carried out several missions which angered the Bolsheviks. Poole traveled into the Ukraine in an effort to make contact with counterrevolutionary forces and assess their ability to overthrow the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks knew of the mission and used Poole's actions to justify their case that the counterrevolutionary forces in Russia worked for the United States.³⁰

While official representatives of the United States conducted various activities in Russia, Wilson also dispatched special envoys and missions to that country. These envoys and missions operated independently and did not report to either Lansing or Ambassador Francis. Wilson's special representatives included the American Red Cross (ARC) and Committee on Public Information (CPI), both of which operated independently in Russia and were responsible for a great deal

²⁹ Ibid., 343-63.
³⁰ Kennan, Russia Leaves the War, 180-83; Gromyko, 75-82.
of the confusion concerning the administration's Russian policies. Consequently, the representatives in the two organizations were resented by the diplomats in Russia. The ARC was supposed to carry out humanitarian missions in Russia. However, between the fall of 1917 and the spring of 1918 two leaders of the ARC, William Boyce Thompson and Raymond Robins, were deeply involved in the political affairs of Russia and the foreign affairs of the United States. Both men wanted the Bolsheviks to be granted "de facto" recognition.

The CPI, headquartered in Washington under the direction of George Creel, was in Russia to carry out propaganda missions to raise the morale of the Russian army. The organization's two principal officers in Russia, journalists Arthur Bullard and Edgar Sisson, both became involved in intelligence operations. Bullard had first visited Russia during the failed 1905 revolution and was active in "The Friends of Russian Freedom" when he returned to the United States. In 1917 Bullard studied the Russian political situation and discreetly gave money to the SRs. Though he reported to Creel independently, he also tried to work with Francis. Sisson became involved in intelligence operations in order to prove Lenin was a German agent. He returned to the United States in 1918 with documents which supposedly proved this was true, although Kennan has written that Sisson's documents were not authentic. Creel and Sisson released the documents to the public in spite of Lansing's
request that they be kept classified until all American diplomats had left Russia and the documents' authenticity could be verified. Creel and Sisson claimed that Wilson authorized their actions. The release of the Sisson documents provoked political opposition in the United States to diplomatic relations with the Bolsheviks.\(^{31}\) Wilson's third special envoy, whom he dispatched to Russia in January 1919, was William C. Bullitt, a member of the State Department. He had come to Wilson's attention a year earlier for his forceful arguments against an Allied military intervention into Russia.\(^{32}\) Bullitt went to France with Wilson as a member of the delegation at the Versailles peace conference. There Wilson ordered Lansing to instruct Bullitt to go on a fact finding mission to Soviet Russia. In addition, House instructed Bullitt to tell the Bolsheviks that if they agreed to an armistice on all fronts, the United States would insist that the Allies also accept an armistice. Finally, House

\(^{31}\) Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 45-67.

\(^{32}\) In the spring of 1918, France, Great Britain, Japan and the United States sent troops into Russia. Wilson reluctantly ordered American troops into Russia for three reasons: 1. To prevent stockpiled war materials in Vladivostok from being captured by the Germans, or their "supposed" allies the Bolsheviks. 2. To prevent Japan from occupying Siberia alone, which Wilson and Lansing believed would only alienate the Russians further against the Allies and allow Japan to expand its power in Asia. 3. To allow American troops to aid the escape of a group of former Czechoslovakian prisoners-of-war known as the Czech Legion from Russia. The military adventure only lasted until 1920. However, the Soviet Union continually used the venture to illustrate that the United States could not be trusted. Smith, 137-152.
further instructed Bullitt to tell the Bolsheviks that if they accepted the proposed armistice, the United States would resume economic relations with Soviet Russia.33

When Bullitt arrived in Soviet Russia he was met by Bolshevik diplomats Georgi Chicherin and Maxim Litvinov. They took Bullitt's mission seriously and arranged for him to meet Lenin. Bullitt and Lenin agreed that a peace conference between the Bolsheviks and all of the other "de facto" Russian factions fighting in the civil war would be convened. Bullitt returned to France on 25 March. However, he never met with Wilson to discuss the agreements he made with Lenin. Wilson decided before Bullitt's return that in order to maintain unity within the Alliance he would comply with the French and British governments' desire not to come to terms with the Bolsheviks. The next day Wilson became very ill and eventually collapsed on 4 April. During that period the president instructed House to confer with Bullitt. House informed Bullitt on 6 April, that in order to preserve what had been agreed to at Versailles the president had decided not to make peace with the Bolsheviks. Bullitt then left the government and became a sharp critic of Wilson, and a lobbyist for granting "de facto" recognition to Soviet Russia.34


34 Ibid., 158-69.
The special missions and envoys confused the Russians as to who represented the United States in their country. The information collected by the ARC and CPI for example was passed directly to Wilson. However, the conclusions of the reports were often based on inaccurate information and only served to further exacerbate relations between the Bolshevik government and the United States. This angered Lansing because information concerning Russia released to the public more often than not resulted in misunderstandings concerning United States policy. Finally, no one knew who represented the president on foreign policy issues: the State Department or the special envoys.35

Between 4 December 1917 and 10 August 1920 the Wilson administration reacted to the situation in Russia in a variety of ways. Despite the policy of nonrecognition American diplomats remained in Russia until 20 September 1920, in the hope that the Bolsheviks would be overthrown or Lenin would abandon his communist revolution in Russia, neither of which occurred.36

Kennan emphasized throughout Soviet American Relations 1917-1920 that misconceptions and ignorance concerning Russia


36 Kennan, The Decision to Intervene, 467; Smith, 94-98.
were "the roots not only of much of the ineffectiveness of American policy toward the Provisional government but also the difficulty experienced by many Americans at a later date adjusting to the realities of Soviet Power." He was critical of both Wilson and Lenin for being blinded by their respective ideologies which were based on misconceptions about their countries. If they had attempted to enter negotiations concerning their differences in 1917-1918, future Soviet-American relations may not have been so hostile.

There were two additional reasons why Wilson and Lansing were unable to implement an effective policy in Russia during the Bolshevik Revolution. First, communication between Wilson and Lansing in Washington and Francis in Petrograd was poor. The communication equipment of the period was unreliable and insecure. Events occurred faster than Francis could report them and the Wilson administration could respond to them. Second, not placing Francis in charge of all United States government activities in Russia led to a policy which was ineffective, indecisive and chaotic. The Provisional and Bolshevik governments were never sure who spoke for the United States or what type of relationship it desired.

37 Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 12.
38 Kennan, *The Decision to Intervene*, 370-72.
39 Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 77-84.
40 Ibid., 45-50, 52-70, 219-41.
Lansing attempted to deal with these problems. He believed it was essential to understand the situation that existed in Russia, and its significance for the future. In 1917, Lansing was one of the few members of the Wilson administration to consider the Bolsheviks a political organization to be taken seriously. In preparation for future communist revolutions he initiated reforms within the State Department which resulted in the creation of a special division to study Soviet Russia and the world communist movement. Lansing wanted the department to lead the diplomatic fight against communism in the government. In order to defend the policy of non-recognition, communism and the new Soviet Union had to be studied and understood.41

41 Kennan, Russia Leaves the War, 157; Propas, "The State Department," 18., Smith, 141.
In the last decade of the 19th century the first serious attempts were made to professionalize the foreign service of the United States. At that time the foreign service was divided into two divisions, diplomatic and counselor. Counselors were responsible for understanding and reporting the economic conditions of the countries where they were stationed. The counselor division was not as prestigious as the diplomatic division and the low salaries of counselors reflected the disparity. In addition, counselors could not advance to the rank of ambassador or minister. Finally, most positions were filled via political patronage. Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William H. Taft tried without success to have positions filled in the foreign service by competitive examinations. Wilson and his first secretary of state, William J. Bryan, maintained and practiced the policy of appointment by patronage.¹

Prior to 1924 there were no specialists in the State Department. Nor were there any programs within the foreign

¹ Propas, "The State Department," 2, 130-32; Barnes, 191-95, 203-05.
service where an aspiring diplomat or counselor could learn a foreign language or study the customs, history and foreign affairs of other nations. Between 1903 and 1913 the State Department attempted to train a corps of linguists but the experiment failed because the government would not appropriate funds that provided for formal courses in foreign languages. Like the counselors, the linguists received low pay and were not permitted to advance within the ranks of the department.²

After the Great War, Robert Lansing once again attempted to professionalize the foreign service. Lansing was not pleased with the performance of the service before, during and immediately after the Great War, particularly as it concerned Russia. Just after the United States entered the war, Lansing created within the Division of Near Eastern Affairs of the State Department a special bureau that would focus on the affairs of Russia. This bureau was headed by Basil Miles, a diplomat with previous experience in Russia. After the war Lansing ordered all foreign service officers to begin gathering information on all political movements around the world. He did not want the government to be surprised by another Bolshevik style revolution.³


³ "Division of Eastern European Affairs," The American Foreign Service Journal (February 1933): 54, report, Robert F. Kelley Papers, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.
In August 1919, Lansing made the Russian bureau an independent political division within the State Department. In that same year the United States established the Riga mission. At first the mission was operated by Army intelligence officers. One of their missions was to serve as military liaison officers with the governments of the Baltic states which were fighting their independence from Russia. In addition, the Army officers gathered intelligence on the civil war in Russia, observing the activities of both the communist and counterrevolutionary forces. After the last American troops left Russia in 1920, the United States did not have an embassy and consulate in Soviet Russia from which events in Soviet Russia could be observed. In order to remedy this situation the State Department dispatched a commissioner to the Baltic States, Evan E. Young. When he arrived in Riga, Young assumed control of all operations at the Riga mission and the State Department had a "window" or "outpost" from which to observe Soviet Russia.  

The first generation of the State Department’s Russian specialists were men who had experience with Imperial Russia. Most of them did not speak Russian and they did not understand Bolshevism. This first generation included Dewitt C. Poole,

(hereafter cited as Kelley Papers); Propas, "The State Department," 18-19.

Felix Cole, Arthur Bullard, Montgomery Scuyler and Evan E. Young. All of these men served at one time as the chief of the Russian division. The Russian division also had Professor Samuel Harper on its staff. Young recruited the second generation of Russian specialists while he was stationed in the Baltic provinces between 1918 and 1920. They included Robert F. Kelley, Earl Packer and Loy M. Henderson.5

In his final year as secretary of state, Lansing maintained that the best and quickest way to insure that the Bolsheviks would be forced from power in Russia was by continuing to deny them "de facto" recognition. At the same time Lansing and his successors maintained that the United States was opposed to any external intervention in the internal affairs of Russia.6

In 1920 Lansing's successor, Bainbridge Colby, defined the conditions for recognition. Colby made it clear that the Bolshevik government did not rule Russia with the popular support of the people. However, only the Russian people could remove the Bolsheviks from power. In order to be granted "de facto" recognition the Bolsheviks had to meet three conditions. First, they had to stop supporting the subversive and propaganda activities of the Third International in the


6 "Policy of the United States Towards Russia," 12, in Kelley Papers.
United States. Second, they would have to restore the private property of American citizens seized by the Bolsheviks. Finally, the Bolshevik government had to pay all debts owed to the United States by previous Russian governments. It was the mission of the Russian Division and the outpost at Riga to gather evidence in a scholarly manner to support the policy of non-recognition. In addition the Russian specialists were to warn the government when Soviet Russia was prepared to meet the conditions for recognition.  

