

PSf

Brant, IRVING

Subject file

Bx 118

3 items

*file
personal*

PSF

U.S.
342

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 10, 1942

Dear Mr. President:

May I offer comments on two housing officials who are under fire at present? Baird Snyder is a capable construction engineer, a good subordinate, exceedingly ambitious, utterly illiterate (I heard him read, in a speech, "not inimical" and correct it to "not inimicable") and without vision. At the housing conference last Friday he heard the reading of your letter on public housing, then spoke for half an hour without indorsing anything you said and without once mentioning the U.S.H.A., after which he went outside and said where many heard him, "I'll get those God damned radicals of public housing yet." His purpose is to destroy the U.S.H.A.

Housing Co-ordinator Palmer, a real estate broker, has a positive approach to all phases of housing. He favors public housing. He favors private housing far more strongly. The result is that whenever the two come into conflict, which is almost always, he has a kindly feeling toward public housing and decides against it. People who do not know how Mr. Palmer's mind works seek for an explanation in self-interest, while he himself is conscious of being misjudged. I think his feelings will always be right and his decisions wrong.

Yours respectfully,

Irving Brant

IRVING BRANT

The President,
The White House.

(784)
for
PSF

Brant

for Louis B.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 17, 1943. B

MEMORANDUM FOR

HON. JAMES F. BYRNES

How do you think I should
answer this?

F.D.R.

Letter from Irving Brant, The Chicago Sun,
400 West Madison St., Chicago, Ill., 3/15/43,
to the President, suggesting removal of Claude
Wickard as Secretary of Agriculture, and
suggesting appt. of either Milo Perkins or
Marvin Jones.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC STABILIZATION
WASHINGTON, D. C.

March 22, 1943

JAMES F. BYRNES
Director

Dear Grace:

I think this is the only way to answer
Irving Brant.

J. F. B.

March 22, 1943

Dear Irving:

Thanks for your letter as to the
agricultural program.

I am now having an investigation
made as to some of the matters to which you
refer.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

Mr. Irving Brant,
1255 National Press Building,
Washington, D. C.

SHALL FIELD
FOUNDER

BILLIMAN EVANS
PUBLISHER

REX SMITH
EDITOR

THE CHICAGO SUN

THE NEW MORNING NEWSPAPER
400 WEST MADISON STREET
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

ADDITIONAL

WASHINGTON BUREAU
1222 NATIONAL PRESS BLDG.
WASHINGTON, D. C.
NATIONAL 0148

March 15, 1943.

Dear Mr. President:

I feel sure that you do not know what is occurring in the Department of Agriculture. Secretary Wickard, one of the best-intentioned men in the world, is governed by indecision and timidity. He yields to Ed O'Neal, Earl Smith (the worst enemy you have in the country) and the farm bloc because he is afraid of them. Then, because he is afraid of you, he fears to tell the truth about what he has done or what the conditions are. Finally, he is temperamentally incapable of putting decisions into effect. The result is that everything breaks down. Those who protest are ignored. Paul Appleby is as isolated as if he were a prisoner in Berlin.

Earl Smith, the real head of the Farm Bureau, boasts openly in Pullman smokers that he is out to elect a Republican Congress and President and is drafting farm policies to that end. Wickard is accepting those policies, not willingly, not unknowingly, but because he has no guts.

The result is a food policy which builds speculative profits for 2,000,000 "best" farmers (including those who bit the hand that ~~served~~ them during the depression), and causes despair among 2,500,000 other farmers who genuinely need help and are capable of vastly increased production. If continued, it will bring about a food shortage and will raise political hell before six months are out. It is also producing utter demoralization in the department.

When Wickard named Parisius to head food production, he showed that he was acting on the findings of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, made public in its memorandum of last January 11 to war agencies and expanded in February, which stated that food production could only be increased decisively in the middle group of 2,500,000 farmers who have surplus land and family labor but lack equipment and credit. (Jim Patton's program also is founded on these B.A.E. findings.) But when Earl Smith, O'Neal, Goss (not so bad) and the farm bloc started hammering, Wickard caved in at one point after another.

After his latest surrender, raising cotton acreage ten per cent "in order to get cottonseed oil," instead of shifting that acreage to peanuts, I called the B.A.E. and got some figures. They told me--and therefore must have told Wickard--that cotton produced 70 pounds of oil to the acre, peanuts 205 pounds. The cotton loan on the added 2,250,000 acres will be about \$100,000,000. The government, therefore, is putting up \$100,000,000 in order to REDUCE vegetable oils by 303,750,000 pounds, compared with peanuts,

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WASHINGTON BUREAU
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which also require far less labor.

When a member of your cabinet, knowing the truth, will do a thing like this, and when everything he does is on a par with it, he is hopeless. The fact that he means well is the worst part of it. If you don't get rid of him, the result will be a disaster both in food production and in next year's election.

In my opinion, either Milo Perkins or Marvin Jones should be made Secretary of Agriculture. Perkins has the sounder policies (he is a prophet if there ever was one); Jones could work better with Congress. Either one would stop the demoralization of the department. But if you are going to escape the political consequences of Wickard's incapacity, the action must come within six weeks, before the breakdown of the food production program becomes manifest throughout the country.

Respectfully yours,

Irving Brant

The President,
The White House.

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PSF *See Column "B" 3-45*
Brant

PRESS ROOM
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 30, 1945.

Dear Mr. President:

From a reliable American in Yugoslavia I have learned that an important unsettled issue between Churchill and Tito is the disposition of the British copper concession near the Bulgarian frontier. Churchill is said to have asked assurance of its continuation, as a condition to recognition of the government, while Tito replied that the decision could not be made by a provisional government. A Russian correspondent, in a story republished here, predicts cancellation of the concession and payment for it.

You may be interested in some background information. The British mining company is exceedingly unpopular because it attracted workers from distant parts, notably Croatia, by promising the high wages of 50 cents per day, but the workers found on arrival that they were required to buy all goods at company stores at prices so high that it reduced their real wage to the 30 cents per day which prevailed at home. The longer they stayed, the less able they were to return, the situation amounting to peonage, plus bad housing. The fact that the miners have been assembled from all over Yugoslavia fortifies Tito's objections with political factors which can hardly be disregarded in any democratic settlement, which I believe is the kind you want.

I hope you won't forget to pass that complaint of the American correspondents, about the Russian and Yugoslav political censorship, along to Tovarich Joseph. They seemed to blame it only on inexperience with a free press, but said it was hurting Russia in Great Britain and would do so in the United States. The Russian word for "thanks," if you have occasion to use it, is "spasibo."

in the Balkans

Yours respectfully,

Irving Brant

(Copy of this ltr is filed - Harry Hopkins folder, 2-45)