

Summer Welles Papers
Box 55 Folder 14
Office Correspondence
Roosevelt, Eleanor 1939

July 24, 1939

Dear Eleanor:

I have read with a great deal of interest the letter to you from Constancia de la Mora which you were kind enough to enclose with your letter to me of July 22. I have the utmost sympathy with the work that she is doing, and I fully share the belief expressed in her letter that many of the Spanish refugees can find appropriate and worth-while openings in the New World if they are given the chance.

As you know, the President's basic idea in suggesting the creation of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees was to provide a practical form of international cooperation through which, over a term of years, there might be worked out a way of solving the problem of the resettlement of refugees in an orderly manner. It would seem to me entirely suitable and completely in line with the fundamental ideas which we hold that some thought be given at the meeting to be held this autumn between the President and the members of the Executive Committee of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees to the question of the Spanish refugees. I have, therefore, recommended

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,

The White House.

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that the agenda to be submitted to the President include the resettlement of Spanish refugees.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

Enc.

SW:DMK

January 24, 1939.

Dear Eleanor:

I have your letter of January 11 enclosing a number of papers which were brought to you by a friend of Hans Eisler and I have somewhat delayed writing you as I wished the matter to be gone into very carefully.

It is quite possible that Mr. Eisler and his wife will be able to show that they are admissible into the United States under our immigration laws. The decision in their cases must be made under the law by the Consul General at Habana to whom they desire to apply and he cannot reach a decision until he shall have had an opportunity to examine Mr. and Mrs. Eisler when they call in person at the Consulate General to apply for visas. This is the customary procedure under the law and, although Mr. and Mrs. Eisler may desire to have a decision reached as to their qualification for visas before they leave the United States, this would not be practicable.

Our file indicates that Mr. Eisler has been connected in some measure with communistic organizations and the facts will therefore have to be gone into very carefully by the Consul General when he interviews Mr. Eisler and his wife. I believe that it would be most helpful to inform Mr. and Mrs. Eisler that it would not be possible to have a decision made in their cases until they

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Mrs. Roosevelt,
The White House.

Hans Eisler

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can proceed to Cuba and appear before the Consul General. They would have to obtain permission from the Cuban authorities to enter that country temporarily and they can then call at the Consulate General to apply for visas.

They should, of course, take with them documentary evidence to establish the facts in their cases and to support their claims that they are not involved in communistic activities and that they do not have affiliations and do not hold beliefs which, under our immigration laws, would exclude them from favorable consideration for visas. It is impossible, of course, for me to indicate just what the nature of this evidence should be, but I think it would be very desirable for them to carry letters from some of their responsible friends in this country indicating that to their knowledge and belief Mr. and Mrs. Eisler do not hold opinions which under our immigration laws would exclude them.

If it is Mr. Eisler's intention, as I understand it is, to apply for a non-quota visa as a professor, he should, of course, carry with him specific evidence from the New School of Social Research of his appointment as a professor there. This can very effectively be in the form of a letter from the head of the New School of Social Research to the Consul General at Habana setting forth the appointment and the salary which Mr. Eisler is to receive. It is also necessary, under the law, to establish non-quota status as a professor, that he should have available to present to the Consul General evidence concerning his teaching activities during the past two years and evidence regarding the institutions with which he has been connected and to which he is coming

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as bearing upon his qualification as a professor of a college, academy, seminary or university in the terms mentioned in the law.

Mr. Eisler may be assured that the Department only desires that the question of his qualification and that of his wife to receive visas shall be determined in the usual manner by the consular officer who is responsible under the law for deciding this question. Mr. and Mrs. Eisler may also be assured that the Consul General will accord them every possible consideration.

I am sending you herewith a duplicate of this letter in case you may wish to have it sent to Mr. Eisler.

Believe me

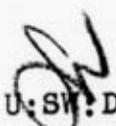
Yours very sincerely,

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
THE UNDER SECRETARY

February 14, 1939

A-M
Mr. Messersmith:

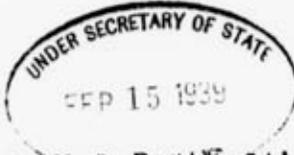
I shall greatly appreciate it if you will let me know what reply I could make to Mrs. Roosevelt with regard to these two questions. The case of Dr. Edith Vogl is obviously one for the Visa Division but I don't want to refer it to that Division without getting your opinion about the request since I do not know the lady and there may be reasons, apart from the technical ones, why the request should not be granted.


U. SW: DMK

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ASSISTANT SECRETARY
A-M

February 14, 1939.



U
Mr. Welles:

With respect to Mrs. Roosevelt's letter of February 3, with which she sends a letter she has received from Dr. Edith Vogl, I can give you the following information.