A related issue, that of granting "de facto" recognition to the Baltic states, secured the Russian specialists' attention by 1922. Poole and the first generation specialists argued against recognizing the Baltic states because it would be a violation of the pledge made by Wilson in his "Fourteen Points" and at Versaille to respect and defend the integrity of pre-revolutionary Russia's borders. The first generation believed that Bolshevik control of the Russian government was a temporary phenomenon. If the United States granted the Baltic states recognition, the Russians would be less inclined


8 In 1920, when Wilson's term as president expired, three of the first generation specialists, Harper, Bullard and Davis left the division.
to overthrow the Bolshevik government.\(^9\)

Young and the second generation disagreed with the first generation's analysis of the political situation in Russia. The second generation did not believe that the Bolshevik government's control of Russia was a temporary phenomenon. In addition Young, then the United States Commissioner to the Baltic States, argued that the nationalistic aspirations of the people of this region were legitimate and that the people of the Baltic states did not want to be a part of Russia or a republic within the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In 1919 and 1920 the Soviet government had recognized the independence of the Baltic states. The Baltics had been granted "de facto" recognition by most of the nations of Europe. The Coolidge administration agreed with Young and on 28 July 1922 the Baltic States were granted "de facto" recognition. Granting recognition to the Baltic states in order to maintain the Riga mission was never used by Young in his arguments.\(^{10}\)

After the Great War the United States tried to maintain an isolationist foreign policy. However, the United States was a great power, a position the government and people assumed with great reluctance. Many members of the government felt that the diplomatic and consular corps of the State

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\(^9\) Baer, 149-56; Propas, "The State Department," 19; Smith, 137-52;

\(^{10}\) Baer, 149-56; Gromyko, 112-115.

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Department had to be professionalized in order to meet the new foreign policy challenges which would confront the United States. During his last two years in office Lansing had worked with Congressman John Jacob Rogers, ranking Republican on the House Foreign Relations Committee, to create the reforms which would professionalize the foreign service. After several attempts, the efforts of Lansing and Rogers were rewarded when the Foreign Service Act of 1924 (the Rogers Act) was passed into law. The law provided four basic reforms:

1. The adoption of a new and uniform salary scale with a modest increase in average rate compensation.
2. An amalgamation of the Diplomatic and Consular Services into one foreign service on an interchangeable basis.
3. Representation allowances for the purpose of eliminating or at least lessening, the demands on private means of ambassadors and ministers.
4. A retirement system based upon the principles of the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Act of May 22, 1920, but administered entirely separately therefrom.\(^\text{11}\)

Following the passage of the Rogers Act, the counselors and diplomats became known as foreign service officers (FSOs). While these reforms were finalized, the department was also reorganized into six separate political divisions.\(^\text{12}\) One of

\(^{11}\) Baer, 133.

\(^{12}\) The other five political divisions were the Western European Division (WED); Division of Far Eastern Affairs (DFEA); Division of Latin American Affairs (DLAA); Division of Mexican Affairs (DMA); and Division of Near Eastern Affairs (DNEA).
the six divisions was the Division of Eastern European Affairs (DEEA) which had been created in 1922. The mission of the DEEA was the following:

The Division of Eastern European Affairs will have general supervision, under the secretaries, of matters pertaining to Russia, (including Siberia), and of relations, diplomatic and consular, political and economic, with Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.¹³

For nine months Poole directed the DEEA. In early 1923 Young was recalled to Washington to head the division. By 1923 the four young men he had recruited, Kelley, Packer, Henderson and Lehrs had become members of the State Department. Once he assumed his post in Washington, Young transferred all three to the DEEA, to create a division staffed by men with a deeper knowledge of Bolshevism. However, the second generation of Russian specialists had the same mission as the first: to defend the policy of nonrecognition.¹⁴

In 1924 the State Department was a small branch of the government, made up of 620 people of whom only 62 were FSOs. Under the new reorganization the FSOs would be administered by the Division of Foreign Service Administration (DFSA), which was controlled by Assistant Secretary of State Wilbur J. Carr. Carr supported the reforms of the Rogers Act. Prior

¹³ "Divisions of Eastern European Affairs," 57, in Kelley Papers.

to the reforms he served as a civil service officer in charge of the Consular Service. Carr as the head of the DFSA decided where FSOs would be assigned. He had definite ideas about the duties of an FSO, believing they were:

the faithful executors of policies made by elected officials. But fearing the effects of popular politics on the stability of international systems, diplomats viewed themselves as the international policy makers best able to accommodate the political needs of individual states to one another.15

Carr felt that specialist FSOs were a waste of the limited monetary and personnel resources which the Congress had allocated to the State Department. Scholarly reports required too much time to research and write, time which could be better used conducting other tasks required of the FSOs. Worst of all Carr feared the specialists would "politicize the foreign service through involvement with partisan foreign policy."16 The second generation Russian specialists and Young disagreed with Carr's assessment of their worth. In addition, the specialist had no control concerning the politicalization of the DEEA. Between 1924 and 1933 the Russian specialists were often instructed to appear before Congress to defend the policy of nonrecognition by the Secretary of State. In addition, their advice was often sought by members of Congress and the administration on issues concerning Soviet-American

15 Propas, "The State Department," 134.
16 Ibid., 135.
relations.\textsuperscript{17}

The four men who were the second generation Russian specialists came from different backgrounds. Earl L. Packer, from Utah, was stationed at the United States Embassy in Petrograd in February 1917 as a member of the Bureau of Insular Affairs in the War Department. Once war was declared, Packer was commissioned as a first lieutenant and made a military attache’. Throughout the remainder of 1917, he observed the political situation in Russia without any preconceptions based on the old tsarist governments.

After Lenin and the Bolsheviks seized power Packer began to study and gather intelligence on the Bolsheviks. Furthermore he learned to speak Russian. Eventually he was forced to move with other Americans to Archangel and in 1920 he returned to the United States. He then left the Army and joined the State Department. Because of his background, he was assigned to the Russian Division. While stationed in Washington, he attended night school and received a bachelor’s degree from George Washington University. In 1922, Packer was sent to Riga with Young.\textsuperscript{18}

Loy M. Henderson was planning to be a lawyer when the United States entered the Great War. He graduated from Northwest University in 1915. Due to a childhood injury, he

\textsuperscript{17} Baer, 147-48; Propas, "The State Department," 62-65.
\textsuperscript{18} Propas, "The State Department," 20; Baer, 124.
was rejected for service with the Army. However he joined the American Red Cross because he wanted to contribute to the war effort. Unfortunately he arrived in Europe after the war ended. Henderson was a man of deep convictions and believed in the mission of the Red Cross after the war. From December 1919 until August 1921, he served in Germany and the Baltic provinces. There he worked to repatriate Russian and German prisoners of war and was involved in humanitarian relief missions during the Russian Civil War. During his work with anti-Bolshevik Russian soldiers who had returned to the Baltic provinces, Henderson contracted typhus and almost died. While in the Baltic provinces in 1920, Henderson met Robert F. Kelly.

In April 1920, Henderson was transferred to the ARC office in Berlin. There he met Young who was impressed with Henderson. Young convinced him to join the foreign service. Since the United States would become more involved in world affairs, Henderson took his exams for the service in 1921 and was accepted into the consular service. He was posted as a vice consul in Ireland from 1922 until 1924. When he returned to the United States, Henderson once again met Young who was at this time chief of the DEEA. Young recruited Henderson into the division. Although Henderson did not speak Russian, he was trained as a Russian specialist.\footnote{Baer, 6-9, 61-118.}
Landreth M. Harrison was the third member of the second generation Russian specialist. Harrison joined the Foreign Service in 1927. Prior to becoming an FSO, he received a bachelor's and master's degree in political science from the University of Minnesota. Between 1923 and 1925 he studied European languages and international affairs in Paris. When Harrison joined the DEEA, he was permitted to study Soviet Russia independently at the Riga mission.20

The final member of this second generation was Robert F. Kelley whom historian Daniel Propas referred to as "the most promising and accomplished of these officers."21 In 1915 Kelley graduated Magna Cum Laude from Harvard University with a bachelor's degree in European History. After graduation he wanted to research the history of the Crimean War. In addition to taking Russian classes at Harvard, he attended the Paris School of Eastern Languages22 (EIC) at the University of Paris to improve his Russian. Because of the war he was unable to go to Petrograd to continue his research so he returned to Harvard. He was working on his doctoral degree at Harvard when the United States entered the Great War. Kelley joined the Army and received a regular commission. He served as an instructor at an officer candidate school with

21 Ibid., 33.
22 Ecole Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes.
the 5th Infantry Regiment during the American occupation of
the Rhineland in 1919. In 1920 Kelley was sent as a military
observer to Riga, Latvia, where he gathered intelligence on
the Bolsheviks during the Russian Civil War. It was during
this period that Kelley met Henderson and Young.

Like Henderson, Kelley was recruited by Young to join the
foreign service.23 He took the foreign service exam in 1922
and was posted as a consul to India briefly in 1923. When
Young became head of the DEEA, he requested that Kelley be
transferred to the DEEA despite Carr's objection. Upon his
arrival in Washington, Young made Kelley the assistant chief
of the division and began to train him as his successor.24

When Young was appointed Minister to the Dominican
Republic in 1925, he chose Kelley as his replacement. Kelley
was chief of the DEEA and leading policy maker in Soviet-
American relations until 1933.25 In 1925 Kelley decided that
a corps of Soviet/Russian experts with post graduate training
in Russian language and history was needed, in the words of
DEEA historian Frederick Propas:

to promote the role of experts in the making of foreign
policy; to defend nonrecognition; and to ensure that if

23 From the Commissioner of the United States Riga Evan
E. Young to the Secretary of State, 12 September 1922, no.
2666, in Kelley Papers.

24 Propas, "The State Department," 33, 136-37; Baer, 122-
23.

25 Baer, 123; Propas "The State Department," 33-39;
recognition did come, the Soviets would not take unfair advantage of it.\textsuperscript{26}

Except for Kelley, the second generation Soviet experts, Henderson, Packer, and Harrison, did not receive formal training in their area of specialization. All three became experts through unstructured on-the-job training at the Riga mission and the DEEA office in Washington. To insure that future Soviet-American policy was conducted effectively Kelley decided that the third generation of Soviet experts would be formally trained linguists and Russian historians.\textsuperscript{27} Kelley worked with Allen Dulles, the chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, to develop programs to train a corps of career foreign service officers to become linguists and area experts in their respective divisions. Both men established guidelines to insure that FSOs selected for the programs were adequately paid. Moreover, they were to be considered for promotion on the same basis as their peers. The FSOs selected for the three year program had to serve an eighteen month probationary period of training at an embassy or mission in the country or region of their specialty. If at the end of the probationary period their superiors were satisfied with their work, they would be sent to school to begin formal training.

\textsuperscript{26} Frederick L. Propas, "Creating a Hardline Toward Russia: The Training of the State Department Soviet Experts, 1934-1939," \textit{The Journal of Diplomatic History} 8 (Summer 1984): 226.

\textsuperscript{27} Propas, "Creating a Hardline Toward Russia," 213; Baer, 166-67.
On 4 June 1927, the program Kelley and Dulles recommended was approved by Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg. Because the Secretary of State authorized the program, Loy Henderson wrote that Carr "was sympathetic to the idea and agreed to take steps toward the training of a corps of East European specialists."  

Kelley immediately searched for a university in which the Soviet specialists could be trained. He rejected several universities located in the United States, England and Czechoslovakia because he feared that his young FSOs would be exposed to an academic community which was too sympathetic to the Soviet Union and therefore hostile to the policy of nonrecognition. Kelley finally decided on his Paris alma mater, the Paris School of Oriental Languages. The school's director was Professor Paul Boyer who had taught both Kelley and Harper prior to the First World War. Boyer believed that in order for a student to learn to speak Russian he must understand Russian history, culture and politics.

