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Description of document: **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) File 62-HQ-60512, Subject: Investigation ("loyalty check") of Edith Helm, Social Secretary to Eleanor Roosevelt, 1940-1956**

Released date: 18-June-2010

Posted date: 19-July-2010

Source of document: Federal Bureau of Investigation
Attn: FOI/PA Request
Record/Information Dissemination Section
170 Marcel Drive
Winchester, VA 22602-4843
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U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Washington, D.C. 20535

June 18, 2010

FOIPA Request No.: 1146883- 000
Subject: FILE NUMBER 62-HQ-60512

This is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request regarding the above-mentioned subject.

The enclosed document (62-HQ-60512) is being released to you in its entirety.

This completes the processing of your FOIA request by the FBI.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Hardy", is positioned below the closing "Very truly yours,".

David M. Hardy
Section Chief
Record/Information
Dissemination Section
Records Management Division

Enclosure

THE ADVISORY COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

Federal Reserve Building

Washington, D. C.

October 29, 1940

2m
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Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, Director,
Bureau of Investigation,
Department of Justice,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Hoover:

It would be appreciated if you would institute an investigation of the following list of per annum employees of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense:

ayres, Ruth W.
Dublin, Mary
Edelston, Shirley H.
Eldredge, Mark
Floyd, Jesse
Franklin, George S., Jr.
Galbraith, J. K.
Gordon, Leland J.
Harris, Herbert
Helm, Edith B.
Hollander, Richard
Ledwith, Elroy A.
Lovell, Leander B.
Magdoff, Harry
Moore, Frank H.

You will find the papers relating to the above listed employees in personnel files located in Room 226, Potomac Park Apartments, 21st and C Sts., N. W. If any further information is desired please contact Mr. L. B. Fulwiler; Room 203, Potomac Park Apartments, phone RE-5050, Ext. 236.

Very truly yours,

RECORDED & INDEXED

19
A portion of info this
serial declassified for
use in "The FBI Story"
by Don Whitehead. See
62-60512-22 for details.

/s/ SIDNEY SHERWOOD

62-60512-1
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
Sidney Sherwood
Assistant Secretary
NOV 4 1940
TAMM
ONE

ORIGINAL FILED IN 62-50512-44

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT

WASHINGTON, D. C.

FILE NO. 77-2686

REPORT MADE AT Washington, D. C.	DATE WHEN MADE 11/15/40	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE 11/12/40	REPORT MADE BY R. F. COOPER REF:JG
TITLE EDITH B. HELM			CHARACTER OF CASE Special Inquiry-Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense

SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:

The file of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense, Washington, D. C. revealed that EDITH B. HELM was born October 6, 1874 in Richmond, New York; that she attended private school (name not listed) and is the wife of Rear Admiral U. S. Navy JAMES M. HELM, deceased; also she has been employed in Washington as social secretary to the wives of two U. S. Presidents. On October 1, 1940 she was appointed social secretary, White House Detail, Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense. Her present Washington address is 2301 Connecticut Avenue, N. W.

P

REFERENCE:

Bureau letter dated November 5, 1940.

DETAILS:

The name of Mrs. HELM was listed among numerous others in a letter from MR. SIDNEY SHERWOOD, Assistant Secretary, Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense dated October 29, 1940 in which Mr. SHERWOOD requests an investigation of these employees. The Bureau has instructed that these investigations receive prompt and expeditious attention and that they be conducted along the lines of departmental applicant investigations, noting

APPROVED AND FORWARDED: <i>[Signature]</i>	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES
COPIES OF THIS REPORT		62-80512-2
3 - Bureau 2 - Springfield 2 - Washington Field		NOV 19 1940
A portion of info this serial declassified for use in "The FBI Story" by Don Whitehead. See 62-80512-22 for details.		RECORDED - 87 INDEXED - 47

particularly the citizenship, possible radical tendencies and foreign affiliations, and that the investigation particularly establish the extent of the employee's loyalty, patriotism and integrity.

AT WASHINGTON, D. C.

MRS. FRANCES GREVE of the Personnel Office, Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense with offices located in Room 226 Potomac Park Apartments, 21st and C Streets, produced the file relative to EDITH B. HELM.

This file reveals that Mrs. HELM was married to the late JAMES M. HELM, Rear Admiral, U. S. Navy who died October 28, 1927; further, that Mrs. HELM was born October 6, 1874 in Richmond, New York (this town is now known as New York City). The file shows her legal voting residence as Grayville, White County, Illinois. Her present Washington, D. C. address is 2301 Connecticut Avenue, N. W. Her education is set out as being that she attended a private school, however, no name is given for this private school. It will be necessary to determine from other sources her educational record.

The file lists Mrs. HELM'S employment as follows:

October 1915 through April 1920, she was employed at the White House, Washington, D. C. at a salary of \$1,800 to \$2,000 as a clerk (social secretary to Mrs. WOODROW WILSON)

November 1933 through July 1940 was employed in the executive office of the President of the United States at the White House Office at a salary of \$2,200 to \$2,600 as secretary-stenographer (social secretary to Mrs. FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT); further that this position Mrs. HELM held required planning and making arrangements for social functions at the White House preparing correspondence and memoranda for Mrs. ROOSEVELT and general assignments along entertainment lines.

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The file further reflects that effective October 1, 1940 EDITH B. HELM was appointed by the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense, Washington, D. C. to the position of Social Secretary, White House Detail, Washington, D. C. at a salary of \$2600. It is to be noted that she was transferred to her present position from the Federal Works Agency, Public Works Administration. The transfer was effective October 1, 1940. With that organization, the Federal Works Agency, she had been employed at the White House Detail in the same position as she now holds under the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense.

On October 2, 1940 Mrs. HELM was given the oath of office to her present position at which time she stated that she is not a member of the communist party, German bund, or any other communist, nazi or Fascist organization, and that she is not a member of any political party or organization which is engaged in the overthrow of the Constitutional form of Government of the United States.

The file does not reflect the names of any references given by Mrs. HELM and it will be necessary for the discretion of the Agent to be used in determining who will be questioned as her references.

Undeveloped Leads

THE SPRINGFIELD FIELD DIVISION

AT GRAYVILLE, ILLINOIS, will at White County, conduct an appropriate neighborhood investigation making the appropriate credit and criminal record inquiries. It is to be noted that Mrs. HELM gives this town as her legal voting residence. Particular stress should be placed in developing the patriotism, loyalty and integrity of Mrs. HELM.

THE WASHINGTON FIELD OFFICE

AT WASHINGTON, D. C. will at the Federal Works Agency, Public Works Administration, determine the appropriate person, and conduct an interview as to Mrs. HELM'S

employment with that agency. It is to be noted that she was employed there from November 1933 through July 1940. Will endeavor to ascertain the institution where Mrs. HELM received her educational training and set out appropriate leads. ✓

Will, if deemed advisable, at the White House Personnel Office, verify the employment record of Mrs. HELM from October 1915 to April 1920, and from November 1933 through July 1940 as social secretary for the first mentioned date to Mrs. WOODROW WILSON, and to Mrs. FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT for the last mentioned date. ✓

Will endeavor to ascertain the names of persons that might know Mrs. HELM in order that they might be interviewed as references. ✓

At 2301 Connecticut Avenue, N. W. will conduct appropriate neighborhood investigation, and develop information as to her patriotism, loyalty and general integrity, and will also make credit and police inquiries. ✓

- P E N D I N G -

JSA/bw

December 3, 1940

~~PERSONAL AND
CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~BY SPECIAL DELIVERY~~

Mr. Sidney Cherwood
Assistant Secretary
The Advisory Commission to the
Council of National Defense
Federal Reserve Building
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Cherwood:

I desire to make further reference to your
recent requests for investigation of members of the
Staff and Personnel of The Advisory Commission to the
Council of National Defense.

There are attached hereto six reports re-
flecting the results of investigation in these cases.
As these investigations progress additional reports
will be forwarded to you.

With best wishes and kind regards,

Sincerely yours,

Mr. Tolson _____
Mr. Nathan _____
Mr. E. A. Tamm _____
Mr. Clegg _____
Mr. Ladd _____
Mr. Coffey _____
Mr. Egan _____
Mr. Glavin _____
Mr. Crowl _____
Mr. Harbo _____
Mr. Lester _____
Mr. Hendon _____
Mr. Nichols _____
Mr. Rosen _____
Mr. Sears _____
Mr. Quinn Tamm _____
Mr. Tracy _____
Miss Gandy _____

Enclosures

ORIGINAL FILED IN

JSA/bw

62-60512

December 26, 1940

Special Agent in Charge
Springfield, Illinois

Re: EDWIN D. KELLY; Special Inquiry -
The Advisory Commission to the
Council of National Defense.

Dear Sir:

Reference is made to the report of Special Agent
R. F. Cooper, dated November 15, 1940, at Washington, D. C.,
wherein undeveloped leads are set forth for the investigative
attention of your Division.

It is desired this investigation be completed
without further delay, and a report should be submitted to
the Bureau within the immediate future.

Very truly yours,

John Edgar Hoover
Director

Mr. Tolson _____
Mr. Nathan _____
Mr. E. A. Tamm _____
Mr. Clegg _____
Mr. Ladd _____
Mr. Coffey _____
Mr. Egan _____
Mr. Glavin _____
Mr. Gurnea _____
Mr. Harbo _____
Mr. Lester _____
Mr. Hendon _____
Mr. Nichols _____
Mr. Rosen _____
Mr. Tracy _____
Miss Gandy _____

cc - Washington Field

RECORDED

62-60512-3
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
4 DEC 28 1940
S. U. _____

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION
MAILED
★ DEC 26 1940 ★
P. M.
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

A portion of info this
serial declassified for
use in "The FBI Story"
by Don Whitehead. See
62-60512 for details.

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT

Washington, D. C.

FILE NO. 77-85

REPORT MADE AT Springfield, Illinois	DATE WHEN MADE 12-31-40	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE 11-23-40	REPORT MADE BY H. G. MAYNOR :TAB
TITLE EDITH B. HEIM			CHARACTER OF CASE SPECIAL INQUIRY - Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense.

SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:

Nothing is known at Grayville, Illinois concerning subject prior to her marriage to Rear Admiral JAMES M. HEIM who was reared at Grayville, Illinois and had considerable real estate there when he died in 1937. Mrs. HEIM is known to all the inhabitants at Grayville, Illinois due to the fact that she spends part of each summer there and is now perhaps the largest land owner in the county, which land she came in possession of through the death of her husband. She is said to be the daughter of Rear Admiral BENHAM, U. S. Navy, and believed to have been born in New York State. She impresses acquaintances as being well educated, is highly respected, has no criminal record and good credit rating. An oil field is being opened up on her land which will doubtless make her wealthy. Her patriotism is vouched for by all parties interviewed.

