

ADOLPH A. BERLE

1935 - 1944

November 19, 1935

BERLE

My dear Mr. Beele:—

I think this woman is much overwrought, but you suggested that you might be able to help her. Will you see what can be done? I think a part time maid's job would help.

Very sincerely yours,

BERLE

Mr. A. A. Beele—  
The Mayor's Office  
City Hall  
New York

339 W 43

~~Mrs. J. Elizabeth Rapinskie~~ (~~gives no address~~)  
complains of very unsatisfactory living conditions in tenement (she went to see Mrs. Roosevelt in New York)

December 26, 1939

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My dear Mr. Berle:

Thank you so much for your letter about the job which Mr. Reeve wanted. I am glad to know how you feel about it and shall tell Mr. Reeve what you say.

Very sincerely yours,

Hon. Adolf A. Berle, Jr.  
Assistant Secretary of State



DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

December 12, 1939

*12-26-39*  
*Reeve*  
*Handwritten notes and signatures in the right margin.*

My dear Miss Thompson:

I delayed answering your letter of December 1st enclosing the letter sent by Mr. Reeve to Mr. Messersmith, a copy of which he sent to Mrs. Roosevelt, until I could go into the matter at some length.

There are two questions behind this.

One is that Mr. Reeve would like a job with the State Department; and he has been backed for that by Mr. Van Kirk, of the National Peace Conference. That question is settled for us: the present Department budget makes no provision for any such activity.

The second question is whether a position ought to be created. Briefly, Mr. Reeve suggests that there ought to be an officer of this Department whose business it is to undertake work in the educational publicity field, working through pamphlets, radio, peace and other similar organizations, and the like. Somewhat similar work is being done by the Department of Commerce and the Department of Agriculture.

The

Miss Malvina C. Thompson,  
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt,  
The White House.

The real question raised is whether the State Department should go into the field of domestic propaganda as other foreign offices do -- the propaganda being, of course, in support of the policies of the government. I have often wished that the Department had such machinery; and I have almost equally often thanked the Lord that it had not. At best, such work could be a high degree of education in international affairs. At worst, it could be the most dangerous form of propaganda there is.

I have, however, undertaken to review the whole problem of seeing whether we could not make available to existing organizations and teaching institutions more accurate statements of fact and of point of view. Obviously, it needs someone with more qualifications than Reeve to do it. As I see it, the time should come when there is a senior officer of the Department -- preferably an Assistant Secretary of State -- whose business it is to do that and nothing else: that is, to write the story, make the speeches, see the various organizations, keep them informed, and so on. The man who did that would have to be of sufficient rank and public stature so that he could deal with public relations not as a permanent career propagandist, but as a responsible political spokesman.

This

This at least is the tentative answer.

It is a little interesting to note that other people besides Reeve have had the idea. For instance, the Editor of the Farm Credit Administration, Mr. Ridgely C. Dorsey, has been talking to me about a somewhat similar plan.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "A. S. Dorsey".

January 30, 1940

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Dear Mr. Berle:

Thank you very much for sending me a copy of the report on the investigation made by the Embassy in Paris on conditions among the Spanish refugees in France. I read it and your letter with much interest.

Very sincerely yours,

The Honorable Adolf A. Berle, Jr.  
Assistant Secretary of State

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sent to Albert Simon

June 19, 1940

Memorandum for Mr. <sup>A.A.</sup> Berle

These are the papers I spoke  
to you about.

E.R.

Max Ascoli, Graduate Faculty of Political and Social Science  
66 West 12th St. sends papers on two Italian citizens, Amelia  
and Maria Rosselli, and four children

New York, N.Y.  
June 25, 1940

file  
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Dear <sup>A.A.</sup> Mr. Berle: Jr.,

I am enclosing this list of people who are at present in grave danger. You will see that it is compiled and submitted by a responsible committee.

I hope, if it is safe and possible to do so, it can be put into the hands of our people in Europe with the request that they do everything they can to protect these refugees. I do not know what Congress will be willing to do, but they might be allowed to come here and sent to a camp while we are waiting for legislation. They are all fine people and their friends here are very much worried about them.

Very sincerely yours,

See Karl Frank

Department of State  
June 26, 1940

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Your memorandum of June 25, enclosing a list of people who are in grave danger, includes a number of names already on lists upon which we have been working.