There is nothing in our files concerning Dr. Edith Vogl. We have, therefore, no information to indicate in what country she was born and to what quota she is chargeable. It is a reasonable assumption, I think, that she would be chargeable to the German quota, against which there is a very heavy demand running into hundreds of thousands. As she is in this country on a visitor's visa, she is not registered under the quota.

Dr. Vogl wishes Mrs. Roosevelt to give her a letter of introduction to the American Consul General in Montreal where she desires to apply for an immigration visa. She seems to think that the Consulate at Montreal has some quota numbers, one of which could be used for her. In this respect Dr. Vogl is resting under a misapprehension. In view of the heavy demands on the German quota and in view of the quota being over-subscribed, persons who do not enjoy preference status under our law (and there is no indication that Dr. Vogl enjoys preference status under the law) must await their turn on the waiting list. She would, therefore, have to wait in Canada several years at least before a number would become available for the issue of an immigration visa. There would be no object whatever, therefore, in her going to Montreal to apply for a visa.

I doubt whether, in any event, Mrs. Roosevelt would wish to give Dr. Vogl a letter to the American Consul General in Montreal for it would open her to similar requests from so many people.

Dr. Vogl happens to be one of a fair number of people who have come into this country on visitor's visas and who may not be able to return or do not wish to return to the country of origin. There is no way provided by the statutes that any relief can be given in these cases

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at this time and the question of proposing legislation to affect such cases was recently discussed by the Secretary with Miss Perkins and the Attorney General and there was, I believe, general agreement that it would not be desirable to propose any such legislation at this time. I may say that the effect of such legislation would be to break down our whole immigration law and practice.

I am sure that the Department of Labor views cases such as that of Dr. Vogl with sympathy and there is no reason to believe that she would not be granted an extension of her present stay if she makes application to the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization in the normal way.

G. S. Messersmith.



A-M: GSM: VNG

February 15, 1939

Dear Eleanor:

In reply to the inquiry you make of me in your letter of February 13, I do not think that you will wish to give Dr. Vogl a letter to the American Consul General in Montreal for it will undoubtedly pave the way for you to receive innumerable requests of this character. It would also place our Consul General in Montreal in a difficult position because of his inability under the law to do anything at this time to comply with Dr. Vogl's request.

Dr. Vogl seems to think that the Consulate General in Montreal has some quota numbers, one of which could be used for her because of your interest in her case. In this respect she is, of course, under a misapprehension. In view of the heavy demands on the German quota, persons must await their turn on the waiting list - unless they have legal preference status which apparently Dr. Vogl does not possess. In all probability Dr. Vogl would have to wait in Canada several years at least before a number would become available for the issuance to her of an immigration visa.

Dr. Vogl is, I suppose, in this country on a visitor's visa. I am sure that the Department of

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
The White House.

Labor views cases such as this one with sympathy and there is no reason to believe that she would not be granted an extension of her present stay if she makes application to the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization in the normal way.

With regard to the case of the Countess di Nogarole I may say that the Countess has misinformed you when she told you that her husband is on the staff of our Consulate in Venice at a salary of \$58 a month. According to our records he is receiving a total compensation annually of \$1,540, or, roughly, \$130 a month.

The Countess' husband, Mr. Meehan, is an American citizen now sixty-three years of age who, according to the reports of the Consular Inspector, is a very unsatisfactory employee and should never have been employed in his present capacity. It appears that the Consul who appointed him to the clerical position which he occupies appointed him out of pity because he was told by Countess di Nogarole that unless employment was found for him he would commit suicide. It seems from the reports I have received that in all likelihood he will have to be discharged because of his complete incapacity.

I think you should also know that in an Inspection Report received sometime ago the Consul General in making the report informed the Department of State that Countess di Nogarole and her husband, while they were conducting a school before the husband obtained his present position, used your own name as that of a sponsor for the school without your authorization and also used your name in various other connections with the school that were improper.

I cannot help but feel that the Countess

di Nogarole is abusing the kindness and consideration you have evidently shown her.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

Enc.

SW:DMK

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March 3, 1939

Dear Eleanor:

In reply to your letters of February 23 and February 24 with which you were kind enough to enclose a memorandum on the subject of student travel from the United States to South America, I may say that with the main objective I find myself, of course, very heartily in accord.

I should like to lay before you, however, the following considerations:

Large scale student travel may easily do more harm than good to international understanding. As you say in your letter of February 24, student groups should be carefully selected and they should, of course, be adequately guided and directed.

I think that travel on the part of graduate students is much more likely to be fruitful than travel undertaken by undergraduate or preparatory school students.

I think it is also clear that a year or more of study in a foreign land brings much more understanding than a brief visit.