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29 The policy was formally called "Regulations Governing the Selections, Training and Promotion of Foreign Service Officers for Language Assignments in the Near East, in Eastern Europe, and in North Africa." They were later embodied in Executive Order No. 4879 of 8 May 1928. "Division of Eastern European Affairs," 61, in Kelley Papers.
30 Baer, 167.
From 1927 until 1936 when the program was terminated, seven FSOs were trained in Kelley's program. They were George F. Kennan (the younger), William M. Gwynn, Norris B. Chapman, Eric Kumiholm, Charles E. Bohlen, Edward Page, Jr., and Francis B. Stevens. All would be trained in Paris except Kennan. Pursuant to Kennan's request and because he could speak German, Kelley permitted him to receive his training in Berlin at the University of Berlin's Oriental Seminary.\textsuperscript{32} In addition to their studies, the student FSOs trained at Riga and other missions in Europe.\textsuperscript{33}

Overall, the seven men who finished the special program appreciated it. The first year of the program was dedicated to learning the Russian language. The students averaged thirteen hours a week in the classroom and in some instances thirty hours outside the classroom learning Russian. Kelley discouraged the student FSOs from taking courses concerning the Soviet Union. However, reports from Riga were sent to the school in Paris and studied by the students. Kennan wrote that Kelley wanted him to "get the essentials of a good Russian cultural background; the rest will come later. It was a wise direction, for which I have always been grateful."\textsuperscript{34}

Kelley wanted the third generation to view the Soviet Union

\textsuperscript{32} The University of Berlin's Seminary for Orientalische Sprachen was founded by Bismarck to train German diplomats.

\textsuperscript{33} Propas, "Creating a Hardline Toward Russia," 220-21.

\textsuperscript{34} Kennan, \textit{Memoirs 1925-1930}, 33.
with caution and skepticism based on research and evidence, not emotion. Finally, he firmly believed that the new Soviet specialists should speak Russian and study Russian history and literature in order to understand the Soviet Union.35

For many years, Kelley's policy was that no FSOs were to visit the Soviet Union or have contact with Soviet officials. However, after 1932 Kelley felt that there was a good possibility that the United States' recognition of the Soviet Union was close at hand. Kelley granted four of the students in the program, Page, Bohlen, Chipman and Kuniholm permission to visit the Soviet Union. The four could go:

under the patronage of the school and the Administration of the school would pay for their visas, etc. It was not contemplated that they should enter Russia for any purpose other than that of obtaining practice in the use of the Russian language or in any other capacity than that of student of Ecole Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes.36

The students were to travel at their own expense and avoid publicity. Kennan was denied permission to go since he was no longer a student and representative of the government. Unfortunately the students never made the trip because it was too expensive. Nevertheless, within eighteen months the


36 Earl L. Packer to Robert F. Skinner, 5 August 1932, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the State Department in Latvia (Riga), Record Group 84, Russian Book 200, 080(R), National Archives, Washington D.C.
policy of nonrecognition had been abandoned and Kennan, Bohlen and Kuniholm were working in the new American embassy in Moscow.37

Between 1919 and 1933, Lansing's goal of creating a corps of professional foreign service officers to defend the United States' policy with the Soviet Union was fulfilled. Each successive generation of Soviet/Russian specialists was more knowledgeable with respect to the language, history, culture and the activities of the Soviet government than their predecessor.

Robert F. Kelley was the driving force behind the desire to develop an understanding of the Soviet Union. Kennan wrote of Kelley:

He was a scholar by instinct and dedication. He had built his division up on scholarly principles to a point where I am sure there was no geographic division in the Department of State that had a better knowledge of the area which it dealt.38

By 1932 members of the third generation of Soviet specialists were serving at the Riga Mission. During this period the quality of the Riga reports improved. Although many disagreed with the policy of nonrecognition, the men of the DEEA were recognized as experts on the Soviet Union.

37 Robert F. Kelley to Edward Page, 3 March 1932, RG 84, Russian Book 200, 030R-800R; Propas, "The State Department," 229-34; Bohlen, 16; Kennan, Memoirs 1925-1950, 52-54.

38 Kennan, Memoirs 1925-1950, 84.
Chapter 3
THE RIGA MISSION 1922-1928

By the time Young arrived in Riga in 1920, all United States missions in Russia had been closed. Prior to 1922 the embassies in Paris, Copenhagen, Constantinople and the Riga mission observed Soviet Russia. In 1922 the task of studying Soviet Russia and the international communist organizations was given solely to the Riga mission. The other missions around the world assisted the Riga mission in its efforts.\(^1\) Accordingly, the State Department expanded the staff of Russian specialists at the mission. Young wrote that with the additional staff members it was his intention:

> to make the mission a sort of clearing house for the Department for all information on Russia emanating either within the so-called Baltic States or within Soviet Russia.\(^2\)

All aspects of the Soviet Union,\(^3\) Communist International (Comintern), and its subsidiary the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA) were studied by the staff. The

\(^1\) Grant, 109.

\(^2\) Young to Charles H. Albrecht, Consul, Rival, 31 March 1922, RG 84, Russian Book 18, 000-715.5(R).

\(^3\) On 30 December 1922 the RFSFR became the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) or Soviet Union.
through the Comintern. In return the CPUSA and other member organizations championed the cause of the Soviet Union and the world proletarian revolution in their native countries. The United States government and the Soviet specialists always considered the activities of the Comintern to be direct interference in the internal affairs of the United States. A cessation of its activities was a necessary precondition for United States recognition of the Soviet regime.

The Riga mission was divided into two sections. One section handled the traditional roles of a United States mission. This included everything from the day-to-day diplomacy with the Baltic States governments to the issuing of passports. The second section, called the Russian section, observed the Soviet Union. The Russian section was unique in the annals of the State Department since its personnel studied a government which was not recognized by the United States. In 1923 Young returned to the DEEA in Washington. He was replaced by F. W. B. Coleman a political appointee. Coleman remained at the post of United States Minister to Latvia for nine years and remained supportive of the objectives of the

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Riga mission.\(^5\)

In addition to the Russian specialist FSOs, the Russian section of the mission employed foreigners as clerks, translators and intelligence agents. Most of these men and women were born in Russia or the Baltic States. Four of the people who served in these positions were M. C. Perts, Sergius Riis, Natalie Grant and David A. Lehrs. Perts and Riis were intelligence agents. The State Department provided funds to support their activities. Their intelligence sources included members of the Soviet government, Soviet citizens, visitors to the Soviet Union and intelligence agents from other European countries.\(^6\) However, information derived from these "human intelligence" sources were only a small part of the evidence gathered by the mission's officers. The vast majority of the material came from printed sources.\(^7\)

David A. Lehrs and Natalie Grant served as clerks and translators at the mission. Lehrs was an American citizen born in Russia who could speak and write Russian and German fluently. He worked for the State Department in the fall of 1919 as the translator for the first United States

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\(^5\) Grant, 109-11; Propas, "The State Department," 73, 142.

\(^6\) In the Riga reports examined for this thesis, the names of Soviet officials and citizens providing information to the Riga mission were never revealed. The writer of the report usually identified them as IS/1, IS/2, IS/3 or IS/4. After 1928, references to these individuals did not appear on any of the reports from Riga.

\(^7\) Baer, 162-63; Propas, "The State Department," 81.
Commissioner to the Baltic States, John Gade. From 1921 through 1923 Lehrs was a member of the American Relief Administration (ARA), a private organization which provided famine relief to Soviet Russia. The State Department attempted to use the ARA officers to gather information on the Soviet Union. Because most of them could not speak Russian, this attempt failed. Furthermore, Soviet officials limited their contact with the people and restricted their activities to famine relief in the countryside. However, Lehrs was able to send Young a large supply of Soviet publications which greatly enhanced the ability of the specialists to understand the Soviet Union. After he left the ARA, Lehrs joined the staff at Riga as a translator.8

Natalie Grant was born in 1901 in Estonia which was then a part of Imperial Russia. She studied at the University of Rostov and was employed by the United States as a translator for the ARA. After her service with the ARA, Grant was employed by the State Department. She worked for the department for thirty five years and eventually became a staff officer and American citizen. She worked at the Riga Mission from 1924 until 1939 as a bookkeeper and translator.9

As stated previously, the Russian specialists at Riga

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8 John A. Lehrs to Young, 13 March 1922, RG 84, Book 18, 000-715.5(R); Grant, 108-109; Baer, 63, 66, 172, 174, 184; Propas, "The State Department," 80.

acquired the vast majority of the evidence used in their reports from published sources. From the time it opened in 1919 until it closed in 1939, the Riga Mission tried to purchase almost every publication produced by the Soviet government and the Comintern. Armed with the publications obtained by the Russian section in Riga, the DEEA studied the Soviet Union in a scholarly manner and successfully defended the policy of nonrecognition. Henderson wrote that:

The legation . . . had been successful in acquiring for its library and for that of the Eastern European Division a mass of Soviet books, pamphlets, newspapers, and other periodicals that was almost without parallel outside the Soviet Union. Both libraries, for instance, had complete sets of Soviet laws and decrees as well as numerous legal treaties, most issues of Izvestia and Pravda dating back to the early days of the Bolsheviks revolution, and files of other newspapers published in Moscow, Leningrad, and the capitals of many of the constituent republics of the Soviet Union.¹⁰

The mission attempted to acquire books directly from the state controlled publisher Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga (International Book) and subscribed to fifty different Soviet newspapers and periodicals. These publications usually reached the mission within thirty-six hours of publication and were translated and analyzed by the staff and then compiled into a report. The subjects of the reports ranged from politics to culture. On occasion, a report was written in response to a specific inquiry from the State Department. The original report, the actual primary source material and

¹⁰ Baer, 162.
translation of the material, was then transmitted to the DEEA in Washington. A copy of the report with enclosures was then "put into neat volumes by an expert Riga bookbinder - a member of a guild that went back to Hanseatic days." Each volume consisted of approximately 600 typewritten pages. A second copy of many of the reports was sent to the Ecole Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes (EIC) in Paris to be used by the Russian scholars of that university. Beginning in 1928, the third generation Russian specialists studied the reports during their stay at the university. The originals received in Washington were read, analyzed and placed in the DEEA library. There the reports were used by the State Department to defend the policy of nonrecognition (1922-1933), or to prepare for diplomatic negotiations with the Soviet government (1933-1937).

Most of the reports written between 1922 and 1928 were simple chronological accounts or monographs of the activities of the Soviet government, the Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Comintern. Natalie Grant wrote that this

11 Baer, 191.

12 These bound volumes are now located in Record Group 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State (Riga, Latvia) at the National Archives.

13 These reports are located in Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State at the National Archives.

was an introductory period and "the views expressed by the personnel were not uniformly objective, and facts took precedent over analysis." Analysis was difficult because the Americans at Riga were studying the world's first communist state which did not act in a traditional manner. The early reports therefore tended to detail the operation and the structure of the Soviet government, Comintern and RCP(B).

When the civil war ended, the Bolsheviks had firm control of the urban areas of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR). However, only fifteen percent of Russia's population lived in the cities. The vast majority of Russians were peasants who lived in the country and resisted the efforts of the Soviet government to force them to live on collective farms or "kolkhoz." The collective farms were inefficiently managed by the RCP(B) and the peasants were forced to sell their produce at prices fixed by the

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15 Grant, 111.