- RUC -

REFERENCE

Report of Special Agent R. F. COOPER, Washington, D. C. dated 11-15-40.

DETAILS

AT GRAYVILLE, ILLINOIS:

Interview was had with Postmaster PAUL WELLS who stated that he knows Mrs. EDITH B. HEIM but has never had the opportunity to become well acquainted with her and has only had casual conversations with her; that it is known she claims to have been born in New York State; that she seems to be well educated and highly cultured; that it is known she was the daughter of Rear Admiral U. S. Navy, BENHAM, and that she was practically raised in the U. S. Navy; that rumor has it that her father and

APPROVED AND FORWARDED: <i>[Signature]</i>	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES
COPIES OF THIS REPORT		62-60512-121 - 4 JAN 4 - 1941 RECORDED
3 Bureau 2 Washington Field 2 Springfield		A portion of info this serial declassified for use in "The FBI Story" by Don Whitehead. See details, 62-60512-121

Rear Admiral JAMES M. HEIM, whom she later married, were good friends and served in the Navy together which accounts for her getting acquainted with her husband in the first place; that it is also known in Grayville, Illinois that Mrs. HEIM was Social Secretary to the second Mrs. WOODROW WILSON and is occupying the same position for Mrs. FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT.

Postmaster WELLS further stated that Rear Admiral JAMES M. HEIM was born and reared at Grayville, Illinois; that upon graduation from high school he obtained an appointment to Annapolis and thereafter continued in the service of the U. S. Navy until he was retired; that he saved his money while in the service of the Navy and invested same in river bottom land adjoining Grayville, Illinois and had his brother, J. J. HEIM, look after this land until they had some sort of disagreement; that this brother is still living and is now on old age assistance; that Rear Admiral HEIM married the subject when he was 66 years old and the first time subject was ever in Grayville, Illinois was when brought there by her husband shortly after their marriage; that they did not live in Grayville, Illinois but did spend part of each summer there looking after real estate interests; that when Mr. HEIM died he was not brought back to Grayville, Illinois for burial but was buried in Arlington cemetery in Washington, D. C. ; that since his death Mrs. HEIM came into possession of all the real estate left by her husband and she continues to come to Grayville, Illinois once each year, usually during the summer time, and spends about three months there.

He further stated that since her husband's death she purchased a nice residence in Grayville which she lives in during her visits and which is looked after by her farm superintendent, Mr. W. H. MALETTE; that he has also been informed that Rear Admiral HEIM also owned some real estate in the State of Tennessee and he knows that Mrs. HEIM generally goes to Tennessee for a part of each year.

Postmaster WELLS further stated that the people of Grayville look upon Mrs. HEIM as a benefactor as she has hired a nurse and pays her regularly and that the duties of this nurse are to attend any person in the city of Grayville who is sick and unable to hire a nurse; that she hired this nurse more than five years ago and has indicated that she contemplates continuing this service as long as she lives; that the nurse employed by her is Mrs. ALVIN GROFF and Mrs. GROFF receives a personal check from Mrs. HEIM each month in the amount of \$100.00 whether any person called upon her or not.

Postmaster WELLS also stated that the real estate owned by Mrs. HEIM consists of 1,000 acres of river bottom land which is very productive; that oil has been discovered on this land and already there are six producing oil wells on same with a daily production of 250 barrels each and that many other wells are in process of being drilled on her land.

Postmaster WELLS stated that Mrs. HEIM is very common in her tastes when at Grayville, Illinois but that she usually entertains the

ladies of Grayville at least once during each visit and has stated that when she retires she intends to come to Grayville and live; that while she was old when married to Mr. HEIM she appears to be very much attached to him and has talked of erecting a monument to his memory at Grayville, Illinois; that her character, reputation, patriotism and credit rating at Grayville, Illinois are par excellent; that Mr. N. V. SEAL, Editor of the local newspaper, and his wife are perhaps more intimately acquainted with Mrs. HEIM than anyone else in Grayville, Illinois as they live near the home she bought and have visited with her in Washington, D. C.

Interview was had with Mr. N. V. SEAL, Editor of the Mercury Independent, who stated that he was well acquainted with Mrs. EDITH B. HEIM; that his acquaintance with her started when she married Rear Admiral JAMES M. HEIM, who was reared at Grayville, Illinois; that the Admiral did not marry until he was 66 years of age, which is the present age of Mrs. HEIM; that he knows Mrs. HEIM is well educated but he does not know where she received her education; that he and his wife have visited often in subject's home during the short time she spends in Grayville each year and they have also been entertained in her home in Washington, D. C. a number of times. This home is the same apartment in which she and the Rear Admiral lived during his lifetime and is located at 2310 Connecticut Avenue, N. W.; that he has heard her speak of being social secretary to Mrs. WOODROW WILSON and of accompanying President and Mrs. WILSON to Paris during the Peace conference; that he has heard her speak of visiting in a number of foreign countries and that he knows she speaks French fluently; that her character, reputation, patriotism and credit rating are all excellent; that her father as well as her husband were Rear Admirals in the U. S. Navy; that as a result of her marriage to Rear Admiral HEIM she inherited all his real estate and other property which real estate consists of 1,000 acres of river bottom land on which oil has recently been discovered and it is conservatively estimated there will be at least two hundred oil wells on her land within the next year as it appears certain that oil will be found under all her land; that she now has six producing oil wells, averaging 250 barrels daily each and as many as fifty other wells are being drilled and to date no dry hole has been struck on her land; that all the people of Grayville have great respect for Mrs. HEIM and will bear witness to her many sterling qualities.

The following other representative citizens were interviewed:

Hugh Coulter, Chief of Police,
C. Carl Hughes, Cashier of the Peoples National Bank,
Grant Broster, President of the Peoples National Bank,
Frank Bowman, President of the Farmers National Bank,
George F. Bowman, Cashier of the Farmers National Bank,
W. L. Skles, Retired Business man,
Claude O. Ellis, Attorney,
George Negley, Attorney, and
H. L. Reynolds, who looks after oil interests of Mrs. HEIM.

All of the above parties gave the same general information as did Postmaster WELLS and Mr. N. V. SEAL. They did not know where Mrs. HELM received her education but stated she enjoys the esteem of all the citizens of Grayville, Illinois; that her character and reputation are excellent and that they know her patriotism is unquestionable.

Mr. C. CARL HUGHES, Cashier of the Peoples National Bank, stated that Mrs. HELM voluntarily subscribed for \$1,000.00 worth of stock in his bank when that bank was reorganized after the bank holiday in 1933; that she keeps a small checking account in that bank but does her banking business with the Washington Trust Company at Washington, D. C.

REFERRED UPON COMPLETION
TO THE OFFICE OF ORIGIN

EAT: HA

January 23, 1941

RECORDED 2-60612-5

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SOLICITOR GENERAL

With reference to your telephonic inquiry of Mr. Tamm last night and confirming information furnished to you by him, you are advised that the Bureau has been conducting an investigation of Edith B. Helm. Under date of October 29, 1940, Mr. Sidney Sherwood, Assistant Secretary of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense, by letter requested the Bureau to conduct investigations of a number of persons described as "per annum employees of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense." The name of Edith B. Helm was included in the list of persons to be investigated. As a result of this request, the Bureau has been conducting an investigation of Edith B. Helm's reputation, background, qualifications and experience and copies of the reports prepared were submitted to Mr. Sherwood. In view of the instructions which you issued to Mr. Tamm this investigation has been discontinued.

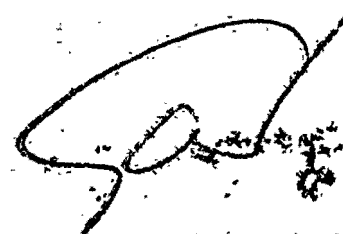
During the course of the inquiries conducted, the investigating Agent ascertained from the records of the Personnel Office of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense that Edith B. Helm is carried on the rolls of that organization with the title, Social Secretary, White House Detail.

Very truly yours,

John Edgar Hoover
Director

Mr. Tolson ☒
Mr. Clegg ☐
Mr. E. A. Tamm ☐
Mr. Foxworth ☐
Mr. Nathan ☐
Mr. Ladd ☐
Mr. Egan ☐
Mr. Glavin ☐
Mr. Nichols ☐
Mr. Rosen ☐
Mr. Tracy ☐
Miss Gandy ☐

By *T. L. [illegible]*
10:25 a.m.



Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

January 22, 1941

EAT:HA

6:10 PM

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

Mr. Tolson	✓
Mr. Clegg	
Mr. E. A. Tamm	
Mr. Foxworth	
Mr. Nathan	
Mr. Ladd	
Mr. Egan	
Mr. Glavin	
Mr. Nichols	
Mr. Rosen	
Mr. Tracy	
Miss Gandy	

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Solicitor General Biddle called stating he had received information from Mrs. Helm, the private secretary of Mrs. Roosevelt, that she was being investigated by the FBI at Grayville, Illinois, and that Mrs. Helm had been informed of this fact by Nolan B. Seil, an editor of a newspaper at that point. I told the Solicitor General I would inquire whether we had in fact conducted any investigation of Mrs. Helm and call him back.

I called Springfield talking with SAC Thornton who advised we did in fact conduct a character investigation of Edith B. Helm at Grayville and that Mrs. Helm had been investigated as a special applicant.

Thereafter the Files Section located one serial of the investigation at Springfield and I called Mr. Biddle advising him an inquiry had been made at Grayville into Mrs. Helm's background, reputation and patriotism at the request of Sidney Sherwood, Secretary to the Advisory Commission of the Council of National Defense. The Solicitor General seemed a bit upset at this and inquired whether we investigated everyone concerning whom a request was made by Sherwood. I told him we did in view of the fact that Mr. Sherwood is the assistant to William McReynolds, the Administrative Assistant to the President. I advised him background and character investigations are conducted at the request of Mr. Sherwood in those cases where a person is already employed or about to be employed by the National Defense Commission and there is no previous information available concerning their background, reputation and patriotism. I advised him we had conducted investigations into the backgrounds of such persons as Mr. Knudsen, W. W. Knudsen, Mr. Stettenius, etc. and in fact it was considered an honor rather than anything else to be investigated for this purpose. Mr. Biddle agreed and remarked that in view of the investigation's having been requested by a member of the White House secretariat, it was the same as having been requested by the President.

