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## **Goldberg and Hoover: How Two Disparate Washington Insiders Resolved a McCarthy-Era Problem to Mutual (and the Nation's) Advantage**

In late 1939, with a second world war just underway, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover ordered that reports be prepared on “persons of German, Italian, and Communist sympathies” whose primary allegiance may be to a foreign country and whose “presence at liberty in this country ... would be dangerous to ... the safety of the United States Government.” Such persons were to be listed in a “Custodial Detention Index” and considered for internment during a national emergency.<sup>1</sup>

On January 8, 1941, in furtherance of the program, FBI headquarters sent a letter over Hoover's signature to its Chicago office concerning a 32-year-old Chicago labor lawyer, Arthur J. Goldberg. The Chicago office had written earlier that “Goldberg is reportedly closely associated with Communist leaders in Illinois.” Headquarters now asked that his home address be obtained to assure its availability “in the event he is considered for custodial detention at a later date.” The Chicago office prepared a “Custodial Detention Memorandum” for Goldberg, stating in its accompanying report that he was “connected in various capacities with many front organizations for the Communist Party and active in radical movements.” The Memorandum recited Goldberg's full name, his home and office addresses, the category “Communist,” and a few particulars, including that in 1939 he was president of the Chicago chapter of the National Lawyers Guild.<sup>2</sup>

A full decade later, in March 1952, the Bureau combed its files for information about Goldberg, now based in Washington and as general counsel for the CIO a nationally-prominent union lawyer, and it found many references to him. Its 12-page “summary memorandum” recited “allegations concerning his attendance at Communist Party meetings and affairs and his association with Communist Party officials in the early 1940's” (albeit none of the information was “furnished by informants of established reliability”). The report described Goldberg's alleged association with “eleven organizations cited as Communist either by the Attorney General or the House Committee on Un-American Activities,” including International Labor Defense and the Young Communist League. And it mentioned two phone calls to Goldberg's residence in Chicago from the residence of Harold Glasser, a former Treasury Department official implicated in a spy ring exposed by ex-Communist Elizabeth Bentley.<sup>3</sup>

Surprisingly, however, the 1952 report also disclosed that Goldberg “has had a number of very cordial contacts with” Louis B. Nichols, a top Hoover aide whose job was to handle the press and politicians. Goldberg, it said, “has remarked that he would do anything he possibly could to be of assistance to the Bureau if he were ever called upon to help” and “expressed a desire of bringing [UAW president] Walter Reuther and Philip Murray of the CIO closer to the Bureau.”<sup>4</sup>

In December 1960, Goldberg was again the subject of FBI scrutiny, this time at the request of the incoming Kennedy administration, which had chosen him to be Secretary of Labor. When the Bureau reported the results of its investigation, it emphasized the strong endorsements given to Goldberg by President Eisenhower's labor secretary, James P. Mitchell, CIA director Allen W. Dulles and GOP Senate leader Everett M. Dirksen. As to Goldberg's alleged “Communist” associations, the report simply noted that Goldberg had “explained” in a 1955 Bureau interview “his association and affiliations with several organizations, some of which have been cited as communist front organizations.” It made no mention of the Bureau's 1941 custodial-detention memorandum.<sup>5</sup>

Nor did the report disclose that Goldberg, only days earlier, had requested a personal meeting with Hoover and that the director had agreed to see him—a rare favor. The meeting was recommended to Hoover by Cartha D. (“Deke”) DeLoach, a Bureau official who had succeeded to Nichols' duties. DeLoach wrote:

Art Goldberg called this morning. He stated he would like very much to drop over and pay his respects to the Director whenever convenient. \*\*\*

Goldberg, due to his labor connections, has had questionable associates, however, he has been very friendly. I had lunch with him last Friday. He is very interested in the FBI and thinks very highly of the Director.

Hoover, in a letter DeLoach prepared for him, congratulated Goldberg on his selection by President-elect Kennedy and said “[i]t was certainly nice of you to call this morning relative to a visit in the near future.” While

his travel plans would delay the visit, Hoover wrote, “I will look forward to seeing you upon my return to Washington.”<sup>6</sup>

The meeting, on February 3, 1961, was a friendly one, leading to a relationship that continued for years. In November 1961, as Secretary of Labor, Goldberg addressed graduating students at the FBI National Academy—“an honor usually reserved for established notables whose politics and loyalty to the Bureau were above reproach”—and Hoover sent him photographs as “momentos of the occasion.” In August 1962, when Goldberg was nominated for the Supreme Court, Hoover wrote immediately to congratulate him, adding “we hope you will not hesitate to call upon us if we can ever be of assistance.” In July 1965, when President Lyndon Johnson appointed Goldberg UN ambassador, Hoover wrote to him that the appointment was “a tribute to your many years of devoted service to our Nation.”<sup>7</sup>

Two more dissimilar Americans can scarcely be imagined: Hoover, the autocratic, suspicious and obsessively anti-communist law-enforcement czar, protector of the values of “traditional Americans, largely middle-class, Protestant and Anglo-Saxon,” and scornful of liberals whom he usually dismissed as “pseudo-liberals”; Goldberg, the son of poor Russian-Jewish immigrants, a lawyer for liberal labor unions, and himself an outspoken liberal who had generated a substantial and mostly adverse FBI file. Their friendly relationship, however, was valuable to both men and, given the high offices Goldberg held, not without consequence for the Nation.<sup>8</sup>

This article is about how this most unlikely relationship came to pass.