Thus I think it seems advisable to encourage student travel along the lines of

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
The White House.

carefully selected groups, graduates as a rule preferred to undergraduate or preparatory school students, and so far as may be possible to emphasize the desirability of at least a year of study in one of the other American republics rather than a merely casual tourist visit.

I have already corresponded with Mr. Burkhard who sent me some months ago a copy of the memorandum which was enclosed with your letters to me. I shall, of course, be happy to see Mr. Burkhard if he cares to come to the Department to talk the matter over with us.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

Sumner Welles

U SW:IJ



April 12, 1939

Dear Eleanor:

I have just received your letter of April 11 asking if the Department can obtain information concerning the wellbeing of Mr. Kraus and Miss Munk whose addresses are given as Vienna and Prague.

I am having instructions sent to the appropriate consular officials immediately and as soon as the information is given the Department I will write you again.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
The White House.

RECORDED
APR 13 1939
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

April 19, 1939

Dear Eleanor:

With reference to your letter of April 11, I have received today a telegram from our Consul in Prague to the following effect: Lottie Munk well, but desires to leave Prague where she is now residing.

In the case of Hofrat Siegfried Kraus, the Consul in Vienna states that he is living at the address given in your letter, he is well, and is in frequent communication with his daughter, Lotte Kraus, whose address is given as 60 West 71st Street, New York City.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

Sumner Welles

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
The White House.

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362.6215/66

U:SW:IJ

May 4, 1939

Dear Eleanor:

On March 14 you wrote to me with regard to the interest of Ben Roosevelt in the case of Wilhelm Guttman in connection with the desire of the latter to obtain a visa for entry into the United States.

An inquiry as to the status of Mr. Guttman was made immediately of our Consul General in London, and for your information I am enclosing a copy of a report from the Consul General dated April 17.

Under the terms of existing legislation the Consul General has not been able to find that Mr. Guttman enjoys a preferential status, and consequently I fear that it will be some time before he can obtain a visa under the regular quota. You can be sure, however, that the Consul General will do everything possible to facilitate a satisfactory solution of this case.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

Sumner Welles

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
The White House.

811.111 Guttman, Wilhelm

U:SW:MW

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811.111 Guttman, Wilhelm

A true copy of
the signed original.

NO. 2462

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL
London, England, April 17, 1939.

SUBJECT: Alien Visa Control: Wilhelm Guttman.

THE HONORABLE
THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
WASHINGTON.

SIR:

I have the honor to refer to the Department's memorandum instruction of March 23, 1939 (File 811.111 Guttman, Wilhelm) enclosing a copy of a letter which the Department had written to Mrs. Roosevelt, who is interested in the immigration case of Mr. Wilhelm Guttman.

Mr. Guttman, who is presently residing at 60A Lanercost Road, London, S.W.2, has just called at this office for a discussion of his case. It appears that Mr. Guttman has been lecturing in law at the University of Genoa, Italy for the academic years 1936/37, 1937/38 during which time he served as assistant to Professor Giovanni Manara, member of the faculty of that University, and attended classes. His position during that time could, it is believed, be described as a "student assistant". Prior to that time he was a practising lawyer in Berlin. So far as could be learned he has never been a professor within the meaning of the immigration laws, nor does he have an engagement to

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teach in the United States.

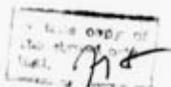
In view of the above Mr. Guttman's case will be taken up as soon as his turn is reached under the German quota on the basis of his registration at the American Consulate General in Naples on September 19, 1938. Currently the Consulate General is giving appointments to German quota applicants who registered in June 1938. It cannot be foreseen at this time how long it will be before Mr. Guttman's turn will be reached.

Respectfully yours,

Douglas Jenkins
Consul General

In Quadruplicate to the Department.

511.11-Outtmann, Wilhelm
ESM/fh



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 8, 1939

Dear Sumner:

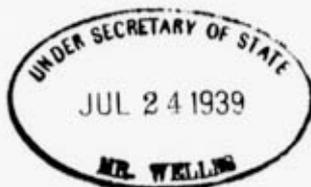
Thank you so much for your report
in the case of Wilhelm Guttman. I appreciate the trouble you have taken to look into this.

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Eleanor Roosevelt". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed closing.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 22, 1939



Dear Sumner:

I am enclosing this letter from
Constancia de la Mora and I wonder what
you think about this question. Is it
possible to prepare for discussion on it
at the meeting in September?

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, which reads "Eleanor Roosevelt".