62-60512-5
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
JAN 25 1941
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
W. W. Knudsen
J. J. Stettenius
J. J. Knudsen

However, Mr. Biddle requested that any further investigation be discontinued until he had a chance to talk with me tomorrow and requested I bring the Springfield report with me to his office in the morning. I said I would do this and read

A portion of info this serial declassified for use in "The FBI Story" by Don Whitehead. See 62-60512-22 for details.

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68 OCT 29 1964

Memo Louis Earl
EAT 1/23/41

Memo for Director

- 2 -

him the synopsis of the Springfield report which was favorable. After this he said it would be unnecessary for him to see the report and appeared satisfied.

6:35 PM

I called SAC Hottel of the Washington Field instructing that he as the office of origin have discontinued any further investigation in this case for the present at least.

Respectfully,


E. A. Tamm



62-60110
 62-60113
 62-60116
 62-60115
 62-60117
 62-60119-2
 62-60125-2
 62-60125-3
 62-60125-4
 62-60125-5

January 13, 1941

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

17 JAN 14 1941

RECORDED

Mr. Sidney Chernod
 Assistant Secretary
 The Advisory Commission to the
 Council of National Defense
 Federal Reserve Building
 Washington, D. C.

By Cecil W. Chernod

I desire to take further reference to your recent requests for investigation of members of the staff and personnel of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense.

There are attached hereto eleven reports reflecting the results of investigations in these cases. As these investigations progress additional reports will be forwarded to you.

With best wishes and kind regards,

Sincerely yours,

Enclosures

- Mr. Tolson _____
- Mr. Clegg _____
- Mr. E. A. Tamm _____
- Mr. Foxworth _____
- Mr. Nathan _____
- Mr. Ladd _____
- Mr. Egan _____
- Mr. Glavin _____
- Mr. Nichols _____
- Mr. Hendon _____
- Mr. Rosen _____
- Mr. Tracy _____
- Miss Gandy _____

62-60110-10

EAT: HA

RECORDED

January 24, 1941

~~Personal and
Confidential~~

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

On the evening of January 22, 1941 Solicitor General Biddle by telephone inquired of Mr. Tamm whether the Bureau had been conducting any investigation of Edith D. Helm, secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt. Mr. Biddle was subsequently informed that the Bureau was conducting an investigation of Edith D. Helm as a result of a written request addressed to the Bureau under date of October 29, 1940 by Mr. Sidney Sherwood, Assistant Secretary of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense. In his letter of October 29, 1940, Mr. Sherwood set forth the names of a number of people including that of Edith D. Helm, requested investigations of them, and described these people as "per annum employees of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense." No information was furnished by Mr. Sherwood which would tend to identify Mrs. Helm and accordingly an investigation of her background, qualifications, and experience was initiated in the same manner as similar investigations have been carried out of several hundred persons whose names were furnished by Mr. Sherwood over a period of some months. Of course, as the reports were prepared in this case they were transmitted to Mr. Sherwood.

As a result of the instructions issued by Mr. Biddle the Bureau has discontinued its investigation of Edith D. Helm.

Since some question has apparently been raised as to the propriety of the Bureau's conducting an investigation of Edith D. Helm, I wanted you to be informed as to the background of this matter in order that you might know why the Bureau initiated this investigation.

COPIES DESTROYED

42 NOV 3 1934

Respectfully,

John Edgar Hoover
Director

By Special Agent
1/24/41
1406

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.
January 23, 1941

Mr. Tolson	_____
Mr. E. A. Tamm	_____
Mr. Clegg	_____
Mr. Glavin	_____
Mr. Ladd	_____
Mr. Nichols	_____
Mr. Rosen	_____
Mr. Tracy	_____
Mr. Carson	_____
Mr. Egan	_____
Mr. Gurnea	_____
Mr. Harbo	_____
Mr. Hendon	_____
Mr. Jones	_____
Mr. Mumford	_____
Mr. Quinn	_____
Mr. Nease	_____
Miss Gandy	_____

EAT:DMP

Time 10:25 A.M.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

Solicitor General Biddle called relative to the investigation conducted at the request of Mr. Sidney Sherwood, Secretary to the Advisory Commission of the Council of National Defense, on Mrs. Helm, the private secretary of Mrs. Roosevelt.

Mr. Biddle stated this case has assumed rather large proportions and he thought the Attorney General would like to have a copy of the investigative report and our authority for making the investigation. I told Mr. Biddle we would send this to him right away.

Respectfully,

E. A. TAMM

A portion of info this serial declassified for use in "The FBI Story" by Don Whitehead. See 62-60512-22 for details.

RECORDED

62-60512-22
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
6 JAN 25 1941
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
TOLSON

I think we should write comprehensive letter to Watson re this pointing out that under stand some question has been raised. In our making this investigation I then outline how it came about & say we are writing him so he will know full facts & can advise the President if he sees fit. Also write a similar note to Mrs. R. but do not refer to President.

Further investigation would be well to write memo to Biddle about this matter referring to Biddle's concern. In letter Mrs. R. also refer to Biddle's concern.

Mem 9-2
Ex. Encl Watson
Mrs Roosevelt
62-12444
I
53
62-60512-22

EAT:HA

January 23, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SOLICITOR GENERAL

Pursuant to your request of Mr. Tamm, I am transmitting herewith a copy of the letter addressed to me under date of October 29, 1940 by Mr. Sidney Sherwood, in which he requested an investigation of Edith B. Ealm together with various other persons. I am also transmitting herewith copies of the following investigative reports submitted to Mr. Sherwood in this matter:

Report of Special Agent R. F. Cooper,
Washington, D. C., November 15, 1940

Report of Special Agent H. G. Laynor,
Springfield, Illinois, December 31, 1940

Very truly yours,

John Edgar Hoover
Director

Enclosures

A portion of info this
serial declassified for
use in "The FBI Story"
by Don Whitehead. See
62-60512-7 for details.

Mr. Tolson _____
Mr. Clegg _____
Mr. E. A. Tamm _____
Mr. Foxworth _____
Mr. Nathan _____
Mr. Ladd _____
Mr. Egan _____
Mr. Glavin _____
Mr. Nichols _____
Mr. Rosen _____
Mr. Tracy _____
Miss Gandy _____

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62-60512-7

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FBI

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11-23-41
FBI

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT

WASHINGTON, D. C.

FILE NO. 77-2686

REPORT MADE AT WASHINGTON, D. C.	DATE WHEN MADE 1-30-41	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE 11-28; 12-14-17-19-20-23-26-1940; 1-6-41	REPORT MADE BY W. C. SEIBERT WCS:LS
TITLE CHANGED EDITH B. HELM, also known as Mrs. James M. Helm; Miss Edith W. Benham			CHARACTER OF CASE SPECIAL INQUIRY - ADVISORY COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:

Mrs. EDITH B. HELM employed as Social Secretary at White House, to Mrs. WOODROW WILSON, October 22, 1915 to April, 1920, and to Mrs. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, from November 6, 1933 to October 1, 1940. Faithful governmental service revealed. Neighborhood investigation favorable. No criminal or credit record, Washington, D. C.

- C -

REFERENCE:

Report of Special Agent R. F. COOPER, dated November 15, 1940, at Washington, D. C., and report of Special Agent H. G. MAYNOR, dated December 31, 1940, at Springfield, Illinois.

DETAILS:

AT WASHINGTON, D. C.

It should be noted that Mrs. EDITH B. HELM is also known as Mrs. JAMES M. HELM, and was employed in 1915, under the name of Miss EDITH W. BENHAM, and the title of this case is being changed to reflect this.

EMPLOYMENT

Miss HAZEL EASTMAN, stenographer in the Personnel Office of Public Works Administration, Federal Works Agency, 18th and E Street, N. W., made available the personnel file on Mrs. EDITH B. HELM. Said file revealed that Mrs. HELM

APPROVED AND FORWARDED: SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES	
COPIES OF THIS REPORT ③ - Bureau 2 - Washington Field A portion of info this serial declassified for use in "The FBI Story" by Don Whitehead. See 62-60512-22 for details.	62-60512-8 JAN 30 1941	JAN 30 1941 RECORDED

was appointed November 6, 1933, as Secretarial Stenographer in the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, at \$2,200 per annum. A personal history statement, dated April 28, 1934, revealed that Mrs. HELM was born in New York on October 6, 1874, and is the widow of Rear Admiral JAMES M. HELM.

EDUCATION

The file further reflected that Mrs. HELM was educated privately and by home instructions, to the equivalent of eight years elementary school. Mrs. HELM also listed that she attended the Packer Institute, Brooklyn, New York, in 1891-1892, but since this training is long past and was for such a comparatively short period, no lead is being set forth.

The personal history statement further revealed that Mrs. HELM was detailed to the White House as Secretarial Stenographer. On June 21, 1939, Mrs. HELM was promoted to a salary of \$2,600 per annum, and was continuously employed at the White House with duties "Consult and advise with the wife of the President regarding the many detailed activities incident to social entertainments at the White House. Have direct supervision over the twelve employees in the Social Bureau".

Said file further revealed that Mrs. HELM, under the name of EDITH W. BENHAM, was appointed October 22, 1915, at \$1,800 per annum, as Social Secretary for the White House, with same duties as above mentioned. Mrs. HELM voluntarily resigned without prejudice from this position in April, 1920.

The file further revealed that Mrs. HELM speaks and reads the French language fluently and that she has no relatives in the United States Government service. Her bonafide residence is listed as Washington, D. C., from November, 1896, to date.

On October 1, 1940, Mrs. HELM was transferred without prejudice to the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense.

NEIGHBORHOOD

At 2301 Connecticut Avenue, N. W., which is an apartment building, no resident could be found who was acquainted with Mrs. EDITH HELM, who resides in apartment 22. Residents of the building merely stated that Mrs. HELM lives in apartment 22, but are not acquainted with her. No resident manager could be located in this apartment building.

Mr. GEORGE H. NOWELL, manager of the apartment at 2301 Connecticut Avenue, N. W., for H. L. Rust Real Estate Agency, 1001 - 15th Street, N. W., stated that this apartment has been owned by the Rust Company since May 1, 1940. He further stated that Mrs. JAMES M. HELM has resided in apartment 22, for the past fifteen years and is the Secretary to Mrs. FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT. He stated that Mrs. HELM pays \$125 per month for the apartment, and is a very desirable tenant. Mr. NOWELL advised that he had no reason to question Mrs. HELM's integrity and loyalty to this country and in his opinion, she is reliable and a 100% American citizen. He further stated that Mrs. HELM lives alone in her apartment, except for one servant, and is a very highly respected tenant. Mrs. HELM, in his opinion, is quite wealthy, and there is no question in his mind that she is living within her means.

