

Biddle Rules Bridges Shall Be Deported

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As a Communist,
Australian Must Be
Subversive, He Says;
Appeal Is Possible

Attorney General Biddle yesterday ordered Harry Bridges, West Coast union leader, deported to Australia for having belonged to the Communist Party.

Biddle found that the Communists have sought to overthrow this Government by violence ever since the party was set up in 1919. His opinion did not mention the recent release from prison of America's No. 1 Communist, Earl Browder.

Browder was sentenced for perjury in applying for a passport to go to Russia. When commuting his sentence; President Roosevelt said he felt clemency would have a "tendency to promote national unity and to allay any feeling which may exist in some minds that the unusually long sentence in Browder's case was by way of penalty imposed on him because of his political views."

Not a Blanket Decision

Although the subject of the Attorney General's opinion was the Bridges deportation, its 32 pages expressed conclusions about a series of broad and bitterly disputed matters. These far transcended the narrow question of whether the fiery labor leader should be expelled from his adopted country.

"The Communist Party of the U. S. A.," said Biddle in his findings of fact, "from the time of its inception in 1919 to the present time, is an organization that believes in, advises, advocates, and teaches the overthrow by force and violence of the Government of the United States."

Moreover, said the Attorney General, the Communist Party now and ever since 1919 has printed, circulated, displayed and published propaganda to have the United States Government overthrown by force and violence.

C. I. O. Chiefs Denounce Move

C. I. O. leaders immediately denounced the Attorney General's order as "the first major victory of Hitler's spring offensive" and "a blow, at national unity and morale necessary for victory."

Philip Murray, president of the C. I. O., said in a formal statement that Bridges and the C. I. O.'s maritime committee are giving the United Nations "the utmost in service" and that it would be "a grave dis-service to our country and to the cause of democratic nations fighting Hitlerism to undermine this contribution."

Bridges, at San Francisco, termed the decision "outrageous." In a telegram to Donald M. Nelson, chief of the War Production Board, he said:

"I wish to assure you that despite the outrageous decision of Attorney General Biddle and numerous protests already pouring in from workers, I will do all possible to offset any effect it might have on

production and labor-management unity, and will urge all workers and unions I can influence to redouble efforts in speeding production to win the main fight—the fight against the Axis."

Biddle told newspapermen that his rulings about the Communist Party in the Bridges case would not, in his opinion, serve as a blanket ruling for all alien Communist deportation cases. He said he believed it would be necessary to prove each case separately.

Union Dominated by Party

The Attorney General found that the Communist Party dominated and controlled the Marine Workers Industrial Union and that Bridges belonged to both the marine union and to the Communist Party.

Accordingly, said the Attorney General, Bridges was not entitled to remain in the United States, but must be sent back to Australia, whence he came in April, 1920, when he was a 20-year-old seaman.

The Biddle opinion recited that the Communist Party, as formed in 1919, was a part of the Third International, which advocated a class struggle, approved illegal methods, undertook systematic agitation in the Army and urged the renouncing of patriotism.

"Penetration into trade unions was strongly emphasized in Communist literature," the Attorney General declared. . . . "Fractions were organized within particular unions to advance the aim of communism."

Eleswhere, the opinion said "testimony on front organizations showed that they were presented to the public for some legitimate reform objective, but actually used by the Communist Party to carry on its activities pending the time when the Communists believe they can seize power through revolution."

Among front organizations, the Attorney General listed the Workers Alliance the International Labor Defense, the All-American Anti-Imperialist League, the American Negro Congress and the American League Against War and Fascism.

Bridges became active in trade union work in San Francisco in 1933. The Attorney General commented that "it is apparent that he has done much to improve the conditions that existed among the longshoremen." However, the opinion said the fact that Bridges was a "good" labor leader, and said he thought a Communist could be a good labor man, did not show that Bridges himself was not a Communist.

The fight to deport Bridges began in 1938. After a long hearing, Dean James M. Landis of the Harvard Law School ruled, as trial examiner, that Bridges was not a Communist at the time the warrant for him was issued and accordingly was not liable, under the law, to be deported.

The law was amended in 1940 to provide that any alien who had been a Communist at any time since he entered this country should be deported. A new proceeding was started against Bridges, under the new act, and Judge Charles B. Sears, retired, of the New York Court of Appeals, presided over a hearing that lasted 10 weeks.

Judge Sears ruled that Bridges ought to be deported.

The Board of Immigration Appeals disagreed with Judge Sears in a 99-page opinion. This brought the case before the Attorney General for final decision, and he reversed the board.

The Attorney General's decision does not mean that Bridges will be placed on the next boat for Australia; or even any vessel sailing this year.

He still can appeal to the courts.

His Deportation Ordered by Biddle



HARRY BRIDGES