17 Soviet collective farms were called "kolkhoz" as a Russian abbreviation for "collective economy." In theory, a collective farm was a cooperative of a number of peasants who pool land and equipment and were paid according to the amount of work performed. The collective farms were managed by the RCP(B) members. Paxton, 211.
government. In order to take control of their land the peasants revolted against the Soviet government. They hid or destroyed their crops, did not pay their taxes and successfully fought the Red Army sent to enforce Soviet authority. As a result of the peasant revolt the Soviet government could not feed the workers in the cities. The workers provided the political base which allowed the Soviet government to rule Russia. As the workers became hungry they also began to challenge the authority of the Soviet government. The most serious challenge to the Bolsheviks occurred on 7-18 March 1921 when the sailors at the Russian naval base at Kronstadt, near Petrograd, mutinied.\textsuperscript{18} Lenin and Trotsky used the Red Army to suppress the revolt. Lenin realized that if the RCP(B) was to maintain power in the Soviet Russia political reforms were needed. The new reforms were called the New Economic Policy (NEP).\textsuperscript{19}

The specialists of the Riga mission studied the reforms instituted by the Soviet government under the NEP with interest. They informed Washington that the Soviets were in a state of transition: "From a state governed by the revolutionary conscience of the proletariat, Soviet Russia

\textsuperscript{18} Soviet historians write that the Kronstadt sailors were led by "counter-revolutionaries and white guards." Western historians write that the sailors revolted because they wanted a more democratic socialist form of government and an end to the policy of war communism. Lelchuk, 99; MacKenzie, 477-78.

\textsuperscript{19} Lelchuk, 98-99; MacKenzie, 476-78.
is to be transformed into a state governed by law."

The specialists also noted the concessions made by Lenin under the NEP to the workers and the peasants. Under the NEP, Lenin gave greater economic latitude to the peasants and small urban entrepreneurs while at the same time he insured that all political power remained in the hands of the RCP(B). The attempts to force the peasants to accept the kolkhoz were abandoned. The right of private property was established and Russian citizens were permitted:

- to organize industrial and commercial establishments, and carry on trade occupations, provided they observe the rule of regulation and protection of labor in Soviet Russia.

The people were no longer governed by the arbitrary laws of the local soviets. A national judicial authority was established.

The political nature of the regime occupied the Riga specialists as well. On 10 July 1918 the 5th Congress of Soviets adopted the Soviet Constitution which provided that the supreme power of the RFSFR be held by the All-Congress of Soviets which met annually for five to seven days. However, the Riga specialists reported that the real power of the government lay within the All Russian Central Executive Committee (the Central Committee), the Organizational Bureau

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20 Harold B. Quarton to Secretary of State, 31 July 1922, 2395, in Kelley Papers.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.

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Ogoburo and the Political Bureau (Politburo). The Ogoburo and Politburo were collectively known as the Presidium. The All-Congress of Soviets elected the Executive Committee. In 1921, it consisted of 386 full members and 125 candidates or alternate members. The Central Committee elected the members of the Presidium within its ranks. The Ogoburo was responsible for government party administration. The Politburo, headed by Lenin, was responsible for the day-to-day operations of the government and was the ultimate authority in the Soviet Union. While stationed at Riga, Kelley correctly observed that, "The political bureau may be regarded as the supreme directing force in the communist party and the Soviet Government." He also noted that the members of the Politburo held the leading positions in the Central Committee of the RCP(B). He further noted that the Soviet constitution was written to insure that the RCP(B) maintained political power in Russia.

The Riga reports indicated that while the RCP(B) had retreated from the policy of war communism they firmly

23 In 1921 the full or voting members of the Ogoburo consisted of Joseph V. Stalin, Aleksey I. Rykov, Michael P. Tomsky, Vyacheslav M. Molotov, and Komarov. The candidate or advisory members were Michael I. Kalinin, Yemelyan M. Yaroslavsky, Ivan I. Dzerzinsky and Y. E. Rudzutak. Lowenhardt, 18.

24 The full members of the Politburo in 1921 were Lenin, Lev Trotsky, Joseph V. Stalin, Lev B. Kamenev and Grigory Y. Zinoviev. Nicholas I. Bukharin, Michael I. Kalinin and Vyacheslav M. Molotov were alternate members. Lowenhardt, 18.
believed that the NEP was a necessary but temporary retreat from the creation of a strict socialist nation. Kelley wrote from Riga that, "it has been under the Bolsheviks that the belief in the Soviet system has become sort of a new religion whose believers see in the Soviet Republic a new type of State which opens to the masses the possibility of taking an active part in the upbuilding of society."\(^{25}\)

In 1921 and 1922 peasants who owned their farms still made up the bulk of the Soviet Union's population. They along with small businessmen were not considered workers. The RCP(B) believed that these Russians posed the greatest threat to their political authority. As a result the communists wrote the Soviet Union's constitution to insure that the successful peasant farmers called "Kulaks" and the small businessmen classified as members of the bourgeoisie could not obtain political power.

The Soviet constitution divided political boundaries by economic class, not geographic location. Under Article 23 of the constitution the Soviet government could deprive Russians not classified as workers of the right to participate in elections. The indirect methods of election used by the RCP(B) insured that political power remained in the cities where the communists enjoyed popular support. The RCP(B)

\(^{25}\) "The Organization of the So-Called Russian Soviet Government" by Captain Robert F. Kelley, USA, with a cover message, Evan E. Young to Secretary of State, 13 September 1922, 2666, in Kelley Papers.
approved all lists of acceptable candidates. The secret ballot was not used in elections and the communists intimidated voters to support the RCP(B) candidates. Members of the RCP(B) elected from the cities where the communists had political power were also allowed to hold positions in the rural districts where the city was located. Despite the efforts of the RCP(B) to keep non-communists out of the governments, the peasants of rural Russia elected 102 non-communist members out of 1611 members to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets in 1921. Kelley concluded that the superior organizational skills, dedication and discipline of the communists would insure that the RCP(B) would maintain power in Russia for a long time.26

In May 1922 Lenin suffered the first of a series of strokes that would eventually kill him. During this period he became less active in the day-to-day operations of the Soviet government and the Soviet Union was ruled by a triumvirate or "troika" led by Joseph Stalin, Gregory Zinoviev and Lev B. Kamenev. Lenin died on 21 January 1924. In May, on the eve of the 13th Party Conference of the RCP(B), Nadezhda K. Krupskaya, Lenin's widow, presented the party with two letters he had written in December 1923 and early January 1924. The letters known as "Lenin's Last Testament" were very critical of the Stalin-Kamenev-Zinoviev troika. The letters

26 Ibid.
in which Lenin was most critical of Stalin were first read to the Central Committee, of which Krupskaya was a full member. In the letters, Lenin warned that Stalin had too much power in the RCP(B); he was a full member of the Politburo, Ogoburo, Central Committee and the Comintern. As the head of the Ogoburo, Stalin expanded the size of the local communist bureaucracies and the Central Committee. He filled these new positions with men who were personally loyal to him. Lenin, in his letters cautioned the party membership that in time Stalin could abuse his power. Stalin in his own defense claimed that he only wanted to revitalize the RCP(B) and to make the party more popular with the masses.27 After the letters were read, the Central Committee voted 30 to 10 to allow the three members of the Troika to maintain their positions. Furthermore they agreed not to read the letters before the party congress.28

This occurred because with Lenin's death, the Soviet government and RCP(B) were divided into four factions. The first was made up of Stalin's supporters. The second consisted of Bukharin's Right Opposition. The Right Opposition wanted to maintain the policies of the NEP and to build the Soviet Union through a policy of cooperation with noncommunist Russians and the capitalist nations. The third

27 Mackenzie, 480-84; Lowenhardt, 21-22.
faction was Trotsky's Left Opposition. The Left Opposition believed that the RCP(B) had an obligation to move the Soviet Union rapidly towards socialism and to actively support the proletarian world revolution. The last group was led by Zinoviev and Kamenev and their supporters in Petrograd.

Trotsky and Bukharin attempted to use Lenin's criticisms of Stalin to remove him from power. Stalin, with the aid of Zinoviev and Kamenev, was able to parry their challenge. Between 1924 and 1926 Stalin continued to consolidate his power by supporting the Right Opposition against the Left Opposition. At the same time, he continued to expand the size of the RCP(B) and the Central Committee,²⁹ but did not alter the size of the Politburo. In 1925 Zinoviev and Kamenev began to withdraw support from Stalin. That same year, Stalin began to advocate a new policy where the first priority of the government and the RCP(B) was to build socialism in the Soviet Union. Since world proletarian revolution was not imminent, Stalin wanted to build the Soviet Union into a major socialist economic and military power. Once this was accomplished, the RCP(B) would be in a better position to support the world revolution when it occurred. Under this policy Stalin wanted members of the Comintern to abandon their quest for political power in their native lands in favor of building socialism in

²⁹ In 1921 the Central Committee consisted of 57 full and candidate members. In 1924 the committees membership had been expanded to a total of 139 members. Lowenhardt, 25.
the Soviet Union. To accomplish this, he demanded that the Comintern strictly follow the instructions of the RCP(B). Stalin claimed that his policies were in line with the political philosophies espoused by Lenin.

The Left Opposition opposed Stalin's plan as did Zinoviev and Kamenev. In 1926 with the aid of his communist loyalists and the Right Opposition, Stalin had Kamenev, Trotsky and Zinoviev expelled from the Politburo. They were replaced by loyal Stalinists, Vyacheslav M. Molotov and Michael I. Kalinin. In 1928 Stalin moved against the Right Opposition and had Trotsky expelled from the communist party. Through these actions, Stalin had built a government and a party which was personally loyal to him. Once this was accomplished, Stalin turned on the peasants and brutally forced them to accept the "kolkhoz." By 1929 Stalin was in firm control of the Soviet Union and its chief international organ, the Comintern.30

The Russian specialists accurately recorded Stalin's rise in the Soviet government. However, they did not analyze how he used the Ogoburo to build a base of political support but only noted that each year the government and the RCP(B) became more totalitarian.31 An accurate account of the leaders of the


31 F. W. B. Coleman to Secretary of State, 5 April 1924, RG 59, 861.00B/180/1874; Coleman to Secretary of State, 27 August 1924, RG 59, 861.00B/229/152.
Soviet Union was maintained and reported to the DEEA. Furthermore, it was noted that each year the RCP(B) attempted to increase its political support among the country's rural peasants. Beginning in 1926 the specialists recorded Stalin's move to assume full control of the Soviet government with the expulsion of Zinoviev and Kamenev from the Politburo.32

As the programs, policies and standards of the DEEA improved, so did the quality of the Riga reports.33 In 1927 Louis Sussdorff, Jr. became the charge d' affaires of the Riga Mission. After he arrived the new policies and standards were implemented and the reports began to contain more analyses. A wide variety of subjects ranging from economics to politics; domestic and foreign policies; science and technology; and the armed forces were addressed in the reports. For example Stalin's implementation of forced collectivization was reported. The specialists reported that the Red Army was indoctrinated and used to enforce the policy. Finally, they noted that with the implementation of collectivization, and the expulsion of Trotsky, Kamenev and Zinoviev from positions of authority within the government, Stalin was moving the Soviet Union towards socialism. The specialists believed the

32 Coleman to Secretary of State, 6 July 1925, RG 59, 861.00B/322/2998; Coleman to Secretary of State, 5 August 1925, RG 59, 861.00B/336/3080; Coleman to Secretary of State, 14 January 1925, RG 59, 861.00B/376/3522; Coleman to Secretary of State, 5 February 1926, RG 59, 861.00B/379/3566.