Mr. STANFORD BROWN, negro elevator man, 2301 Connecticut Avenue, N. W., stated that Mrs. HELM has resided in this apartment for many years and is highly regarded. He stated that he has never observed anything suspicious or radical concerning Mrs. HELM and in his opinion, she is patriotic; that Mrs. HELM is a Social

Secretary for Mrs. FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT, and speaks very highly of the President and his wife. BROWN stated that Mrs. HELM often accompanies the ROOSEVELTS on their numerous trips.

CREDIT AND CRIMINAL RECORD

On November 28, 1940, Special Agent CARL C. Mac-CARTEE performed the following investigation:

"Miss MARCELLA LIBONATI, The Credit Bureau, 1221 G Street, N. W., and Miss RUTH BERRY, Stone's Mercantile Agency, 1419 H Street, N. W., advised upon a search of their respective records that they had no credit information therein on EDITH B. HELM."

Mr. F. E. STROMAN, Metropolitan Police Department, stated that EDITH B. HELM had no criminal record in Washington, D. C.

The above-mentioned personnel file verifies all of Mrs. HELM's employment in the Executive Office of the White House. Due to the fact that Mrs. HELM is approaching seventy years of age, that she was educated fifty years ago, and that her loyalty and patriotism have never been questioned while employed at the Executive Mansion, it is not deemed advisable or necessary to conduct further investigation in Washington, D. C.

All outstanding leads having been covered and reported, this case is being placed in a closed status.

- CLOSED -

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **WASHINGTON, D. C.**

FILE NO. **77-2686**

REPORT MADE AT WASHINGTON, D. C.	DATE WHEN MADE 1-30-41	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE 11-28; 12-14-17-19-20-23-26 1940; 1-6-41	REPORT MADE BY W. C. SEIBERT WCS:LS
TITLE CHANGED EDITH B. HELM, also known as Mrs. James M. Helm; Miss Edith W. Benham			CHARACTER OF CASE SPECIAL INQUIRY - ADVISORY COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:

Mrs. EDITH B. HELM employed as Social Secretary at White House, to Mrs. WOODROW WILSON, October 22, 1915 to April, 1920, and to Mrs. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, from November 6, 1933 to October 1, 1940. Faithful governmental service revealed. Neighborhood investigation favorable. No criminal or credit record, Washington, D. C.

- 0 -

REFERENCE:

Report of Special Agent R. F. COOPER, dated November 15, 1940, at Washington, D. C., and report of Special Agent H. G. MAYNOR, dated December 31, 1940, at Springfield, Illinois.

DETAILS:

AT WASHINGTON, D. C.

It should be noted that Mrs. EDITH B. HELM is also known as Mrs. JAMES M. HELM, and was employed in 1915, under the name of Miss EDITH W. BENHAM, and the title of this case is being changed to reflect this.

EMPLOYMENT

Miss HAZEL EASTMAN, stenographer in the Personnel Office of Public Works Administration, Federal Works Agency, 18th and F Street, N. W., made available the personnel file on Mrs. EDITH B. HELM. Said file revealed that Mrs. HELM

APPROVED AND FORWARDED:	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES	
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③ - Bureau 2 - Washington Field <i>62-68522-22</i>		A portion of info this serial declassified for use in "The FBI Story" by Don Whitehead. See details.	

EAT:EM

January 24, 1941

~~Personal and~~
~~Confidential~~

Major General Edwin M. Watson
Secretary to the President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear General Watson:

I have been advised by Solicitor General
Biddle that some concern is felt over the fact that
the Bureau has been engaged in conducting an investi-
gation of Edith B. Kohn. I wanted therefore to
advise you fully of the facts in this matter in order
that you might understand the background and reason
for the Bureau's investigation.

Under date of October 29, 1940, Mr. Sidney
Sherwood, Assistant Secretary of the Advisory
Commission to the Council of National Defense, by
letter requested the Bureau to conduct investigations
of a number of persons whose names were set forth in
his letter and whom he described as "per annum
employees of the Advisory Commission to the Council
of National Defense." Included in this list of names
was the name of Edith B. Kohn. As a result of this
request, the Bureau initiated an investigation of the
background, qualifications, experience and reputation
of Edith B. Kohn. The investigative reports prepared
were transmitted to Mr. Sherwood.

Mr. Sherwood has requested investigations
over a period of time of several hundred employees of
the Advisory Commission to the Council of National
Defense and his request of October 29, 1940 was
considered as a routine inquiry. There was nothing
in Mr. Sherwood's request which would identify Edith B.
Kohn as Mrs. Roosevelt's secretary. The investigation
was immediately discontinued upon the indication of
Mr. [redacted] that further inquiry was not desired.

Mr. Tolson _____
Mr. Clegg _____
Mr. E. A. Tamm _____
Mr. Foxworth _____
Mr. Nathan _____
Mr. Ladd _____
Mr. Egan _____
Mr. Glavin _____
Mr. Nichols _____
Mr. Rosen _____
Mr. Tracy _____
Miss Gandy _____

MAILED

★ JAN 24 1941 ★

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
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A portion of info this
serial declassified for
use in "The FBI Story"
by Don Whitehead. See
62-60512-22 for details.

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2 JAN 24 1941
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Major General Edwin H. Watson

- 2 -

Having been informed that some question has been raised as to the propriety of the Bureau's investigation in this case, I thought possibly the President and you would be interested in knowing why this investigation was initiated and conducted.

With kind regards,

Sincerely yours,

J. Edgar Hoover

THE ADVISORY COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

FEDERAL RESERVE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, D. C.

January 24, 1941

Mr. Tolson
Mr. Clegg
Mr. E. A. Tamm
Mr. Glavin
Mr. Ladd
Mr. Nichols
Mr. Rosen
Mr. Tracy
Miss Gandy

Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, Director,
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Hoover:

It is kindly requested that the investigations of the following employees of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense, whose names have been previously submitted to you for investigation, be discontinued by reason of the fact that their employment has no connection with the work of the Defense Commission:

Helm, Edith B.
Rumelt, Ruthjane V.

Inasmuch as the above-named employees are presently connected with the offices of the White House, it is especially desired that the investigations be terminated immediately.

In my letter to you of January 8, the name of Alec Searles was included in a list of prospective dollar a year employees submitted for investigation. Subsequent information shows the name to be Eric Searle; and accordingly, it is requested that this name be submitted for that of Alec Searles.

Sincerely,

Sidney Sherwood

Sidney Sherwood
Assistant Secretary

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by Don Whithead. See
62-60512-3 for details.

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use in "The FBI Story"
by Don Whithead. See
62-60512-3 for details.

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62-60512-10	
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION	
2 JAN 1941	
U. S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE	

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January 24, 1941

Personal

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
The White House
Washington, D. C.

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serial declassified for
use in "The FBI Story"
by Don Whitehead. See
62-60512-22 for details.

DECLASSIFIED BY 6080 *Ent*
ON JUL 19 1977

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I have recently learned through Solicitor General
Francis Biddle that some concern has been expressed re-
garding the fact that the Bureau has been conducting an
investigation of Mrs. Edith D. Keln. I wanted to advise
you that the Bureau initiated an investigation of Mrs.
Keln as a result of a specific written request dated
October 29, 1940 by Mr. Sidney Sherwood, Assistant
Secretary of the Advisory Commission to the Council of
National Defense. Mrs. Keln's name was included in a
list of persons who were described as "per annum employees
of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National
Defense." Mr. Sherwood, in line with established
procedure, has over a period of time requested investi-
gations of several hundred employees of the Advisory
Commission to the Council of National Defense and no
indication was given us as to the identity of Edith D.
Keln or the fact that she was acting in a secretarial
capacity for you.

In view of the fact that some question apparently
has been raised as to why the Bureau was conducting this
investigation, I wanted to inform you fully of the facts
in the matter. Of course had we known at the time the
investigation was requested that Mrs. Keln was assigned
to White House duties the inquiry would not have been
initiated. I want to assure you that I regret the
incident may have caused you any annoyance or concern.

Sincerely yours,

J. Edgar Hoover

ENCLOSURE

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION
MAILED
★ JAN 24 1941 ★
P. M.
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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2 JAN 24 1941
U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE

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J. P. R.

JSA;DC

January 24, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. ROSEN

Re: Investigations being conducted of the
Personnel of The Advisory Commission
to the Council of National Defense.

With reference to my memorandum of this same date reflecting an interview had with Mr. Matthew F. McGuire, Assistant to the Attorney General, upon the authority of Mr. L. R. Pennington, I wish to record the additional information as hereinafter set forth.

Mr. McGuire advised he deemed it preferable to have all requests in the future emanating from The Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense clear through the office of the Attorney General in order that that office might be advised at all times concerning the names of the individuals upon whom investigations are being requested of the Bureau. He explained that this situation was brought to a head through a recent request made by Mr. Sidney Sherwood at The Advisory Commission to the Bureau for an investigation of Miss Edith Helm who is a personal secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt, the wife of the President. He explained as a result of the Bureau's investigation Miss Helm had apparently learned that inquiries were being made concerning her and Mr. McGuire indicated although he did not state as much, that this had been brought to the Department's attention by the President. He explained that he was going to contact Mr. Sidney Sherwood immediately and arrange for all these requests to clear through his office in the future in order that no kickback might be made upon the Bureau as a result of investigations being conducted of individuals whom the Department might feel should not be investigated in view of their positions and surrounding circumstances. He explained it was best to have any kickback fall upon the Department and for this reason, as well as those previously mentioned, he advised in the future these requests would be handled in this manner. He stated that he would advise the Bureau concerning the results of his conversation with Mr. Sherwood and would indicate the manner in which these requests would be handled in the future.

Mr. Tolson _____
Mr. Clegg _____
Mr. E. A. Tamm _____
Mr. Foxworth _____
Mr. Nathan _____
Mr. Ladd _____
Mr. Egan _____
Mr. Glavin _____
Mr. Nichols _____
Mr. Hendon _____
Mr. Rosen _____
Mr. Tracy _____
Miss Gandy _____

checked by G. P. R.
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JAN 30 1950
62-60512

Memorandum for Mr. Rosen

Page 2

Mr. McGuire was asked by the writer whether in those cases referred to the Bureau by the Department for investigation he would desire copies of the reports furnished the Department. However, he stated that this was not his desire and he did not wish to have a record of these investigations in the Department, his only purpose in this procedure being a means by which he might be advised of the names of those individuals upon whom investigations are being requested by The Advisory Commission in order that a situation similar to that which arose relative to Miss Edith Holm would not occur in the future.

