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Schreiben Singer Manufacturing Company an den Secretary of State (19.08.1921)

Brief

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Formalia:

Maschinenschriftliches Briefdokument

Regest:

Der hier präsentierte Brief der Singer Manufacturing Company (Hersteller von Nähmaschinen) an den US-amerikanischen Außenminister Charles Evan Hughes verdeutlicht die institutionelle Unsicherheit der ersten Jahre nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg, welche die internationalen Handels- und Finanzbeziehungen stark erschwerte. Die Sorge der Firma, die deutsche Regierung könne US-amerikanische Eigentumstitel verstaatlichen, um damit die Reparationen zu bezahlen, ist dafür ein gutes Beispiel. Tatsächlich wurde im wenige Zeit später zwischen den Vereinigten Staaten und Deutschland abgeschlossenen Berliner Vertrag die Einrichtung einer Mixed Claims Commission beschlossen, deren Aufgabe u. a. die Entschädigung US-amerikanischer Eigentumsverluste durch die deutsche Seite darstellte.

The Singer Manufacturing Company

General Management

August 19, 1921

The Honorable, The Secretary of State, Washington, D.C.

Sir,

In connection with the drafting of the proposed Treaty between the United States and Germany¹, we desire to call your attention to the situation which our Company and other American concerns may be placed in by reason of the proposed German scheme of taxation for raising funds for paying the reparation debt due by Germany to the Allies.

This scheme we understand is (1) to levy a heavy tax upon all real estate assessed at its prewar value in gold marks and to secure payment of the same by compelling the owner to give the Government a mortgage for that amount on such real estate and (2) the Government will also claim a considerable interest in all industrial enterprises.

Our company had invested in Germany prior to the war a very large amount of capital in carrying on a branch of our business in that country. This business we desire[2] to continue but if the proposed German scheme of taxation is carried out and our Company and similar American companies are not protected by the Treaty, a large portion of our property will be taken away from us for the purpose of aiding Germany to pay her debt to the Allies. It would be a very serious matter for us, as our assets at December 31st 1913 stood at Gold Marks 77,778,352, and whether the figures are large or small the principle would seem to be one to be guarded against in the wording of the Peace Treaty. It is our feeling and the feeling of other American investors in Germany that some proper provision should be made in the proposed Treaty that would protect us from such a situation.

1 Gemeint ist der kurz vor dem Abschluss stehende Separatfrieden (25. August 1921) zwischen den Vereinigten Staaten, die den Versailler Vertrag nicht ratifiziert hatten, und Deutschland, als Berliner Vertrag bezeichnet. Jähnicke, Washington.

We shall be glad to furnish, personally or by letter, any other particulars which may be needed for our guidance in dealing with this matter and shall be obliged if you will kindly let us know what provision is made to protect American interest in Germany.

Very respectfully,

The Singer Manufacturing Company