33 Propas, "The State Department," 83.
dictatorship of the proletariat led by Stalin would remain in control of the Soviet Union for an indefinite period.\textsuperscript{34} 

With these supports to sustain them, between 1922 and 1928 the Russian/Soviet specialists at Riga and the DEEA in Washington successfully defended the policy of nonrecognition. The first challenge occurred in 1922 when Lenin sent George Chicherin, the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, to the meeting of the Supreme Allied Council in Cannes, France and the Genoa Conference. Lenin realized that the Soviet Union was devastated after seven years of war. Furthermore, both Europe and the United States had recovered economically from the Great War thus indefinitely postponing the inevitable world proletarian revolution. Lenin wanted diplomatic relations with the capitalist nations, especially Great Britain and the United States. What Lenin wanted most from the two nations were loans and technical assistance. These were necessary to convert the Soviet Union from an agricultural to an industrial nation. Until the proletarian revolution occurred Lenin stated that the Soviet Union would be guided by a policy of peaceful coexistence with the capitalist nations as

\textsuperscript{34} Coleman to Secretary of State, 14 April 1925, RG 59, 861.00B/315; Louis Sussdorff, Jr. to Secretary of State, 5 January 1928, RG 59, 861.00B/31/5807; Sussdorff to Secretary of State, 19 October 1928, RG 59, 861.00B/29/5626; Sussdorff to Secretary of State, 26 October 1928, RG 59, 861.00B/5652; Sussdorff to Secretary of State, 19 November 1928, RG 59, 861.00B/5703; Sussdorff to Secretary of State, 22 November 1928, RG 59, 861.00B/5722.
Chicherin's international role indicated.\textsuperscript{35} The European
governments endorsed the policy of peaceful coexistence. In
1922 for example, the Treaty of Rapallo was signed between
Germany and the Soviet Union. In the treaty Germany opened
diplomatic relations with the Soviet government. These events
marked the beginning of the end of the diplomatic isolation
of the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{36}

The Riga specialists sent reports to the DEEA which
outlined these goals of Soviet foreign policy. First, the
specialists noted that the Soviets wanted to end their
country's diplomatic isolation. Second, the Soviet Union
would avoid a war with a capitalist nation(s) until their
armed forces were strengthened. Finally, the Soviet diplomats
would encourage international rivalries between the capitalist
nations. These policies would allow the Soviet government to
maintain its image as a peaceful nation and prevent the
formation of an alliance between the capitalist nations
against the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{37}

However, establishment of relations with the United
States involved more steps. The Soviet government knew that
\textsuperscript{35} H. Percival Dodge to Secretary of State, 30 August
1924, RG 59, 861.00B/231/2434; MacKenzie, 550-51.

\textsuperscript{36} MacKenzie, 550.

\textsuperscript{37} Dodge to Secretary of State, 30 August 1924, RG 59,
861.00B/231/2434.
in order to be granted "de facto" recognition by the United States, pre-war debts had to be paid and subversive activities by the Comintern in the United States had to cease. The Soviet government challenged the issue of paying the debts of previous Russian governments by claiming that the United States must pay for property destroyed or damaged by the American troops during the 1918-1920 intervention. Coincidentally the damage estimates amounted to a little more than the debts claimed by the United States. Their approach concerning the Comintern was tangled. Due to the reports and evidence collected by the Riga mission, the Soviet officials were forced to lie about the Comintern's role as a subversive organ of their government. On 11 January 1924, Coleman reported that the Soviet government was aware of the Riga Mission and instructed its diplomats to tell the public that

38 The DEEA was concerned how the Congress and international community would interpret the presence of both American and Soviet diplomats at international conferences. The major question to be answered was: If the United States and the Soviet Union signed an international agreement jointly, did this constitute "de facto" recognition on the part of the United States? The diplomats at the DEEA said no. However, at all future conferences attended by the United States and the Soviet Union, American diplomats inserted a reservation clause in all documents jointly signed by the two nations. The reservation stipulated that acceptance of the agreement by both countries did constitute the granting of "de facto" recognition of the Soviet Union by the United States. Baer, 160-61; Propas, "The State Department," 44-51; MacKenzie, 550.

the documents collected by the mission were forgeries.  

However, the specialists at Riga were able to prove that the chief of the Comintern, Zinoviev, was also a member of the Politburo. Zinoviev was not the only member of the Soviet government who was both a member of the Politburo and the Comintern. Trotsky, Bukharin, Kamenev and Stalin were all members of the Comintern’s leadership. The mission also collected documents which contained instructions and guidance from the RCP(B) and the Soviet Government to the Comintern. For example, communist parties that were part of the Comintern were instructed by the Soviet government not to alienate the workers in their country. Each communist party was to base its tactics on the unique political, economic and social condition of their country. The ultimate objective of every member party of the Comintern was to be prepared to seize power under the direct orders of the RCP(B) when conditions were correct for the world proletarian revolution. Orders from Moscow were to be obeyed with “unquestioning obedience.”

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40 Coleman to Secretary of State, 11 January 1924, RG 59, 861.00B/1746; Gromyko, 216.  
41 Coleman to Secretary of State, 6 July 1925, RG 59, 861.00B/322/2998; Coleman to Secretary of State, 16 July 1924, RG 59, 861.00B/213.  
42 Robert W. Bliss to Secretary of State, 3 March 1924, RG 59, 861.00B/173/144; Coleman to Secretary of State, 9 March 1924, RG 59, 861.00B/186/1871; Coleman to Secretary of State, 20 January 1925, RG 59, 861.00B/289/2642; Coleman to Secretary of State, 24 January 1925, RG 59, 861.00B/292/2650; Coleman
In addition, the United States learned from the Russian specialists and the DEEA how the Soviet government financed and controlled the Comintern and how the RCP(B) moved propaganda materials overseas. The Soviet trade delegations in the United States, were instructed to maintain contact with the CPUSA and its subsidiary organizations.\(^{43}\) The specialists at Riga obtained from Soviet newspaper articles the names of Americans who were active in the Comintern and reported that the Soviet government followed the activities of the CPUSA with interest.\(^{44}\) During the 1920's it was noted by the Soviet government that the CPUSA had very little support from the workers of the United States. The RCP(B) and the Comintern recommended that the CPUSA increase party membership by providing financial assistance to unemployed workers, poor farmers and African-Americans who were victims of institutional racial segregation in many parts of the United States.\(^{45}\)

\(^{43}\) Coleman to Secretary of State, 17 January 1924, RG 59, 861.00B/160; Charles L. Kasey to Secretary of State, 9 February 1924, RG 59, 861.00B; Coleman to Secretary of State, 8 March 1924, RG 59; 861.00B/170F; Coleman to Secretary of State, 8 October 1924, RG 59, 861.00B/324/2831; Coleman to Secretary of State, 23 November 1925, RG 59, 861.00B/365/3386.

\(^{44}\) Dodge to Secretary of State, 14 March 1924, RG 59, 861.00B/174/2232; Coleman to Secretary of State, 9 May 1925, RG 59, 861.00B/324/2831.

\(^{45}\) Coleman to Secretary of State, 12 October 1924, RG 59, 861.00B/358/3267, J.C. White to Secretary of State, 20 August 1925, RG 59, 861.00B/342/3129; White to Secretary of State, 3 September 1925, RG 59, 861.00B/349/3174.
The Soviet specialists did not agree on how Stalin’s rise to power would affect the relationship between the Soviet Union and the Comintern. Russian specialists David MacGowan and Lehrs believed that the expulsion of Trotsky and Kamenev from the Politburo indicated "a mortal blow" to the Comintern. Coleman believed the opposite was true based on information provided by American intelligence sources and Latvian intelligence officers. Soviet periodicals stated that in 1926 the Soviet government had committed financial resources to the Comintern. As a result, Coleman concluded that the Comintern was subservient to the Soviet government and was still under Stalin’s strict control. He wrote:

When proof was available that the Soviet Government has ceased to allot funds for this purpose, then, and only then, will one be justified in believing that Russia has turned the corner in her international relations. 46

As this chapter has shown, the Riga reports written between 1922 and 1928 were in large part factual accounts of the activities of the Soviet government, RCP(B) and the Comintern. However, Natalie Grant’s contention that the reports written during this period contained little analysis was accurate. 47 Yet the reports served their purpose. In 1923, Hughes argued against granting the Soviet Union "de facto" recognition for economic reasons. Hughes admitted that

46 Coleman to Secretary of State, 28 January 1926, RG 59, 861.00B/378/3545.
47 Grant, 111.
trade with the Soviet Union would benefit the United States but noted that the country's principles were not for sale. However, American citizens were free to conduct business in the Soviet Union at their own risk.  

In that same year Senator William E. Borah, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, held hearings in an attempt to have legislation passed which granted the Soviet Union "de facto" recognition. Hughes sent Young and Kelley before Borah's committee to defend the policy of nonrecognition. Young in turn left it to Kelley to speak for the administration. Armed with evidence collected by the Riga Mission and his own experiences, Kelley clearly demonstrated that the Soviet Union had not met the conditions established by the United States for recognition. Borah then asked Kelley specifically why the United States should not grant the Soviet Union "de facto" recognition. If they violated the agreement, the United States could withdraw recognition or sever diplomatic relations. Kelley told the senator that according to international law and domestic courts once "de facto" recognition was granted, it could not be taken away, even if there was a legitimate grievance between the two nations. Due in large part to Kelley's testimony, the committee voted to continue the policy of nonrecognition. The testimony established Kelley's reputation as the department's foremost

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expert on Soviet Russia. Kelley was the government's guide concerning Soviet-American relations and the policy of nonrecognition until 1933.49

The reports from this period, therefore provided partial evidence to defend the policy of nonrecognition by demonstrating the Soviet's noncompliance with conditions for recognition. In addition, the Riga FSO's proved that the Comintern was a subversive organ of the RCP(B) and the Soviet Union. They strengthened the belief that the Soviet government's support of the Comintern and its subsidiary, the CPUSA, was interference in the internal affairs of the United States. By contrast the reports provided little information regarding the Soviet Union's ability to pay the pre-war debts of previous Russian governments.

Beginning in 1929, the reports written by the specialists at Riga evolved from simple chronologies to more scholarly analyses of the Soviet Union and the Comintern. The reason for the improved quality of the reports was due partially to the large library collected on the Soviet Union. In addition, the staff now had an excellent corps of FSOs, many of whom had studied the Soviet Union for seven years.\footnote{Grant, 112-114; Baer, 179-81; Propas, "The State Department," 74-75.} In that same year, as Loy M. Henderson wrote, two significant events occurred in the United States and the Soviet Union. In October, the Great Depression began in the United States. One month later in the Soviet Union, Stalin became the supreme ruler.\footnote{Baer, 186-87.}

The Soviet specialists watched with great interest as Stalin consolidated his power. By 1929 they determined that the Comintern and its major subsidiary organizations such as the Red International of Labor Unions (Profintern)\footnote{The Profintern, subordinate to the Comintern, was created in 1919 at the same time that the Comintern was created.} were
under the direction of the Soviet government and the All-Union Communist Parties of Bolsheviks or AUCP(B).\(^4\) By the end of 1929, all four organizations were controlled by Joseph V. Stalin.\(^5\)

As the Riga mission noted Stalin's rise to power during the first ten months of 1929 was not easy. First he had to "purge" from the AUCP(B) the members of the Right Opposition led by Nicholas I. Bukharin, who opposed Stalin's five-year plan to rapidly industrialize the Soviet Union\(^6\) and were also against the policy of collectivization.\(^7\) However, Bukharin's power in the party was so strong that in May 1929 Coleman reported that the Soviet Union's secret police, the GPU,\(^8\) refused to arrest Bukharin.\(^9\) Yet by August, Stalin had purged

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\(^4\) In 1927 at the 15th Congress of the Russian Communist Party the name of the party was changed to the All Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks which reflected the incorporation of all of the republic's communist parties into the former RCP(B). Coleman to Secretary of State, 25 February 1929, RG 84, Russian Book 125, 800R/5911; Coleman to Secretary of State, 12 March 1929, RG 84, Russian Book 125, 800R/5960.

\(^5\) Baer, 181.

\(^6\) Coleman to Secretary of State, 15 May 1929, RG 59, 861.00/54/6142.

\(^7\) J. Webb Benton to Secretary of State, 18 February 1929, RG 59, 861.00/38/2170.

\(^8\) GPU was the abbreviation for Gosudarstvennoye Politicheskoe Upravleniyer which translated to the State Political Administration Soviet Security Service. Paxton, 157.