Respectfully,


J. S. Adams

RECEIVED
JAN 27 1941
- 10X
January 27, 1941

~~Personal and Confidential~~
By Special Messenger

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
The White House
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I have just received your note of January 26th relative to the investigation of Mrs. Kalm. I note your statement that the explanation contained in my letter of January 26th that the investigation of Mrs. Kalm was a mistake, indicated inefficiency upon the part of the person who ordered it. I thoroughly share your view about this. I did want to make certain, however, that you understood that the investigation was not ordered by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, but was ordered by the Assistant Secretary of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense.

In regard to the statement that inquiries have been made about Miss Thompson at her apartment house as to when she comes and goes and other information, I made immediate inquiry and find that no investigation of any character has been or is being conducted by this Bureau of Miss Thompson.

I want to assure you that there has been no one more appreciative of the necessity for avoiding any attitude or indulging in any activities which might be construed as improper or un-American methods in the conduct of investigations than I. I think it is so important that those of us who are charged with the conduct of Governmental investigations see that they are carried forth in a proper manner - fairly, impartially, and without any aspect that may savor of those procedures typical of certain foreign Governments and so repugnant to our American ways. To accomplish this, we have endeavored to select not only personnel of very high standing and ethics, but to also train and instruct that personnel in the proper performance of their duties and in the necessity for carrying

Mr. Tolson _____
Mr. Clegg _____
Mr. Glavin _____
Mr. Ladd _____
Mr. Egan _____
Mr. Gurnea _____
Mr. Harbo _____
Mr. Rosen _____
Mr. Tracy _____
Miss Gandy _____

By *[Signature]*
3:00 P.M. Jan 27

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Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt - Page 2 - January 27, 1941

then out in a truly American way. Obviously, no Governmental agency can expect to merit the support and confidence of the public unless it conducts itself in a manner that is both legal and ethical.

In connection with the necessary expansion of Governmental agencies incident to the National Emergency, the policy had been established of sending to the Federal Bureau of Investigation the names of persons working for those Governmental agencies, in order that inquiry might be made as to their background, integrity and loyalty. I want to point out that this work was not sought by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, but was assigned to it. I want further to point out that the names which are sent to the Federal Bureau of Investigation upon which investigations are ordered by the interested Governmental agencies, are selected by those agencies and that this Bureau has no part in the selecting of these names upon which investigations are ordered. In the case of Mrs. Tola, I understand now that her name was on the pay roll of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense, along with many others, and the list, which was prepared in the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense, was taken from the pay roll of that Commission. This Bureau had nothing whatsoever to do with the preparation of the list or the placing thereon of Mrs. Tola's name. The investigation of all of these names, including Mrs. Tola, was predicated upon the letter from the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense.

(U)

I want again to assure you that I deeply regret the resentment which this incident has caused you, and particularly the impression which I fear you have gained as to the position of this Bureau in this matter. I have tried in this letter to clarify exactly what the position of this Bureau has been and what its function was, and I am hopeful that this may correct the impression which you may have.

Sincerely yours,

H. J. Edgar Hoover

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 26, 1941

Mr. Tolson.....
Mr. Clegg.....
Mr. E. A. Tamm.....
Mr. Foxworth.....
Mr. Nathan.....
Mr. Ladd.....
Mr. Egan.....
Mr. Glavin.....
Mr. Nichols.....
Mr. Hendon.....
Mr. Rosen.....
Mr. Tracy.....
Miss Gandy.....

My dear Mr. Hoover:

I am very much surprised by your letter about the investigation of Mrs. Helm. I am also surprised to learn that some one has been making inquiries about Miss Thompson at her apartment house as to when she comes and goes, how much company she has, etc.

This type of investigation seems to me to smack too much of the Gestapo methods.

The explanation that the investigation of Mrs. Helm is a mistake, seems to me to show inefficiency on the part of the person who ordered it. I am not blaming the young man who conducted this investigation because he was merely carrying out orders. However, anyone who cared to avoid such a mistake would only have had to look at the questionnaire which Mrs. Helm filled out last summer to realize that she has been attached to the White House ever since we have been here, and incidentally that her father and husband had been Admirals in the Navy.

I can not help resenting deeply the action in these two cases and if you have done this type of investigating of other people, I do not wonder that we are beginning to get an extremely jittery population.

A portion of info this serial declassified for use in "The FBI Story" by Don Whithead. See 62-60512-21 for details.

Very sincerely yours,

RECORDED - 47
INDEXED - 47

Eleanor Roosevelt

Marion Roosevelt

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jus

54 NOV 30 1950

JRH:ECD

January 27, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SOLICITOR GENERAL

I am attaching hereto, for your information, a copy of a memorandum which I have today addressed to the Attorney General relative to certain investigations requested of this Bureau by the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense.

Very truly yours

J. Edgar Hoover

John Edgar Hoover
Director

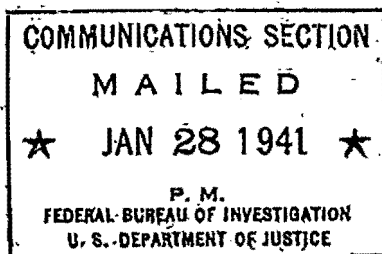
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Feb 13 4 11 PM

Mr. Tolson ☒
Mr. Clegg ☒
Mr. E. A. Tamm ☒
Mr. Foxworth ☐
Mr. Nathan ☐
Mr. Ladd ☐
Mr. Egan ☐
Mr. Glavin ☐
Mr. Nichols ☒
Mr. Hendon ☒
Mr. Rosen ☒
Mr. Tracy ☐
Miss Gandy ☐

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Checked per G.P.R. 54 NOV 30 1950
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JED:ECB

January 27, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

With further reference to my memorandum of January 24, 1941, relative to the investigation which was requested of this Bureau by the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense, I wanted to quote the following letter dated July 11, 1940, addressed to you by Mr. William H. McReynolds, Secretary, Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense:

"I transmit herewith a list of employees in the Information and Statistics Division of the Advisory Commission's office. The first section of this list consists of the names of individuals normally designated to contact the War and Navy Departments and to consult their confidential files. The other section of the list consists of all other employees in that Division who normally come in contact with the material obtained.

"It is the President's desire, and that of the Commission, that a careful check be made with respect to each individual involved, but particularly those on the first section of the list, for the purpose of making sure that these persons are dependable and justify the trust placed in them.

"It seems desirable that these particular people should be investigated by your Bureau of Investigation because of the significance of the question of loyalty. It will be appreciated if appropriate instructions may be given to see that such investigations are made, and the reports should be transmitted to me as completed.

"It will be appreciated if these investigations can *Enclosure* be expedited."

The above quoted letter was routed to this Bureau from the office of Assistant Attorney General Rogge, and in compliance with the letter, investigations were initiated. From time to time additional communications have been received, signed by Mr. McReynolds, Secretary of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense.

A portion of info this serial declassified for use in "The FBI Story" by Don Whitehead. See 62-60512-22 for details.

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
JAN 31 1941
ADVISORY COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

January 27, 1941

National Defense, or by Mr. Sidney Sherwood, Assistant Secretary of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense. The request for the investigation of Mrs. Helm was contained in a letter dated October 29, 1940, containing fifteen names, and without any indication as to who they were other than the furnishing of the name, and among these was the name of Edith H. Helm. In line with the request which was made by Mr. McReynolds in his letter of July 11, 1940, all such lists of names have been given prompt attention by this Bureau.

I understand that the way Mrs. Helm's name came to be sent to the Bureau was that she is carried on the pay roll of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense, and apparently the procedure in that agency has been to merely list the names on the pay roll in the requests made for investigation, without any analysis of the identity of the employee. Therefore, this Bureau has not questioned the action of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense as to the names selected by them and forwarded to this Bureau. I want to make it very definitely clear that the Bureau did not have anything to do with the selection of Mrs. Helm's name, and in fact did not know when the name was sent to the Bureau and the request made for the investigation of her, that she was the Social Secretary at the White House.

I would like to further point out that the Bureau did not seek this work, but as you will note, it was assigned to it as a result of the letter from Mr. McReynolds dated July 11, 1940, in which he stated that it was the President's desire, as well as that of the Commission, that a careful check be made with respect to the persons employed.

In order to prevent any recurrence of such a situation as occurred in the case of Mrs. Helm, I have issued instructions that no request for investigation of personnel of any Governmental agency is to be made unless the request is made in writing and signed by the head of that agency. Furthermore, I have directed that even when such a request is received and signed in the manner indicated, an Agent should call and examine the personnel file to determine whether there are any aspects of the case that would warrant a question being raised as to the propriety or desirability of making a character investigation, and that if there is, this matter be called to my personal attention before the investigation is undertaken.

For your information, I wanted you to know that I have written a personal note to Mrs. Roosevelt, expressing my regret that this situation had arisen and had caused her any annoyance.

The Attorney General

- 3 -

January 27, 1941

In her reply, she advised me that she understood that an investigation was being made of Miss Lulu Thompson, and that persons were making inquiries at Miss Thompson's apartment concerning her goings and comings, et cetera. I have advised Mrs. Roosevelt that this Bureau has not, and is not making any investigation of Miss Thompson, and that the parties who have been making the inquiries to which she referred are not connected with this Bureau.

Respectfully,

*John Edgar Hoover
Director*

JOHN EDGAR HOOVER
DIRECTOR

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.
January 29, 1941

Mr. Tolson ✓
Mr. Clegg ✓
Mr. E. A. Tamm ✓
Mr. Foxworth ✓
Mr. Glavin ✓
Mr. Ladd ✓
Mr. Nichols ✓
Mr. Rosen ✓
Mr. Tracy ✓
Miss Gandy ✓

EAT:DMP

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

On January 28, 1941, I had lunch with Sidney Sherwood, Assistant Secretary of the National Defense Advisory Committee. I informed Mr. Sherwood that he had put the Bureau in a difficult spot by requesting an investigation of Edith B. Helm, Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt. Sherwood stated that the investigation of Mrs. Helm had been initiated without his knowledge or the knowledge of any of the officials at the Defense Advisory Commission, her name appearing in a list of names of people of whom there were about fifteen, who are on the payroll of the Advisory Commission but assigned to duties at the White House. Sherwood stated that he had talked to both Mrs. Roosevelt and Mrs. Helm on the telephone about this matter and that he had assumed full responsibility in behalf of the Commission for the investigation. Sherwood claimed close personal acquaintanceship with both Mrs. Roosevelt and Mrs. Helm. He stated that he had informed Mrs. Roosevelt that the investigation had been specifically requested of the FBI by the Defense Advisory Commission in a letter prepared for his signature, but that he had not noted Mrs. Helm's name in the list of people to be investigated. He stated that Mrs. Roosevelt was blistering in her denunciation of the initiation of this investigation and that he, Sherwood, took the full responsibility for the request, endeavoring to explain that the name had not come to anyone's attention, being but one of some 1,500 names on the payrolls upon whom investigations were being requested. Sherwood stated that of course if the name had come to his attention or if it had come to the attention of you personally, undoubtedly the investigation would have been immediately discontinued. Sherwood stated that he told Mrs. Helm the same thing and that both she and Mrs. Roosevelt took the position that they did not want any clerical or minor employee reprimanded or censured for the conducting of this investigation.