I need hardly tell you that the difficulties are extreme. There is now almost no communication with the occupied parts of Europe. I have been asking the groups with which I was in touch to advise these people to get to Africa, or, if possible, to Portugal (this last is extremely difficult) in the hope that we might, in time, be able to take some of them off from African ports. Only time will tell what has actually occurred.

If they are clear of the German lines, we have at least a sporting chance to do something to permit their entry.

A few escaped to England, and some of them will undoubtedly come here - as for instance the widows of Nello and Carlo Rosselli. But on the whole I think this is the most heart-breaking job I ever touched.

Faithfully yours

Adolph Berle, Jr.

July 13, 1940

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Dear Mr. Berle:

I am enclosing a letter which I have just received from Miss Charlotte Kraus, who is greatly distressed about her parents.

Would it be possible to send a cable, as she suggests? I will pay for it.

Very sincerely yours,

Hon. Adolf A. Berle, Jr.

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ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO  
THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.



DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

*Jul 16 1940*

In reply refer to  
A-B

*file*  
July 15, 1940

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I hasten to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of July 13, 1940 enclosing a communication which you have received from Miss Charlotte Kraus in regard to her desire to obtain news of her father and mother, from whom she last heard in Vienna. I am sending a personal telegram to our representative in Berlin asking him to try to obtain information concerning them. As soon as a reply has been received I shall communicate with you.

Sincerely yours,

Adolf A. Berle, Jr.  
Assistant Secretary

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt,  
The White House.

September 25, 1940

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My dear Mr. Berle:

I am sending you a copy of a letter from ~~Mr. Max Ascoli~~ to Mr. Louis Weiss, about a young writer, ~~Mario Rossi~~.

Can anything be done quickly in this case, as the man seems to be in great danger, The consul in Zurich is holding him on the technicality that he might be a charge on the Government.

Very sincerely yours,

Hon. Adolf A. Berle, Jr.  
Assistant Secretary of State

Letter returned to Mr. Weiss

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO  
THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

*Copy sent  
to Mrs. Roosevelt  
10/3/40*

OCT 2 - 1940



DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

In reply refer to  
VD 811.111 Rossi, Mario R.

October 2, 1940

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I have received your letter of September 23, 1940 enclosing a copy of a communication from Mr. Max Ascoli to Mr. Louis Weiss concerning the visa case of Mr. Mario Rossi.

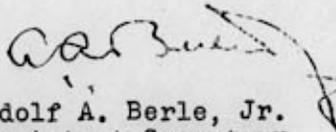
I find that in a recent telegram to the Department our consular officer at Zurich, Switzerland states that Mr. Rossi had been given an appointment for September 21, 1940 with a view to the formal examination of his application for visa. An earlier telegram from the consular officer indicated that Mr. Rossi's assurances of support, concerning which there apparently was some question at one time, had been found satisfactory but that information was being awaited from Italy with regard to certain aspects of his case which it is inferred has now been received.

I shall

Mrs. Roosevelt,  
The White House.

I shall not fail to advise you in the event of the receipt of a further report from the consular officer concerning Mr. Rossi's application.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Adolf A. Berle, Jr.", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Adolf A. Berle, Jr.  
Assistant Secretary

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO  
THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.



*File*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

In reply refer to  
VD 811.111 Rossi, Mario R.

October 26, 1940

61-73 1940

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Referring to my letter of October 2, 1940, a communication has now been received by mail from the American consular officer at Zurich, stating that an immigration visa was issued to Mr. Mario Rossi on September 21, 1940, the date mentioned in my previous letter as having been fixed by the consular officer for the formal examination of Mr. Rossi's visa application.

Sincerely yours,

*Adolf A. Berle, Jr.*  
Adolf A. Berle, Jr.  
Assistant Secretary

Mrs. Roosevelt,  
The White House.

March 5, 1941

Dear Mr. Berle:

The enclosed letters on the case of Jacques Hannak, now in a refugee camp in unoccupied France, have been given to me. I wonder if anything can be done as it seems an unusual procedure.