C
O
P
Y

258 Kings Highway,
Westport, Connecticut,
July 17, 1939.

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
Hyde Park, New York.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

May I thank you again for the great kindness and hospitality you showed me last Saturday? I hope we did not overburden you. But I was very anxious that Dr. Negrin should have another opportunity to see you before he sailed for France. As you have doubtlessly noticed, he has a certain difficulty in expressing himself easily in English (he speaks German, Russian, Hungarian and Italian fluently!), besides, I am sure he felt that Saturday was not an appropriate occasion to tell you what our hopes for the future of the Spanish refugees are and what it has been possible to accomplish so far. That is why he sent you his letter, as he finds it easier to put things in writing.

Do you think there is some possibility of the President's Advisory Committee on Refugees taking up the question of the Spanish exiles, or of another similar committee being formed to deal only with the Spanish question?

Please forgive me for putting this question so bluntly, but I am sure that some constructive plan could be worked out with the help of such a committee; a plan both to raise money and to use the Spaniards arriving in the new world to foster the democratic policies of the United States in Latin and South America. We should not forget that many of our exiles are men of the greatest prestige in all Spanish speaking countries. Their words and writings carry great weight; but they must be given the opportunity to establish themselves in their new surroundings.

It will surely interest you to know that our Catholic writer José Bergamin (now in Mexico City, heading a group

-2-

of Spanish intellectual exiles who plan to start a publishing house) has already started giving a series of lectures on the great Spanish literary figures: Unamuno, Garcia Lorca, Machado, etc. The first lecture was only attended by anti-Fascist intellectuals but the last one was sold out. Everyone in the cultural world of Mexico, reactionary or liberal, was present. To me, this is a most significant thing, and very indicative of the way we can use our people, both to counteract the Nazi and Fascist penetration, disguised in Spanish "Imperial" language - the kind of language the Falangists have now copied from Mussolini - and to keep the real tradition of Spanish culture alive. For the tradition of our culture is essentially democratic!

Excuse me for writing such a long letter. I do not think I will leave this country for the time being; in fact, I even have hopes that my husband might join me here later this summer.

May I thank you once more for your warm and gracious hospitality, and may I tell you that the interest you take in my country and my people fills me with hope and gratitude.

Sincerely,

CONSTANCIA DE LA MORA

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

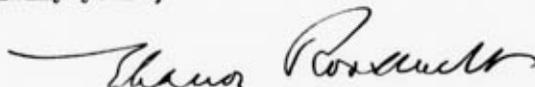
September 6, 1939

My dear Sumner:

This is a letter in answer to one from a German woman with whom I went to school in England and whose husband was in command on the western front in 1914. She has been pro-Nazi and I had a letter from her the other day appealing for sympathy for Germany. She is, however, very religious and I have written her what I honestly believe.

I have left the letter open in case you want to read it. I don't dare mail it direct for fear it would get her into trouble, but I thought it might be delivered through our representatives in Berlin, without making her conspicuous. If you think it is wise not to send it, just tear it up.

Cordially yours,



September 11, 1939

Dear Eleanor:

I greatly appreciate your kindness in giving me the opportunity of reading the letter which you propose sending to a friend in Germany and which was transmitted with your letter to me of September sixth.

Since you have given me the opportunity, I think I should give you very frankly my best judgment which is that I do not think it would be wise for you to send this letter. It is very possible, indeed, probable, that your letter would get into the hands of officials of the present German Government and if it did, I am afraid that unwarranted use might be made of it. Also, the very fact that you are writing a letter of this kind to a German friend might prove, under the conditions which exist in Germany, to be harmful to her. Consequently, thoroughly as I share the opinions set forth in your letter, I believe it would be more expedient for you not to send it.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

Enclosure.

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
The White House.

U:SW:IJ

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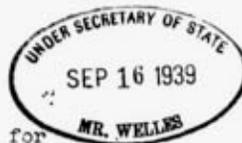
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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 11, 1939

Dear Sumner:

Thank you so much for
what you are doing to help
Dr. Vera Lachmann.



Very sincerely yours,

Walter Rostow

(Complete file
in A-M)

November 17, 1939

Dear Eleanor:

In view of the moving letter which Miss Kraus has written to you, I have seen that an appropriate letter has been written to our Consul General in Vienna, Mr. Morris, asking him to see that in his personal capacity he makes a discreet inquiry into the whereabouts and welfare of the parents of Miss Kraus and transmits to us the information available. He will do this quite personally and unofficially and will convey the results of his inquiry to us, and as soon as I hear from him I shall be very glad to have the information available conveyed to you for transmission to Miss Kraus.

In the meantime you may wish to tell Miss Kraus that we are endeavoring to secure some information concerning her parents, which will be forwarded to her as soon as possible, but that there will undoubtedly be some delay as the mails are a bit slow.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

Sumner Welles

Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
The White House.

Mrs. Roosevelt re Lotee Kraus

A true copy of
the signed original