Sherwood stated that he knew nothing about the initiation of this investigation although of course it was his responsibility,

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for details.

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Memo for the Director

- 2 -

January 29, 1941

that as a matter of fact when Solicitor General Biddle contacted him by telephone about the matter, he denied that the Commission had requested such an investigation, feeling that because of his personal acquaintanceship with Mrs. Helm he would have recognized her name appearing in any list. He stated that subsequently however he had checked and determined that the investigation had been requested by his office in a letter bearing his signature and that he had so informed the Solicitor General.

Sherwood reiterated on several occasions the fact that he had accepted the responsibility for the initiation of the investigation, both to Mrs. Roosevelt and to Mrs. Helm.

Respectfully,



Edward A. Tamm

EAT:DMP

January 30, 1941

RECORDED

62-60512-11

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

I wanted to advise you that in reviewing the names of persons upon whom investigations have been requested by the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense there was found the name of Ruthjane V. Runelt. Available information indicated that this woman was assigned to the White House and accordingly I have issued instructions within the Bureau to conduct no investigation of this woman. The Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense has been informed that the Bureau will not conduct an investigation of Ruthjane V. Runelt.

Respectfully,

John Edgar Hoover
Director

Mr. Tolson _____
Mr. Clegg _____
Mr. E. A. Tamm _____
Mr. Foxworth _____
Mr. Nathan _____
Mr. Ladd _____
Mr. Egan _____
Mr. Glavin _____
Mr. Nichols _____
Mr. Hendon _____
Mr. Rosen _____
Mr. Tracy _____
Miss Gandy _____

ORIGINAL FILED IN 62-60512-4

JSA:MEMO

January 28, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. ROSEN

RE: RUTHJANE V. RUMELT
SPECIAL INQUIRY
THE ADVISORY COMMISSION

This is to record on the above date Mr. Laurence A. Welch, Chief, Investigation Section, Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense, telephonically contacted the writer advising a letter had been directed to the Bureau under date of January 27, 1941, requesting that investigations of EDITH B. HELM and RUTHJANE V. RUMELT be discontinued. He advised both these individuals were assigned to the White House detail and stated that the Office of the President had contacted Mr. Sidney Sherwood calling this fact to his attention and instructing that these investigations be discontinued.

A review of the Bureau file in the case of RUTHJANE V. RUMELT reflects that no action has yet been taken in this investigation, therefore, in the absence of contrary instructions the Washington Field Division will be advised telephonically on this date to discontinue this investigation immediately.

Respectfully,

J. S. Adams

Mr. Tolson _____
Mr. Clegg _____
Mr. E. A. Tamm _____
Mr. Foxworth _____
Mr. Nathan _____
Mr. Ladd _____
Mr. Egan _____
Mr. Glavin _____
Mr. Nichols _____
Mr. Hendon _____
Mr. Rosen _____
Mr. Tracy _____
Miss Gandy _____

RECORDED
&
INDEXED

62-60572-11

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by Don Whitehead. See
62-60572-20 for details.

FEB 4 1941

TAMM
NATHAN

62-60572-11

JEN:HCB

January 27, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

With further reference to my memorandum of January 24, 1941, relative to the investigation which was requested of this Bureau by the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense, I wanted to quote the following letter dated July 11, 1940, addressed to you by Mr. William H. McReynolds, Secretary, Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense:

"I transmit herewith a list of employees in the Information and Statistics Division of the Advisory Commission's office. The first section of this list consists of the names of individuals normally designated to contact the War and Navy Departments and to consult their confidential files. The other section of the list consists of all other employees in that Division who normally come in contact with the material obtained.

"It is the President's desire, and that of the Commission, that a careful check be made with respect to each individual involved, but particularly those on the first section of the list, for the purpose of making sure that these persons are dependable and justify the trust placed in them.

"It seems desirable that these particular people should be investigated by your Bureau of Investigation because of the significance of the question of loyalty. It will be appreciated if appropriate instructions may be given to see that such investigations are made, and the reports should be transmitted to me as completed.

Mr. Tolson

Mr. Clegg

Mr. E. A. Tamm

Mr. Foxworth

Mr. Nathan

Mr. Ladd

Mr. Egan

Mr. Glavin

Mr. Nichols

Mr. Hendon

Mr. Rosen

Mr. Tracy

Miss Gandy

"It will be appreciated if these investigations can be expedited."

RECORDED & INDEXED

62-60512-12

The above quoted letter was routed to this Bureau from the office of Assistant Attorney General Rogge, and in compliance with the letter, investigations were initiated. From time to time additional communications have been received, signed by Mr. McReynolds, Secretary of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense.

A portion of info this serial declassified for use in "The FBI Story" by Don Whitehead. See details.

62-60512-22

Filed 10-0-11-22-41 11:20 AM JCH

January 27, 1941

National Defense, or by Mr. Sidney V. Sherwood, Assistant Secretary of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense. The request for the investigation of Mrs. Helm was contained in a letter dated October 29, 1940, containing fifteen names, and without any indication as to who they were other than the furnishing of the name, and among these was the name of Edith B. Helm. In line with the request which was made by Mr. McReynolds in his letter of July 11, 1940, all such lists of names have been given prompt attention by this Bureau.

I understand that the way Mrs. Helm's name came to be sent to the Bureau was that she is carried on the pay roll of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense, and apparently the procedure in that agency has been to merely list the names on the pay roll in the requests made for investigation, without any analysis of the identity of the employee. Therefore, this Bureau has not questioned the action of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense as to the names selected by them and forwarded to this Bureau. I want to make it very definitely clear that the Bureau did not have anything to do with the selection of Mrs. Helm's name, and in fact did not know when the name was sent to the Bureau and the request made for the investigation of her, that she was the Social Secretary at the White House.

I would like to further point out that the Bureau did not seek this work, but as you will note, it was assigned to it as a result of the letter from Mr. McReynolds dated July 11, 1940, in which he stated that it was the President's desire, as well as that of the Commission, that a careful check be made with respect to the persons employed.

In order to prevent any recurrence of such a situation as occurred in the case of Mrs. Helm, I have issued instructions that no request for investigation of personnel of any Governmental agency is to be made unless the request is made in writing and signed by the head of that agency. Furthermore, I have directed that even when such a request is received and signed in the manner indicated, an Agent should call and examine the personnel file to determine whether there are any aspects of the case that would warrant a question being raised as to the propriety or desirability of making a character investigation, and that if there is, this matter be called to my personal attention before the investigation is undertaken.

For your information, I wanted you to know that I have written a personal note to Mrs. Roosevelt, expressing my regret that this situation had arisen and had caused her any annoyance.

The Attorney General

- 3 -

January 27, 1941

In her reply, she advised me that she understood that an investigation was being made of Miss Malvina Thompson, and that persons were making inquiries at Miss Thompson's apartment concerning her goings and comings, et cetera. I have advised Mrs. Roosevelt that this Bureau has not, and is not making any investigation of Miss Thompson, and that the parties who have been making the inquiries to which she referred are not connected with this Bureau.

Respectfully,

John Edgar Hoover
Director

JSA:EE

January 28, 1941

PERSONAL ATTENTION

BY SPECIAL MESSENGER

Mr. Guy Hottel
Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Room 2266, United States Department of
Justice Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Hottel:

Your attention is invited to the recent investigation which was initiated by the Bureau concerning Mrs. Edith B. Helm at the request of The Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense.

It will be noted Mrs. Helm is the Social Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt, the wife of the President. As a result of our inquiries conducted in this matter an embarrassing situation was brought about which might have otherwise been averted.

It is my desire that you issue appropriate instructions to the Agents in your office so that in the future if information is noted in the personnel files of The Advisory Commission, at the time such files are reviewed, reflecting any of the individuals, upon whom investigations have been requested, are holding positions of prominence, such information should immediately be brought to your attention. You should, of course, thereafter advise the Bureau concerning these circumstances so that appropriate action might be taken.

RECORDED

62-6112-13

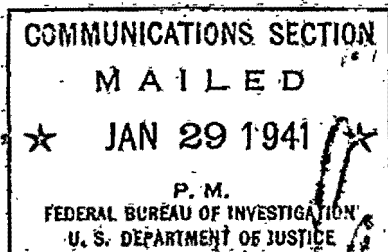
Mr. Tolson _____
Mr. Clegg _____
Mr. E. A. Tamm _____
Mr. Foxworth _____
Mr. Nathan _____
Mr. Ladd _____
Mr. Egan _____
Mr. Glavin _____
Mr. Nichols _____
Mr. Hendon _____
Mr. Rosen _____
Mr. Tracy _____
Miss Gandy _____

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by Don Whitehead. See
62-60512-22 for details.

Very truly yours,

J. Edgar Hoover

John Edgar Hoover
Director



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6 41 PM '41

February 1, 1941

EAT:TEB

~~PERSONAL AND~~
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

With further reference to the investigation of Mrs. Edith B. Egan, I thought you would be interested in knowing that on making inquiry concerning the status generally of applicants for appointment to the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense, I was advised that the President had given specific orders to the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense that a complete and thorough investigation should be conducted in regard to all individuals connected with this organization "regardless of their status".

On December 17, 1940, a Special Agent of the Bureau contacted Mr. Sidney Chermood, Assistant Secretary to the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense, who stated that the President had given specific orders that a complete and thorough investigation should be conducted regarding all individuals connected with the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense regardless of their status and that no differentiation whatsoever should be made among the employees of the Commission.

You will recall that Edith B. Egan was carried on the pay roll of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense and that the investigation of her was requested by Mr. Chermood as I have previously advised you. One certainly would gain the impression from Mr. Chermood's statement that the President specifically desired an investigation of all of the persons carried on the rolls of the Advisory Commission.

Respectfully,

EDWARD

John Edgar Hoover
Director

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Mr. Tolson _____
Mr. Clegg _____
Mr. E. A. Tamm _____
Mr. Foxworth _____
Mr. Nathan _____
Mr. Ladd _____
Mr. Egan _____
Mr. Glavin _____
Mr. Nichols _____
Mr. Hendon _____
Mr. Rosen _____
Mr. Tracy _____
Miss Gandy _____

RECEIVED ROOM 5640
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S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE

EAT:DMP

January 30, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SOLICITOR GENERAL

I thought you would be interested
in the contents of the attached memorandum
which I have today addressed to the Attorney
General.