\(^9\) Coleman to Secretary of State, 28 May 1929, RG 59, 861.00/56/6161.
most of Bukharin’s support from the AUCP(B),\textsuperscript{10} and in November, Bukharin was expelled from the Politburo. The Riga specialists reminded Washington that with Bukharin’s expulsion from the Politburo, the last of Lenin’s old Bolsheviks had been removed from power. Stalin now had complete control of the most powerful organ of the Soviet government.\textsuperscript{11}

Loy M. Henderson, who was stationed at Riga, wrote that by 1930, Stalin occupied:

a central position between, on the one hand, those elements of the party that were insisting that regardless of obstacles and possible dangers the party should press for the immediate realization of communist ideals in the Soviet Union and for quick social revolutions abroad under communist leadership, and, on the other hand, those elements that believed that the success of the party’s world revolutionary program was so dependent on the development of a powerful and impregnable Soviet Union that the party in making basic policy decisions should be given primary consideration to the security and strengthening of the Soviet State.\textsuperscript{12}

As the Comintern mobilized to carry out Stalin’s orders, the Soviet specialists reported that there was division within the ranks of the CPUSA. Many American communists were angered by the expulsion of Trotsky and Bukharin from the Politburo and AUCP(B). The Comintern leaders instructed the Americans

\textsuperscript{10} Coleman to Secretary of State, 9 February 1929, RG 59, 861.00/5885; Coleman to Secretary of State, 6 April 1929, RG 59, 861.00/6027.

\textsuperscript{11} Sussdorff to Secretary of State, 27 August 1929, RG 84, Russian Book 125, 800R/6367; Coleman to Secretary of State, 20 November 1929, RG 84, Russian Book 125, 800R/88; Baer, 187; MacKenzie, 485; Lowenhardt, 25.

\textsuperscript{12} As quoted in Baer, 187-88.
to end their factionalism and carry out the instructions of the AUCP(B) and Stalin. In addition, the Comintern and Profintern leaders instructed the CPUSA to increase its membership by concentrating their recruiting efforts on new immigrants, unemployed workers and African-Americans. These groups were deeply affected by the Great Depression and by racism in the United States. To attract them, the Comintern ordered all cells of the CPUSA to be integrated. To enforce this rule, they ordered an African-American named Otto Hall to head the CPUSA cell in Norfolk, Virginia. Members who opposed the policy were expelled.

The Soviet specialists reported that in November 1929 a group of American members of the Comintern and Profintern visited the Soviet Union. The Soviet press listed the names which were later sent to the DEEA with the report. These members of the CPUSA pledged that they would defend the Soviet Union, the homeland of socialism. If the United States were to wage war against the Soviet Union, they would start a civil war. They claimed that African-Americans were sympathetic to the Soviet Union and declared that American communists who supported Trotsky or Bukharin were to be expelled from the

13 Coleman to Secretary of State, 19 November 1929, RG 84, Russian Book 125, 800R/6568.

14 Coleman to Secretary of State, 22 March 1929, RG 84, Russian Book 125, 800R/5994.

15 Coleman to Secretary of State, 19 August 1929, RG 84, Russian Book 125, 800R/6350.
In 1929, neither the Russians nor the specialists expected the period of nonrecognition to end in the near future. Despite the lack of diplomatic relations, trade between the two nations was strong. However, the Amtorg Trading Cooperation founded in 1924 by the Soviet government to conduct trade with American business, reported that Soviet officials did not impress visiting American businessmen. Amtorg officials wanted Soviet officials to be more open and courteous to American businessmen who visited the Soviet Union and allow them access to all industrial sites. Since the embryonic Soviet industries were dependent on the importation of machinery and tractors manufactured in the United States, the American businessmen had to be well treated. In addition, the Amtorg officials wanted Russians who worked there to study the American language and customs. The Riga specialists also noted that Amtorg was involved in propaganda activities; this in turn troubled Congressman Hamilton Fish. Fish had corresponded with Kelley throughout the 1920's concerning the

16 Coleman to Secretary of State, 22 March 1929, RG 84, Russian Book 125, 800R/5994; Coleman to Secretary of State, 19 August 1929, RG 84, Russian Book 125, 800R/6350; Coleman to Secretary of State, 19 November 1929, RG 84, Russian Book 125, 800R/6568.

17 Coleman to Secretary of State, 31 December 1929, RG 84, Russian Book 125, 800R/6674.

Soviet Union and the Comintern. In 1930 Fish requested that Kelley provide the reports from Riga concerning the Amtorg's subversive activities to his congressional committee. Fish used these reports to prove that Amtorg, like the Comintern and CPUSA was involved in propaganda activities in the United States.19

The Soviet government was also concerned with their image in the United States. In an attempt to improve their image, the government created Intourist to help foreign businessmen with transportation and hotel accommodations while in the Soviet Union as well as provide guides who spoke English.20 Despite these services, American journalists reported problems within the Soviet Union. In their fact-gathering discussions with the Riga specialists, the journalists acknowledged that the Soviet's industrial capacity had made significant gains during the first five-year plan. However, the standard of living for the average Russian was poor. When the journalists printed their stories, the Soviet government accused them of being involved in a propaganda campaign to slander the Soviet

19 Coleman to Secretary of State, 29 February 1929, RG 84, Russian Book 122, 020R-670R/5869; Coleman to Secretary of State, 5 June 1929, RG 84, Russian Book 122, 020R-670R/6192; Robert F. Kelley to Congressman Hamilton Fish, 16 December 1926, Box 2, Folder 4, in Kelley Papers; Kelley to Fish, 4 June 1930, Box 3, Folder 5, in Kelley Papers.

20 Coleman to Secretary of State, 17 May 1929, RG 84 Russian Book 122, 020R-670R/6150; Coleman to Secretary of State, 27 May 1929, RG 84, Russian Book 122, 020-670R/6160.
Union and AUCP(B).\textsuperscript{21} They contended that the American journalists lied when they claimed that the Comintern and CPUSA were subversive organs of the Soviet Union and AUCP(B). The Soviets used the negative reports made by the American journalists to justify the propaganda efforts of the AUCP(B) and the Comintern.\textsuperscript{22}

The Riga specialists recommended to the DEEA that although the Soviet government was angered by the American journalist reports, they would remain as a major trading partner with the United States. They also reported that the industrial strength of the Soviet Union would continue to improve. However, because their methods were based on socialist theories, the Soviet government would have difficulties meeting the goals of the five-year plan. The Soviet Union needed American machinery to achieve the goal of making the Soviet Union a self-sufficient socialist state. The Riga specialists recommended no change in the policy of

\textsuperscript{21} In an effort to further discredit the Soviet government, Kelley recommended that a prominent American communist Emma Goldman be allowed to return to the United States. Goldman had been deported in 1921 for communist agitation. However, after living in the Soviet Union she had become an opponent of the Soviet government which did not allow dissent. Kelley contended that she would be "an effective antidote to the propaganda with regard to the political and economic conditions in Soviet Russia," if she were allowed to return. Kelley to Secretary of State, 16 November 1926, Box 3, Folder 5, in Kelley Papers; Filene, 147.

\textsuperscript{22} Coleman to Secretary of State, 7 January 1929, RG 84 Russian Book 125, 800R/5815; Coleman to Secretary of State, 31 December 1929, RG 84, Russian Book 125, 800R/6674.
nonrecognition and that the Soviet Union’s dependence on American machinery be used as a leverage to force them to accept the United State’s terms for recognition at some future date.23

From 1930 to 1931 the Riga specialists continued to report the ebb and flow of Stalin’s dictatorship. They noted that the Soviet government’s campaign to force the Russian peasants on the collective farms continued unabated. The Soviet government also initiated a plan to discredit claims by the United States that the Comintern was a subversive propaganda organ of the AUCP(B). The Riga specialists were especially disturbed by the terrorist tactics Stalin used to achieve his political and economic objectives in the Soviet Union. While Bukharin’s communist followers willingly accepted their fates, the Russian peasants fought Stalin.24 Coleman reported that in retaliation for the resistance, Stalin planned to annihilate the peasants.25 Based on interviews with Russian peasants leaving the Soviet Union and

23 Coleman to Secretary of State, 19 April 1929, RG 84, Russian Book 122, 020R-670R/6354; Coleman to Secretary of State, 31 December 1929, RG 84, Russian Book 125, 800R/6674; Baer, 187-89.

24 Coleman to Secretary of State, 26 February 1929, RG 59, 86.5017/54/5923; Coleman to Secretary of State, 28 May 1929, RG 84, Russian Book 125, 800R/6165; Coleman to Secretary of State, 8 January 1930, RG 84, Russian Book 144, 800R.

25 Coleman to Secretary of State, 3 January 1930, RG 84, Russian Book 144, 800R/6683; Coleman to Secretary of State, 7 November 1930, RG 84; Russian Book 145, 800R/7340.
Soviet press accounts, the Soviet specialists reported that the government confiscated all tractors and sent them to the collective farms. Peasants were forced to turn their crops over to the government at below-market value. Fearful of being classified as a kulak and being deported, peasants destroyed excess livestock and crops. This resulted in a shortage of grain and draft animals. In addition, the government was unable to transport crops to the cities. Ultimately food shortages occurred throughout the Soviet Union.\(^{26}\)

By the end of 1931, the specialists now joined by the first graduates of Kelley's specialist program, George F. Kennan and William M. Gwynn, reported that Stalin's five-year plan would not meet the industrial and agricultural goals set in 1928.\(^{27}\) Russian peasants who moved to the factories were not properly trained to run and maintain the machinery.

\(^{26}\) Coleman to Secretary of State, 14 May 1929, Russian Book 130, RG 84, 800R/6141; Coleman to Secretary of State, 7 June 1929, RG 84, Russian Book 125, 800R/6196; Coleman to Secretary of States, 3 January 1930, RG 84, Russian Book 144, 800R/6683; Sussdorff to Secretary of State, 4 February 1930, RG 84, Russian Book 149, 861R/Telegram 5; Sussdorff to Secretary of State, 14 March 1930, RG 84, Russian Book 149, 861R/6848; Coleman to Secretary of State, 21 July 30; RG 84, Russian Book 149, 861.31R/Telegram 34; Coleman to Secretary of State, 7 November 1930, RG 84, Russian Book 145, 800R/7340; Lelchuk, 164-73.

\(^{27}\) "The American Foreign Service Journal," February 1933: 61, in Kelley Papers; Kennan, Memoirs, 1925-1950, 33-34; Coleman to Secretary of State, 8 January 1930, RG 84, Russian Book 144, 800R; Coleman to Secretary of State, 24 January 1931, RG 84 Russian Book 167, 800R/7448.
Foreign technicians were needed to maintain Soviet factories but they were disliked and distrusted by both Russian communists and peasants. Inflation was rampant in the Soviet Union and food shortages abounded. By April 1931, the specialists reported that Stalin was forced to institute a policy called the "Mini-NEP" in certain areas of the Soviet Union. This policy allowed peasants to be given small plots of land controlled by the state where they could grow and sell food at market prices. Coleman wrote that these events were warnings to Stalin and the AUCP(B) that planned economies did not work.\(^\text{28}\)

In addition to the problems in the Soviet Union, Stalin faced resistance within the CPUSA to his programs. In March 1930, the Riga specialists reported that Stalin became directly involved in the operations of the CPUSA. Many American communists refused to obey Stalin and the AUCP(B). Despite the recommendations made by the leaders of the Comintern and Profintern in 1929, membership in their American counterparts remained low. Some American communists argued that since the economic and political history of the United States was unique, socialism in the United States would evolve differently from the Soviet Union. Finally economic and political reforms made by the United States government

\(^{28}\) Coleman to Secretary of State, 9 January 1930, RG 84, Russian Book 149, 815.R/6690; Coleman to Secretary of State, RG 84, Russian Book 163, 800R/7609.
further delayed the evolution of the United States towards socialism.29

Stalin rebuked those who disagreed with his policies. He asserted that capitalism was the same regardless of the country, and that the United States would only become a capitalist state if the CPUSA remained faithful to the Marxist-Leninist doctrine as he defined it. He further contended that factionalism within the CPUSA had to end and that there would be no compromise with those who followed Trotsky and Bukharin. Stalin predicted that the United States was on the verge of war with its great imperialist rival, Great Britain, and that when the war began, the CPUSA must be ready to lead the bolshevik revolution in the United States.30

In November 1930, the specialists reported Stalin's goals for the Comintern and its subordinate groups. The communist parties of the Comintern and Profintern accepted the policy of building socialism in the Soviet Union as a priority. Stalin informed the communists that in an attempt to end the Great Depression, the capitalist nations would go to war with each other, and the Soviet Union in order to pursue new markets and raw materials. When this occurred, members of the Comintern were to mobilize the masses to

29 Sussdorff to Secretary of State, 14 March 1930, RG 84, Russian Book 147, 800R/6849; Coleman to Secretary of State, 19 June 1930, RG 84, Russian Book 144, 800R/7054.