Very sincerely yours,

Hon. Adolf A. Berle, Jr.  
Asst. Secretary of State

Hattie Ross, Bard College, Annandale, N.Y. writes to Joe Lash about Hannak - in camp specially reserved for refugees about to leave the country - has American Visitor's visa. French exit visa has been granted but he cannot actually get it, without a German traveling document - He is refugee from German authorities and cannot get such a document - only thing to do probably is to ask American Amb. to point this out to the French - Worked in Trade Union Federation in Vienna - this having been organized by the Quakers.



DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

MAR 13 1941

In reply refer to  
VD

March 14, 1941

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I refer to your letter of March fifth concerning the case of Jacques Hannak. It appears from one of the communications which you enclosed that Mr. Hannak has received an American visa but is experiencing difficulty in obtaining an exit permit from the French authorities. I note that this matter has been taken up by the French Embassy with the French authorities at Vichy.

Our Consul General at Marseille has been requested to make inquiries and to submit a telegraphic report in the matter. I shall write to you again upon receipt of the report.

Sincerely yours,

Adolf A. Berle, Jr.  
Assistant Secretary

Mrs. Roosevelt,  
The White House.

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May 30, 1942

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

I know I am going to be deluged with letters as to why at this particular time, when Mr. Browder has just been released, you are taking the attitude that you have stated toward Mr. Bridges.

I should like from you some form of answer which I can make to these letters, because I do not want to say anything which is not the truth.

It seems to me just at this moment, with the situation as it is in Russia, that it will not be very well understood, and it is confusing because I am now under the impression that your decision makes the communist party in this country, illegal. Up to this time, as I have understood it, it was legal to belong to that party if they did not advocate the overthrow of the government by force, but simply preached communist principles. Exactly why is there a difference between an American citizen and an alien belonging to the communist party if he has been here sometime and is known to have belonged to that party? Of course, if Mr. Bridges had come in under false pretenses, I can understand he should be deported at once.

With the attitude toward Mr. Browder and this attitude toward Mr. Bridges, somehow, does not seem to me very consistent.

I should like to be able to answer the letters which are coming to me truthfully, and shall be grateful to you for advice as to what I shall say.

Very cordially yours,



Office of the Attorney General  
Washington, D.C.

June 8, 1942

*Handwritten initials*

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Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

In answer to your letter of May 30, asking about the Bridges case, I am briefly outlining the basis of the decision.

The law (as amended in 1940) provided for the deportation of an alien who, when entering the United States, or at any time thereafter had been a member of or affiliated with an organization advocating the overthrow by force or violence of the Government of the United States. Two questions of fact were presented: First, whether the Communist Party of the U. S. A. was such an organization. Judge Sears, who had been appointed as Inspector to try the case, found that it was. Bridges presented no evidence to the contrary. So my finding, undisputed on the record, and amply supported by voluminous testimony, was necessarily to the same effect. Second, whether Bridges was a member of or affiliated with this party. Judge Sears found that he was; the Board of Immigration Appeals overruled Judge Sears on the ground that the evidence did not support this finding, and when it came to me, after a careful study of the testimony, I sustained Sears, and ordered the deportation.

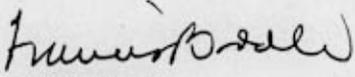
Deportation proceedings are, of course, applicable only to aliens, not to American citizens.

Browder's term was commuted by the President because his sentence - four years - was far in excess of the usual sentence in passport fraud cases; and this long sentence reflected, presumably, condemnation of his being a Communist, rather than punishment for the crime of which he had been convicted. This does not seem to me inconsistent with the deportation of Bridges, unless the test of the handling of such cases should be the theoretical effect on our relation with Russia. Because Russia and the United States are fighting side by side against the Axis powers should not affect our domestic policy with respect to Communist propagandists in this country. Many persons have feared that our military cooperation with Russia might change our view towards Communist activities in this country, and the possible damaging result of such activities on the American form of government. If, therefore, policy questions have any place in the decision of the Bridges case, his order for deportation should set at rest such doubts. The decision makes it clear that because we are aiding the Russians in their gallant fight against our joint enemies, it does not follow that we are permitting any Communists a free hand in this country. Since Germany declared war on Russia the practical effect of these activities changed suddenly; this does not mean, however, that in the future, and with equal suddenness, a change will not occur which would have serious consequences.

But, as I have said, my duty was to decide whether Bridges was identified with the Communist party, and whether this party was of the forbidden revolutionary type. The evidence seemed to me conclusive on both these questions. Policy making was not in my province; that is for the Congress.