Very truly yours,

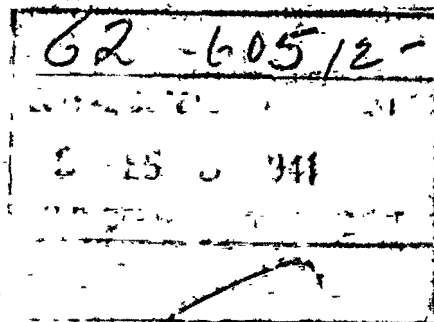
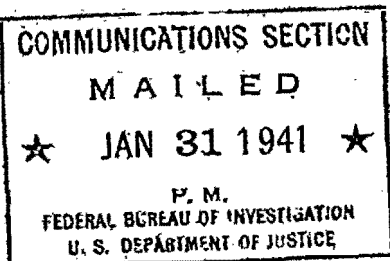
J. Edgar Hoover

John Edgar Hoover
Director

Attachment

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by Don Whitehead. See
62-60512-246 for details.

Mr. Tolson _____
Mr. Clegg _____
Mr. E. A. Tamm _____
Mr. Foxworth _____
Mr. Nathan _____
Mr. Ladd _____
Mr. Egan _____
Mr. Glavin _____
Mr. Nichols _____
Mr. Hendon _____
Mr. Rosen _____
Mr. Tracy _____
Miss Gandy _____



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 30, 1941

Mr. Tolson	✓
Mr. E. A. Tamm	✓
Mr. Clegg	✓
Mr. Foxworth	
Mr. Nathan	
Mr. Ladd	
Mr. Glavin	
Mr. Nichols	
Mr. Hendon	
Mr. Rosen	
Mr. Tracy	✓
Miss Gandy	✓

My dear Mr. Hoover:

Thank you very much for your
letter of January 27 in answer to mine.
It was very good of you to write me in
detail.

Very sincerely yours,

Eleanor Roosevelt
Eleanor X Roosevelt

lms

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62-60512-22 for details.

RECORDED - 47
INDEXED - 47

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very PR
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Edith B. O'Helm

see

o Helm

February 1, 1941

EAT:TEB

~~PERSONAL AND~~
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SOLICITOR GENERAL

I thought you might be interested
in the attached copy of a memorandum which
I today transmittted to the Attorney General.

Very truly yours,

RECORDED

John Edgar Hoover
Director

pc

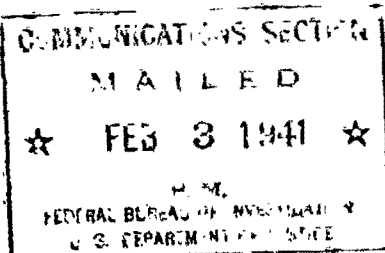
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Attachment

Mr. Tolson _____
Mr. Clegg _____
Mr. E. A. Tamm _____
Mr. Foxworth _____
Mr. Nathan _____
Mr. Ladd _____
Mr. Egan _____
Mr. Glavin _____
Mr. Nichols _____
Mr. Hendon _____
Mr. Rosen _____
Mr. Tracy _____
Miss Gandy _____

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by Don Whitehead. See
62-60512-22 for details.



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U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE

COPY
HVV

JEB:HCB

January 27, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. TOLSON
MR. E. A. TAMM

with reference to the attached file dealing with the investigation of Mrs. Edith B. Helm, I do not believe that this case was handled as it should have been. I furthermore do not believe that I was furnished all the information that I should have had concerning this matter in the original instance. I was informed by Mr. Tamm that the request from the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense addressed to me under date of October 29, 1940, was a mimeographed form. That is not correct. It is true that in file 62-60512 there is a mimeographed copy of the letter of October 29th, but in file 62-58374 there is the original of the letter from Mr. Sherwood, from which we apparently made mimeographed copies.

In order that there may be no recurrence of a situation of this kind, I want to direct (1) that no investigation is to be made of any person connected with any Governmental agency unless the request for such investigation is made in writing and signed by the head of that agency. This will not apply in cases where the employee is charged with a violation of some Federal Statute over which this Bureau has primary jurisdiction. (2) When such a request for an investigation is made, the Washington Field Office should have an Agent immediately inspect the personnel file to ascertain whether there are any aspects of the case that would make it inadvisable, inexpedient, or undesirable to conduct an investigation of that employee. No investigation is to be initiated until such an examination of the personnel file has been made. If any unusual aspects are noted, the matter should then be brought to my personal attention before an investigation is initiated.

Will you please see that all supervisors and the Agent in Charge of the Washington Field Office thoroughly understand this procedure and adhere to it strictly.

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use in "The FBI Story"
by Don Whitehead. See
62-60512-22 for details.

Very truly yours,

John Edgar Hoover
Director

Attachments

(Files 62-60512 and 62-58374 attached to Mr. Tolson's copy)

February 14, 1941

With reference to the whole policy dealing with the matter of investigating names of persons under consideration for employment in other Government agencies, I would appreciate it if some definite policy could be outlined for this Bureau to follow because as you know, we are neither "fish nor fowl" in the picture. The Bureau has received, in my estimation, entirely unwarranted criticism from all too many sources as to the investigation made of Mrs. Helm. Then the Attorney General decided that the Bureau was to make no investigation of any person unless there were charges either of subversive activities or a violation of a Federal Statute. The reason, as I understood it, for this policy, which I consider to be a very definite and clear rule to follow, was that in making so-called personnel investigations we were bound to incur animosities and enmities upon the part of the persons under investigation, particularly when these persons were persons of high standing in the business or political world. There was no doubt that such animosities were being developed.

Now, as I understand it, we are supposed to make investigations of such names as may be sent to the Bureau from your office, notwithstanding that these names are in that class of persons which I have above referred to - namely, persons of very high political or business standing, with the inevitable result that when we investigate them, we are going to incur enmities and animosities which will be against the FBI. In other words, it looks to me as if we are right back to where we were before, because as I understood the reason for the decision of the Attorney General, it was not solely upon the Helm case, but was predicated upon a much broader reason - namely, that of conducting investigations in matters that did not involve some violation of a Federal Statute or charge of subversive activities upon which there could be no basis for criticism of Bureau action.

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

MAILED *Very truly yours*

★ FEB 14 1941 ★ J. Edgar Hoover

P. M.
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

John Edgar Hoover
Director

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Mr. Tolson

Mr. E. A. Tamm

Mr. Clegg

Mr. Forwer

Mr. Nathan

Mr. Ladd

Mr. Glavin

Mr. Nichols

Mr. Hendon

Mr. Rosen

Mr. Tracy

Miss Candy

Abstract

JKH:BK

May 24, 1941

THE DIRECTOR

There is set out hereinafter a brief summary of our experience with the investigation of the personnel of executive departments and agencies and the status of efforts made to elicit from the Department a clear-cut ruling for the Bureau to follow in the acceptance of such cases.

You will recall that beginning on June 20, 1940, investigations of this type were requested by the Office of Production Management and the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense, and by early 1941, several hundred had been acted upon, each on an expedite telephonic or telegraphic basis. The indiscriminate manner in which those requests were forwarded to the Bureau resulted in the embarrassment which arose out of the investigation of Mrs. Edith B. Helm, social secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt.

The advisability of handling matters of this type was discussed by you with the Attorney General at which time he ruled against the acceptance by this Bureau of any request for the investigation of an employee of another Governmental department or agency except upon instructions from his Office and except under jurisdiction of the Executive Directive promulgated in accordance with Section 9A of the Hatch Act and Section 15 (g) of the Emergency Relief Act of 1941.

On February 8, 1941, Mr. Tamm advised you of a conversation with Matthew F. McGuire at which time Mr. McGuire informed him he had talked with the Attorney General who had expressed the belief it was a serious mistake for the Bureau to be investigating employees of other Governmental agencies in that it hurt the Bureau generally and would hurt it more if

Mr. Tolson _____
Mr. E. A. Tamm _____
Mr. Clegg _____
Mr. Foxworth _____
Mr. Glavin _____
Mr. Ladd _____
Mr. Nichols _____
Mr. Rosen _____
Mr. Carson _____
Mr. Quinn Tamm _____
Mr. Hendon _____
Mr. Tracy _____
Miss Gandy _____

RECORDED & INDEXED

INITIALS ON ORIGINAL

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

JUN 16 1941

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TAMM

FOXWORTH

ROSEN

ONE

ORIGINAL FILED IN 62-60512-244

RE
Tamm

Memorandum for the Director

- 2 -

some of them turned out bad. At that time you noted that since the Attorney General had ruled against the acceptance by the Bureau of such cases, there would be no exceptions and requests on hand should be returned with the explanation that the action was based upon the ruling of the Attorney General.

Thereafter on February 14, 1941 you transmitted a memorandum to Mr. Matthew F. McGuire outlining the entire situation as of that date and particularly pointed out that notwithstanding the fact the Attorney General had decided the Bureau was to make no investigation of any person unless there were charges either of subversive activities or of violation of a Federal statute, such requests were being cleared through his Office and forwarded to the Bureau, resulting in placing the F.B.I. inevitably in the same position as it was in before, open to the enmities and animosities resulting from such investigations.

You specifically requested that some definite policy be outlined in the premises.

Receiving no answer to this memorandum, the matter was taken up verbally by Mr. Tamm with Mr. McGuire on February 18, 1941. He at that time advised he was addressing a memorandum to the Bureau on the subject.

Since that date requests for investigations of this type have continued to be cleared through the Office of the Attorney General and directed to this Bureau and no instructions in the matter or reply to your memorandum of February 14, 1941 or Mr. Tamm's oral request of February 18, 1941 of Mr. McGuire has been forthcoming.

Respectfully,

P. E. Foxworth

Mr. Tolson _____
Mr. E. A. Tamm _____
Mr. Clegg _____
Mr. Foxworth _____
Mr. Glavin _____
Mr. Ladd _____
Mr. Nichols _____
Mr. Rosen _____
Mr. Carson _____
Mr. Quinn Tamm _____
Mr. Hendon _____
Mr. Tracy _____
Miss Gandy _____

EAT:GEG

May 31, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
MR. MATTHEW F. MOQUINE

I have been advised by Mr. Tamm of his discussions with you concerning the matter of investigation of present or potential employees of various Governmental agencies and desire to express my belief that the present procedure is cumbersome, inefficient and will probably result in serious repercussions if the present program is continued.