30 Ibid.
protest, strike and, if necessary, create a civil war against the capitalist governments in order to protect the Soviet Union. The Great Depression was the precursor to the world proletarian revolution.31

Riga also noted that the Profintern was very active in the United States and its colony, the Philippines, in 1930-31. In the United States the Profintern worked with the Comintern to attract African-Americans and Filipinos to their organizations. In their efforts to recruit African-Americans, American communists asserted that in a socialist nation racial segregation did not exist. The racially motivated trial of the Scottsboro boys was used by the American communists to prove their claim and recruit new members. Propaganda material which specifically targeted African-Americans was printed by both organizations overseas and smuggled into the United States.32

The Comintern and Profintern supported the formation of the Philippine Communist Party (PCP) in 1930. A series of small insurrections initiated by the PCP against the United

31 Coleman to Secretary of State, 7 November 1930, RG 84, Russian Book 145, 800R/7340; Coleman to Secretary of State, 5 February 1931, RG 84, Russian Book 163, 800R/7423.

32 John E. Kehl (Consul General, Hamburg) to Coleman, 17 April 1931, RG 84, Russian Book 166, 800R/7630; Felix Cole to Secretary of State, 5 June 1931, RG 84, Russian Book 163, 800R/7773; Coleman to Secretary of State, 26 June 1931, RG 84, Russian Book 163, 800R/7823; David MacGowan to Secretary of State, 3 July 1931, RG 84, Russian Book 163, 800R/7837; Cole to Secretary of State, 28 July 1931, RG 84, Russian Book 163, 800R/7904.
States were organized but were quickly extinguished by the colonial government. The Riga specialists noted the communists in the Philippines took advantage of the fact that most of the land in the archipelago was owned by a few influential families who ruled the islands with the support of the Americans. The PCP informed the Filipinos that the United States was considering granting them independence only because American sugar beet and cotton oil manufacturers wanted to end the importation of competitive and less expensive sugar and coconut oil from the Philippines. Because the archipelago was a territory of the United States, there were no duties on Philippine imports.33

The communists played on the racial fears of the African-Americans in the United States by claiming that Filipinos were brought to the United States because they were cheap labor and would replace them in the factories. By contrast Filipinos were told that once the colony was granted independence, they would be allowed in the United States.34 Unfortunately, many of the charges made by the communists concerning racial

33 Coleman to Secretary of State, 31 May 1931, RG 84, Russian Book 165, 800R/7733; Coleman to Secretary of State, 6 June 1931, RG 84, Russian Book 165, 800R/7824.

34 Cole to Secretary of State, 5 June 1931, RG 84, Russian Book 163, 800R/7773; Coleman to Secretary of State, 6 June 1931, RG 84, Russian Book 165, 800R/7824; Coleman to Secretary of State, RG 84, Russian Book 163, 800R/7823; MacGowan to Secretary of State, 3 July 1931, RG 84, Russian Book 163, 800R/7837; Cole to Secretary of State, 28 July 1931, RG 84, Russian Book 163, 800R/7904.
prejudice against the African-Americans and Filipinos in the early 1930’s were true.

Beginning in 1930, Congress became concerned about the activities of the Comintern, Profintern and their subordinate organizations. They authorized Congressman Hamilton Fish to investigate Amtorg and the activities of all Comintern organizations in the United States. The committee was to determine if these organizations advocated "the overthrow by violence the Government of the United States, or attempt to undermine our republican form of government by inciting riots, sabotage, and revolutionary disorders." Fish requested that Kelley provide the committee with the Riga reports for use as evidence. Kelley sent the reports requested to the committee. In the end the committee, armed with the reports, concluded that Amtorg, the Comintern and the CPUSA were subversive propaganda organs of the United States government. However, they did not restrict their activities.

The Soviet Union reacted angrily to the actions of the Fish Committee. They insisted that the committee should investigate the racial violence against the African-Americans

35 House Resolution 180, 5 March 1930, Box 3, Folder 5, in Kelley Papers; Filene, 229-34.


37 Kelley to Undersecretary of State Cotton, 4 June 1930, Box 3, Folder 5, in Kelley Papers.
and the cruel imperialist policies of the United States in the Philippines and Latin America. The Riga reports indicated that the Soviet government reacted in this manner because the Congress was considering restricting Soviet imports to the United States based on the findings of the Fish Committee. Congress accused the Soviet Union of exporting goods to the United States that were made by slave or forced labor. The Soviet government asserted that forced labor was only used to build roads and canals. On the other hand, the Soviet government accused the United States of considering joining an economic blockade with other capitalist nations against the Soviet Union. The Soviet government warned the United States to carefully consider its course of action. They reminded the United States that trade without recognition was good between the two nations. However, if the United States persisted in its political attacks, the Soviet government would not allow American exports into the Soviet Union. They asserted that the United States needed trade with the Soviet Union, however the Soviet Union did not need trade with the United States.\footnote{Coleman to Secretary of State, 24 January 1931, RG 84, Russian Book 167, 800R/7448; Coleman to Secretary of State, 12 February 1931, RG 84, Russian Book 163, 800R/7496; Coleman to Secretary of State, 29 April 1931, Russian Book 163, 800R/7741.}

Coleman on his own initiative responded to the Soviet accusations in two reports to the State Department. He wrote that under international law the Soviet Union was responsible...
for the actions of the Comintern and its subservient organs. Most of the leaders of the Comintern were members of the Soviet government and the AUCP(B); thus the Comintern and its subsidiary organs were organs of the Soviet government. He maintained further that the Soviet government controlled the means of production in the Soviet Union. Many of the peasants and workers were coerced into accepting the jobs assigned to them by the Soviet government. He asserted that their inability to chose their jobs was compulsory labor and violated United States trade laws.39

In 1932, Wilbur Carr, head of the DFSA, sent Robert F. Skinner to replace Coleman in Riga. Carr made this move as part of his continuing struggle within the State Department to end the policy of allowing FSOs to specialize in the affairs of one country. Skinner was a generalist who shared Carr’s belief that FSOs should not specialize in one country or region. Furthermore, Skinner did not believe in the policy of nonrecognition. During his first year, he tried to impose his views on the mission. Instead of writing lengthy reports, Skinner wanted the Soviet experts to submit brief abstracts to the State Department. The Riga staff and his superiors at the DEEA resisted his efforts to change established methods.

39 Secretary of State to American Legation (Riga), 29 January 1930, RG 84, Russian Book 149, 850.4R; Coleman to Secretary of State, 14 July 1930, RG 84, Russian Book 144, 800R/7101; Coleman to Secretary of State, 24 January 1931, RG 84, Russian Book 167, 800R/7448.
and after one year of resistance, he complied with the will of his superiors and became a reluctant supporter of the policy of nonrecognition.\(^{40}\) Fortunately for Skinner that policy would soon change.

The year 1932 was significant because it was presidential election year in the United States. Franklin D. Roosevelt was the Democratic Party's candidate for President. He was known as a liberal and many of his followers favored established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. In anticipation of Roosevelt's election Russian specialists at Riga and the DEEA made preparations to conduct negotiations which would lead to diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.\(^{41}\) At Skinner's request seven specialists, Felix Cole, Clarence B. Hewes, W. J. Gallman, William M. Gwynn, Landreth M. Harrison, George F. Kennan and John A. Lehrs, compiled a report entitled "Reflections on Russia." Skinner was so impressed with their response that he submitted their paper enclosures with his report.\(^{42}\)

Skinner determined that the specialists felt no hostility towards the Russians, however they were hostile to the communist ideology of the AUCP(B). The seven men reached similar conclusions concerning the Soviet Union. First,

\(^{40}\) Propas, "The State Department," 144-49.

\(^{41}\) Baer, 216-17; Propas, "The State Department," 163-64.

\(^{42}\) Robert F. Skinner to Secretary of State, 24 March 1932, RG 84, Russian Book 201, 801R/193.
political change in the Soviet Union would be revolutionary and not evolutionary. Second, the Soviet Union only wanted formal relations with the United States in order to receive economic loans or credits from American banks. The Soviet Union may be persuaded to pay its past debts if it were politically and economically advantageous to do so. Third, the Soviet government would reduce its involvement with the Comintern only if it were politically expedient. Fourth, when the United States initiated negotiations for recognition, it should be guided by principle and not political expediency. Finally, recognition would benefit the Soviet Union more than the United States. Even without recognition the Soviet Union was a major importer of American products. Again they reiterated the fact that the Soviet Union needed American machinery to reach the goals of the second five-year plan.\(^{43}\)

The specialists believed that if the United States recognized the Soviet Union the following could be expected: First, the Soviet Union would repudiate any agreements concerning the Comintern if it were in its interest to do so. Second, once the United States granted the Soviet Union "de facto" recognition, the Soviet government would expect to be given most favored nation treaty status. Finally, the Soviet government would expect the United States to force American bankers to give the Soviet Union favorable credits and loans

\(^{43}\) Ibid.
without preconditions. The Riga specialists based this assessment on a thorough study of all treaties and agreements signed by the Soviet Union with other nations.\(^{44}\)

In his report, Skinner warned the State Department to approach the issue of recognition with caution. The Soviet Union had never fulfilled any treaty in which they agreed to pay previous debts nor had they desisted in their support of the Comintern. Skinner advised:

All in all, it appears to be necessary that we continue our attitude of watchful waiting, hoping that the Soviet government will mend its way, always disposed, ourselves, to be bear in mind our long-standing friendship with the Russian people and to enter relations with their government on the same terms which have guided our relations with other governments born out of revolutionary conditions.\(^{45}\)

However, there were other issues to consider. In 1931 Japan seized Manchuria. Japanese aggression in China worried both the Soviet Union and the United States. The specialists reported that the Soviet Union was prepared to establish diplomatic relations with the United States in order to deter further Japanese aggression in China. The Red Army was not strong enough to fight Japan and the Soviet Union needed the help of the United States to stop Japanese aggression. The Soviet government believed that the visit of Army chief of staff, General Douglas MacArthur, to Poland in the fall of 1932 was a precursor to Soviet-American negotiations. They

\(^{44}\) Ibid.