I am enclosing herewith a copy of my decision.

Sincerely yours,

  
Attorney General

Mrs. Roosevelt  
The White House.

P. S. You might be interested in the enclosed editorial  
from the Philadelphia Record.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR E.R.

I have checked twelve statements  
in two pages which are questionable as to  
their correctness -- and that is a pretty  
high average.

F.D.R.

*file*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

MEMO FOR THE PRESIDENT:

I should like to know in  
what respects this is 90% wrong.  
How can I answer the gentleman?

E.R.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

June 12, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR

E.R.

About 90% of this is just  
plain untrue.

F.D.R.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

JUNE 9, 1942

MEMO FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Please read and if you  
think worth passing on to the Attorney  
General you may do so.

E.R.

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Bridges

Effects of Biddle Decision

The decision has caused American working men to lose faith in the Administration, confused the public mind and has diverted attention from the main issue - winning the war. This has resulted, despite the fact that Bridges immediately, upon notification of the decision, issued a public statement in which he declared that his case was secondary to winning the war, and despite a telegram to Donald M. Nelson, assuring him that he (Bridges) would exert all energy to repairing the damage already caused.

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Five hundred delegates to a CIO "Votes for Victory" conference in Fresno, California, the weekend of the decision only gave consideration to formulating a constructive legislative and political program and endorsing three Democratic candidates for high office, after the greatest persuasion by Bridges and state CIO officials.

One thousand San Francisco longshoremen immediately threatened to quit the docks in protest and only remained on the job after intervention of union officials and Bridges.

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Numerous newspapers and the national CIO have heralded the fact the Biddle decision was praised by the Berlin radio and by the reactionary press in the United States.

The national CIO Executive Board, meeting in Washington last week, marshalled all resources and finances behind Bridges, called for the formation of Bridges Committees throughout the country, public meetings and radio programs.

Army and Navy authorities in San Francisco now refuse to discuss the shiploading operations with Bridges and his union.

The decision has strengthened the hand of certain elements in the maritime unions, who opposed the Bridges program, including the establishment of the Maritime Industry Board, and hold the union comes first and the war second.

The decision has destroyed working unity in San Francisco between the CIO and the AFL, with the result that the AFL Central Labor Council refuses further joint meetings and the entire program of Labor's Unity for Victory Committee is seriously threatened.

The decision means a lessening of the sale of war bonds and stamps, and contributions to Allied War Relief as this money will go to finance the Bridges case.

The decision threatens the President's seven-point program in that opponents of the program among working men and women are using the ruling to contend that Bridges misled the workers in advocating acceptance of it.

The decision prevents Bridges from continuing his meetings with unions, employers, farmers, advocating unity.

The decision has caused an undermining of morale in Australia as evidenced by the statement of Acting Attorney-General Beasley of Australia found necessary to issue.

Summary and Recommendations:

1. The record of the Bridges case shows that Bridges has been exonerated four times and found guilty twice in nine years of investigation.
2. Pacific Coast dock and marine unions have bitterly fought Fascism and Nazism since 1935 and during the Soviet Russia-German pact.
3. Bridges was quick to realize the necessity for greater war production; is largely responsible for the establishment of the Pacific Coast Maritime Industry Board, and is an able and conscientious worker in behalf of the United States, the Administration, and the war.
4. The protracted court fight on the deportation of Bridges can not fail to divert attention, money and effort from the war and to the Bridges case as evidenced already by the action of the National CIO Executive Board marshalling all forces and apparatus behind Bridges.

This situation can be corrected by the Attorney-General ordering a rehearing. In this connection, Bridges' attorneys declare they have irrefutable and new evidence destroying the credibility of Harry Lundeberg, one of two major witnesses on whom the AttorneyGeneral relies.

Enclosed "Brief Report on the Activities of the Temporary Council  
of Food for Europe's Children" Signed by Howard E. Kershner.

February 9, 1944.

Dear Mr. Berle:

The President, whom I asked  
about this, says that if a statement  
could be made to the effect that the  
whole policy on this is in the hands  
of the combined military authorities,  
he thinks it might clarify the think-  
ing of a great many people.

Very sincerely yours,

Mr. Adolf A Berle, Jr.  
Assistant Secretary of State  
Washington, D. C.

VDS