You will recall that, originally, the Federal Bureau of Investigation conducted the investigations of present or potential employees, not only of the Department of Justice but of the Office of Production Management and of the various national defense agencies. This procedure was followed for almost a year without any difficulty being encountered and with completely satisfactory results in so far as the various agencies were concerned. As a result of the confusion caused by the Bureau's investigation of Mrs. Helm, the Bureau was instructed to discontinue all personnel investigations except those relating to present or potential employees of the Justice Department. As a result of the discontinuation of these investigations by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Treasury Department has initiated a program of investigating personnel for the Office of Production Management and various other national defense agencies. The Civil Service Commission is likewise conducting personnel investigations of certain classes of employees who, as I understand it, are outside of the Civil Service classification. There is growing up within the Treasury Department a large investigative unit which is devoting its major effort to the investigation of present and potential employees of the Federal Government. I assume that a considerable quantity of information is being developed upon certain persons, particularly applicants for employment in the Government service, relative to their subversive activities, un-American associations and other detrimental information. This material is not being forwarded to the Federal Bureau of Investigation despite the fact that the Bureau by Presidential directive is charged with the responsibility of handling these types of cases. Over a period of time, the present procedure will result in the Treasury Department's being able to maintain an investigative unit

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION
MAILED
★ JUN 4 1941 ★
P. M.
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Mr. Quinn Tamm _____
Mr. Hendon _____
Mr. Tracy _____
Miss Gandy _____

✓

EO

Memorandum for Mr. McGuire

- 2 -

which basically will be conducting investigations of subversive activities. The situation is made more intolerable by the fact that the basic idea of having one central reservoir in which there would be maintained all data relative to persons engaged in un-American activities, which ideal prompted the President's designation of the Bureau as the coordinating agency, is made entirely ineffective.

The Treasury Department does not have files or information upon the many thousands of persons who have been the subjects of Bureau investigations, which investigations resulted in the accumulation of comprehensive data concerning their subversive and un-American activities. They cannot incorporate this information in their investigative reports without conducting a complete investigation of the subversive activities of these people, and if this is done, their work constitutes a needless duplication of investigation already conducted. I do not blame the Office of Production Management and the other national defense agencies for soliciting and utilizing the services of the Treasury Department in having these investigations conducted. When those agencies were denied the use of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, they, of course, had to turn to whatever other agency was available in order that some investigations of their personnel could be conducted.

The administrative officers of the Governmental agencies interested in hiring or retaining the services of numerous people desire an investigation primarily to determine the background and loyalty of their employees and applicants. The investigations ordinarily are not intended to relate to the technical fitness of each person for the position he is to occupy. Thus, the primary purpose of the investigations being conducted by the Treasury Department is to determine the loyalty and background of the applicant. I believe that most certainly a more sound conclusion can be reached as a result of an investigation conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation with its tremendous files relating to un-American activities than can be drawn from an investigation conducted by other agencies not having these files or a means of obtaining the information contained in them. The future value of the Bureau's files, however, will be seriously curtailed if they are not kept current by the addition of information developed as additional investigations are being conducted. If these investigations are conducted by the Treasury Department or some other agency, it is obvious that the information will not reach the Bureau's files.

I am concerned about this situation not primarily because

Memorandum for Mr. McGuire

- 3 -

certain cases of a type formerly investigated by the Bureau are now being handled by some other agencies, but because of my tremendous official and personal interest in the proper functioning of the national defense program. The subjects of most of the investigations are persons being employed upon national defense projects. Most certainly the security of the country demands that these persons be of unquestioned loyalty and that the persons responsible for their employment have a complete, thorough and accurate picture of their backgrounds. I do not believe that the security of the country will be enhanced if these investigations are conducted in the present cumbersome, inefficient and unsatisfactory manner.

Very truly yours,

J. Edgar Hoover

John Edgar Hoover
Director

2706 Gulf Building
Houston, Texas
June 23, 1941

Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

I have been advised by Special Agent
R. L. GRINDALL that during the broadcast of PEARSON
and ALLEN, a sustaining program on NBC, which was
heard at 6:00 P. M., Sunday, June 15, 1941, over
Houston station KXYZ, a commentator stated that the
investigation of applicants for positions with the
Office of Production Management has been removed from
the investigative jurisdiction of this Bureau,

The commentator further stated that this
change in jurisdiction had been occasioned by the dif-
ficulties encountered during the recent investigation
by the FBI of the background of Mrs. F. D. ROOSEVELT's
Social Secretary who had made application for a posi-
tion with the OPM.

It was further stated that those investiga-
tions would be conducted by the Secret Service in the
future.

Special Agents J. D. LOCKREY and D. E. MAAS
also heard the broadcast and verified the above informa-
tion.

Very truly yours,

RECORDED

62-10572-20
R. J. ADAMS, JR. SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE
JUN 26 1941

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

EX-106 SIX 11A
JUN 26 1941

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by Don Whitehead. See
62-60513-22 for details.

JDL mls

JOHN EDGAR HOOVER
DIRECTOR

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

June 16, 1941

SJT:1rd

CC-160

Mr. Tolson ☒
Mr. E. A. Tamm ☒
Mr. Clegg ☒
Mr. Glavin ☒
Mr. Ladd ☒
Mr. Nichols ☒
Mr. Rosen ☒
Mr. Carson ☒
Mr. Egan ☒
Mr. Gurnea ☒
Mr. Hendon ☒
Mr. Coffey ☒
Mr. Harbo ☒
Tele. Room ☒
Mr. Nease ☒
Mr. Quinn ☒
Miss Gandy ☒

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

Mr. Jim Strebis telephoned to advise that last evening he listened to a part of the Pearson and Allen broadcast. He stated that they referred to an investigation made by the Federal Bureau of Investigation of Mrs. Helm, Social Secretary to Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Mrs. Helm's name having been submitted for investigative purposes by officials of the OPM. The Narrator went on to say that it appeared that all defense employees have been investigated and that the job of investigating has been done by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, that someone at OPM furnished the name of Mrs. Helm not knowing who she was, that the FBI conducted the investigation without recognizing Mrs. Helm as being a White House employee until after a complaint was made to Mrs. Roosevelt by Mrs. Helm.

The broadcast then continued to state that as a result of this incident the investigation of Government employees in National Defense work was taken away from the FBI and has been turned over to the Secret Service.

Mr. Strebis wanted to follow on this and I informed him that I had no knowledge of the facts except that I knew that the Bureau had received names in the past from OPM and other Governmental Agencies and that we had conducted investigations of certain personnel. I told him for his confidential information that the Bureau had received Mrs. Helm's name along with others in a formal request for an investigation but that I did not know who furnished the name to the Department of Justice and that it was, of course, not the FBI's responsibility to question formal requests through proper channels.

If approved, I will advise Mr. Strebis that the Bureau has no information to the effect that the Secret Service has been designated as the Agency to conduct personnel investigations of National Defense employees and suggest that he make inquiry of the Secret Service.

Respectfully,

S. J. Tracy
S. J. Tracy

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

4 JUN 26 1941

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

RECORDED
INDEXED
SERIALIZED
FILED

A portion of this
document is
classified "TOP SECRET"
by Don Whitcomb, SA
on 10/1/81

no comment

H

Enclosed
6/16/41

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : For the File

DATE: November 28, 1956

FROM : L. B. Nichols

SUBJECT: Edith B. Helm

9/B

There are attached hereto pages 276, 277 of "The FBI Story, A Report to the People" by Don Whitehead, which contain data taken from Bureau file 62-60512.

The information from the file was personally reviewed and declassified by me prior to the author's use of it in the preparation of the book and the clearance procedures followed in the book were approved by the Attorney General by appropriate notation on the Bureau memorandum of July 20, 1956, outlining procedures to be followed. (62-102693-90) The declassified data has been underlined in red on the attached excerpts.

For complete information concerning data declassified in "The FBI Story," see 62-102693-352

Enclosure

FCS:pwl

62-60512-226
NOT RECORDED

2 MAR 6 1957

1 ENCLOSURE

MAR 19 1957

CRIMINAL DIV.

The FBI was frequently attacked for making investigations into Communist activities and, at times for making loyalty checks at the request of other agencies.

In one case, the story went the rounds in Washington that the FBI had been "caught" investigating Edith B. Helm, social secretary to Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Malvina Thompson, Mrs. Roosevelt's personal secretary. And it was added that Mrs. Roosevelt had taken the FBI to task.

The facts in the case were that William H. McReynolds, Secretary of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense, and a White House secretary, sent a letter to the Attorney General on July 11, 1940, asking for a loyalty check on several persons. Enclosing a list of names, McReynolds wrote:

It is the President's desire, and that of the Commission, that a careful check be made with respect to each individual involved, but particularly those on the first section of the list, for the purpose of making sure that these persons are dependable and justify the trust placed in them.

Three months later another list of fifteen names was sent over by McReynolds' assistant with a written request that the FBI "institute an investigation." One of the names on the list was Edith B. Helm. Since the request came from an office in the White House, the check was made.

When the news of the investigation leaked out, criticism was heaped on the FBI. Hoover wrote to Major General Edwin M. Watson, the President's secretary, explaining how the inquiry had developed, and he sent a similar letter to Mrs. Roosevelt. Mrs. Roosevelt replied that she was surprised by the investigation of Mrs. Helm and that someone had been making inquiries about the private affairs of Miss Thompson. "This type of investigation seems to me to smack too much of the Gestapo methods," Mrs. Roosevelt said, "[and] seems to me to show inefficiency on the part of the person who ordered it."

Hoover wrote Mrs. Roosevelt there had been no investigation of Miss Thompson by the FBI and that the FBI had nothing to do with Mrs. Helm's name being on the list received from the White House. He agreed the investigation of Mrs. Helm "indicated inefficiency upon the part of the person who ordered it," but said that the order had not originated with the FBI and the investigation had been handled in routine fashion.

The Helm incident was only a flurry, but it was a small warning of the difficulties and misunderstandings that would develop in the government's investigations of its employees during the Cold War that was to come.

Excerpt from pages 276, 277 of
"The FBI Story, A Report to the
People" by Don Whitehead

ENCLOSURE

62-60512-22

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Mr. Nichols

DATE: November 28, 1956

FROM : M. A. Jones

SUBJECT: Edith Helm

There are attached excerpts concerning the above-captioned case taken from "The FBI Story, A Report to the People," by Don Whitehead published by Random House, 1956. These excerpts are from page(s) 276, 277 of the book.

The full text of the book may be found in the FBI Library.

Enclosure

62-60512 - ✓
NOT RECORDED

4 MAR 11 1957

1 ENCLOSURE

66 MAR 12 1957

62-60512

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*Excerpts from pages 276, 277 of
"The FBI Story, A Report to the
People" by Don Whitehead*

62-6052-✓
ENCLOSURE