\(^{45}\) Ibid.
believed that MacArthur was in Poland to ascertain the strength of the Red Army and to warn the Polish government not to attack the Soviet Union in the event of a war with Japan.46

In November 1932, Roosevelt was elected President. After the election, the Riga specialists again thoroughly studied the various trade agreements and treaties between the Soviet Union and other nations in anticipation of a change in United States policy. In April 1933, Skinner and Kennan reported the results of their research to the State Department. Kennan advised that all treaties with the Soviets should be specific written agreements. American diplomats were warned that they would be dealing with a government based on communist ideology. The Soviet government controlled all political and economic activities in the Soviet Union; therefore special clauses would have to be written into the treaty which would protect the civil liberties of American citizens. In addition, the United States would have to establish strict economic and trade guidelines to protect the interests of American businessmen from the Soviet government's "foreign

46 Skinner to Secretary of State, 24 February 1932, RG 84, Russian Book 200, 030R-800R/87; William N. Castle (Division of Western European Affairs) to Skinner, 17 December 1933, RG 84, Russian Book 201, 801-R/143; Skinner to Secretary of State, 20 December 1932, RG 84, Russian Book 201, 801-R/1002; Skinner to Secretary of State, 23 March 1932, RG 84, Russian Book 224, 820R/1232.
trade monopoly.47 Skinner followed Kennan's report with a draft of a proposed commercial treaty based on the recommendations found in Kennan's report. Both men believed that it was important that the agreements contain specific language which restricted interference by both nations in internal political affairs.48

In June 1933, the DEEA informed the specialists that in order to establish diplomatic relations, the Soviet Union would have to negotiate and pay some of the previous debts. According to the DEEA, the Soviet Union owed the United States $2,614,025.70 from the Tsar's government and $327,583,071.37 from the Provisional government. When Great Britain and France established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, they negotiated a settlement to pay the debts owed to both nations. After eleven years, no payments had been made. However, the division believed that Stalin would be willing to pay the Provisional government's debt in the form of an interest payment on the loan, and only place a counter-claim against the Tsarist government debts. The DEEA further recommended that private debts be arbitrated at the


international court at the Hague.\textsuperscript{49}

The Riga specialists believed that the United States would be able to bargain from a position of strength when negotiations were initiated with the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union needed American equipment in order to meet the goals of the second five-year plan. On the other hand, the economy of the United States did not depend on exports to the Soviet Union to sustain it. This would not allow the Soviet government to hold an agreement hostage to a threatened trade embargo. Finally, the specialists recommended that American businessmen not base their trade requirements on the Soviet Union's economic figures because they were manipulated to obtain bargains from the western market. In order to provide American businessmen with accurate figures, a special economic foundation should be established which would focus on the Soviet economy and make recommendations based on economic data obtained from neutral sources. The foundation would be funded by both the public and private sectors.\textsuperscript{50} The specialists and Stalin were clearly in disagreement as to who needed diplomatic relations more, the Soviet Union or the United States.

While the Soviet government may have been prepared to

\textsuperscript{49} Division of Eastern European Affairs to American Legation (Riga), 19 June 1933, RG 84, Russian Book 224, 851R.

make concessions to the United States in order to establish diplomatic relations, it made no concessions to the Russian people. The Riga specialists cited Soviet press accounts which reported the closing and conversion of churches, synagogues and mosques into factories, grain silos and offices. Only women in Russia attended religious services, the men stayed away in fear of being persecuted by the government. This was purportedly done at the request of the Soviet workers. Russians who married American workers in the Soviet Union were terrorized by the secret police, the NKVD. Russians fleeing the Soviet Union reported that the people were tired of the demands placed on them to meet the goals of the second five-year plan and that there were shortages of food and consumer goods. Stalin diverted scarce industrial resources to build up the Soviet armed forces instead of manufacturing consumer products. Russian peasants were still being terrorized and coerced by the Soviet government to move on to the collective farms and the Soviet government continued subversive propaganda activities under the auspices of the Comintern against the United States.

51 Cole to Secretary of State, 8 January 1932, RG 84, Russian Book 195, 840.4R-850.32R/8368; Cole to Secretary of State, 7 September 1932, RG 84, Russian Book 195, 840.4R-850.32R/8368; Cole to Secretary of State, 9 December 1933, RG 84, Russian Book 215; 800R/1752.

52 A. E. Carleton to Secretary of State, 30 December 1932, RG 84, Russian Book 201, 800R/51; Edward S. Crocker to Secretary of State, 1 March 1933, RG 84, Russian Book 224, 804.4R/703; Skinner to Secretary of State, 21 April 1933, RG
Nevertheless, in October 1933, Roosevelt, after determining that Congress and the American people supported the issue, decided that it was time to recognize the Soviet government. The President was under pressure from American business to establish relations with the Soviet Union. This would enable the United States to increase its exports, thus creating more jobs during the depression. Roosevelt was also very concerned about Japanese aggression. He realized that the American people would not support unilateral action to curb Japanese aggression in Asia. However, if the United States established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, Japan might be intimidated into ending its expansionist policy in Asia.53

From this point on, Roosevelt assumed responsibility for Soviet-American relations until he died in 1945. Like Woodrow Wilson, Roosevelt delegated the task of approaching the Soviet government with the issue of recognition to special envoys. The envoys were two of his two closest associates, Henry Morgenthau and William C. Bullitt. The president believed that the FSOS of the State Department would be hesitant in supporting his policy. Bullitt, however, turned to Kelley and the DEEA staff to provide him with materials necessary to

84, Russian Book 233, 800R/1301; Cole to Secretary of State, 9 December 1933, RG 84, Russian Book 215, 800R/1752.

negotiate the treaty with the Soviets. He also chose Kelley, with Roosevelt’s approval, as a member of the negotiating team.\textsuperscript{54}

The Soviet government accepted Roosevelt’s invitation to begin negotiations. Maxim Litvinov, one of the more experienced diplomats in the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, was sent by Stalin to negotiate on behalf of the Soviet Union. The president’s advisors and the DEEA established the conditions for recognition which would serve as the basis for negotiations. On the issue of debt payments, the United States would focus on repayment of the loans made to the Kerensky government and would make a provision acknowledging repayment for private property seized by the Soviet government which was owned by Americans. The Soviet Union and the Comintern would be prohibited from sending communist propaganda into the United States and American citizens would be allowed to practice their religion. Roosevelt added the conditions regarding religious freedom in order to gain the support of American religious groups who were opposed to diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{55} Furthermore, American nationals residing in the Soviet Union who were arrested would have quick access to United States diplomats or consular officers and would be entitled to a public and

\textsuperscript{54} Baer, 236-37; Dallek 79-80; Propas, "The State Department," 163-67.

\textsuperscript{55} Baer, 238-43; Dallek, 79.
just trial and would be adequately protected from ambiguous charges such as "economic espionage." Litvinov arrived in Washington on 8 November 1933. Negotiations were difficult. He refused to sign any agreement concerning the payment of debts, nor would he acknowledge that the Comintern was a subversive organ of the Soviet Union. He was angered with the documentation presented by Bullitt and Kelley which supported the position of the United States. According to Kennan, Litvinov knew that the Russian section of the Riga mission provided the documentation. He informed Kelley that the DEEA's records were superior to the Soviet government's own records. By 10 November, negotiations had reached an impasse.

The impasse was broken when Roosevelt decided to meet with Litvinov. By 15 November they reached a gentleman's agreement concerning the establishment of diplomatic recognition. Litvinov agreed that the Soviet Union would not interfere in the internal affairs of the United States. To the disappointment of Kelley and the specialists, the Comintern was not mentioned by name; they believed this would allow the Soviet government to continue to deny it had any control over the activities of the Comintern. The issue of debt payments was to be negotiated after normal diplomatic

56 Baer, 237, 242.

57 Kennan, Memoirs 1925-1950, 47-48, 83-84; Baer, 244-45; Dallek, 79-80.
relations between the two nations had been established. American citizens in the Soviet Union were granted the right to practice their religion, and the American consul was to be immediately contacted when an American citizen was arrested. On 16 November 1933, Roosevelt announced that the United States had established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.58

For thirteen years, the Riga specialists observed the Soviet Union. They collected the evidence that was used by Bullitt and Kelley to effectively argue the position of the United States during the negotiations to establish diplomatic relations. They advised the government that in order to make the Soviet Union acknowledge its international obligations, agreements must be in writing and contain specific language. They also warned the government that the negotiations should not be based on political expediency. Unfortunately for the Riga specialists the world situation forced the United States to reconsider the policy of nonrecognition with the Soviet Union. Roosevelt believed that aggressive nations like Japan, Italy and later Germany were greater threats to the United States than the Soviet Union and the Comintern. In addition, the president may have decided it was safe to recognize the Soviet Union based on the fact that even in the midst of a

deep depression Americans overwhelmingly rejected the political and economic agenda of the CPUSA in national elections. Soviet-American relations entered a new phase with Roosevelt's election to the presidency.
CONCLUSION

The reforms initiated by Robert Lansing between 1918 and 1920 served many purposes. First, the reforms allowed for the selection of foreign service officers based on capability and not political patronage. Second, Lansing set the standard for FSOs to be professionals dedicated to the art of diplomacy. Third, he established the practice whereby FSOs kept the president and secretary of state informed about the political and economic conditions in the country where they were stationed. Finally, Lansing hoped to end the use of special envoys by the president. Special envoys created confusion both at home and abroad as to who represented the policies of the United States: the special envoys or the FSOs. The use of special envoys could be ended only if the president had trust and confidence in the abilities of his diplomats.

The Soviet specialists were the type of FSOs Lansing believed should serve the State Department. Due in large part to the reforms he initiated, they were selected because of their capability; not political patronage. They were dedicated to their profession and kept the United States government well informed concerning the political activities of the Soviet Union and the Comintern. The professional
reputation of the specialists was excellent and they used their expertise to serve five presidents between 1919 and 1933.

As this thesis has shown, the specialists' memoirs and the reports they wrote in Riga demonstrated their hostility to the communist ideology of the Soviet Union. Yet their task was in essence a negative one; they were to use their expertise to support nonrecognition. The specialists were prepared to be flexible and to negotiate with the Soviet Union on the issue of debt payments. However, they believed their reports proved that the Comintern and its American subsidiary organization, the CPUSA were organs of the Soviet government. Such activities, which the specialists saw as direct interference in the internal affairs of the United States, could not be so easily compromised. Until the Soviet Union acknowledged and then renounced the activities of the Comintern and the CPUSA, the specialists believed it was in the best interest of the United States to continue the policy of nonrecognition.

Historians must be careful to evaluate the Riga reports in the context of the times in which they were written. Between 1919 and 1933, the United States and the Soviet Union were not two super powers leading two hostile blocks of nations. During that period, the two nations were part of a group of great powers that included Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Japan and China. Both nations were not part
of any alliances. Therefore the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union was bilateral. It was based on this relationship that the Riga specialists wrote their reports and came to their conclusions concerning the Soviet Union.

Due to the clear direction and high standards established by Kelley, the Riga specialists were able to evolve as Russian/Soviet scholars as well as FSOs. The evidence used by the Riga specialists was the best available under the conditions in which they operated. The specialists based their conclusions on empirical evidence. Information received from interviews was tested against other interviews and Soviet publications for validity. Since all publications in the Soviet Union were controlled by the government, all pronouncements found were considered Soviet policy. This was especially true after Stalin assumed full control of the country and the party. When the archives of the Soviet government in Russia are opened to the public, historians will be able to more accurately evaluate the validity of the methods used by the specialists to study the Soviet Union and defend the policy of nonrecognition.

If the specialists had a fault it was that they were too focused, as their critics claimed, on the relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States.¹ The specialists at

¹ Yergin, 8-14; Propas, "The State Department," 167-73, 229-31.
Riga and in the DEEA did not attempt to analyze how the lack of diplomatic relations with the Soviet effected United States foreign policy as a whole. Roosevelt believed that they did not understand his foreign policy concerns and objectives. As a result, Roosevelt, like Wilson, returned to the use of special envoys to implement his foreign policy initiatives in 1933. Yet one of those envoys, William C. Bullitt, still turned to the Riga specialists for advice. The counsel they gave was still accurate; it simply did not reflect the political and international considerations which motivated Franklin D. Roosevelt.
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**THESES AND DISSERTATIONS**