

SECRET

18 March 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS

C-17 2-1-PES

j/c Subject: Leo Yehuda CHERTOV, with aliases Leo Y. Chertok and
Leo V. Chortok

1. Pursuant to your oral request of March 17, 1968 there is attached, for the Director, a memorandum summarizing the report prepared by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the investigation of the above individual, together with the results of a review of all CGO traces.

2. Where possible, the pertinent individuals in contact with CHERTOV have been briefly identified for your information and assistance and for the information and assistance of the Director.

William K. Harvey
WILLIAM K. HARVEY
FBI1-
ENCLOSURE

REGISTRY COPY

SECRET

JULY 1968

AIDS 672

SECRET

16 March 1948

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR
CENTRAL INVESTIGATION SECTION

Subject: Leo Yehuda CHERTOK with aliases Leo L. Chertok and
 Leo V. Chertok

- Pursuant to your request there is enclosed a summary of the results of the FBI investigation of CHERTOK, together with the results of a review of all QSO traces concerning him. There is also, the individual mentioned below as being in contact with CHERTOK have been identified briefly for your information.

BACKGROUND

Leo Yehuda CHERTOK was born at Chernovtsy, Russia, on September 9, 1872. He entered the United States in 1901 and has resided in New York City almost continuously since that time. His wife, Abby HIRSCH, whom he married on January 1, 1927 at New York City, was born in Austria on May 3, 1902. CHERTOK's father, Joseph, became a naturalized U. S. citizen in Boston, Massachusetts, about 1912 and, consequently, CHERTOK is an American citizen by derivation.

In 1935 CHERTOK filed application with the State Department for a U. S. passport for the purpose of a business trip to England, France, and Russia. His application for this passport was refused by the State Department on November 23, 1935, at which time the State Department commented that he "is definitely of the promoter type and first came to the attention of the Department of State around 1935 when his negotiations with the Italian Ambassador in London for extensive concessions in Ethiopia were 'arranged' to the detriment". The State Department also commented at this time that in 1935 CHERTOK made a trip to the Soviet Union and proposed the establishment of a bank in the U. S. with a capital of \$50,000,000 for the purpose of discounting Soviet convertible paper received in payment for American products shipped to the USSR.

RESULTS OF FBI INVESTIGATION

In October 1942 the FBI instituted an investigation of Leo Yehuda CHERTOK based on information received to the effect that a practice bomb casing had been shipped to him at the Hotel Astoria, Mexico, D. F. Investigation of this incident failed to reflect any intelligence significance, but did reflect that CHERTOK had acquired a wide reputation as an opportunist and promoter and that the bomb casing had been shipped to him in connection with efforts on his part to procure U. S. and Mexican Government contracts.

165-165-1
 SECRET
 165-165-1
 165-165-1

On November 27, 1942, it was ascertained that CHARTOK was a close associate of Edward G. Tamm, M.P. (Edward Tammberg Tamm). Tamm was reported as pro-Russian and as a possible German intelligence agent. It was also reported in 1942 that Tamm served as a German agent during the Spanish Civil War and was, during the period of that war, in close contact with Communist leaders in France and Spain.

While it does not appear in the FBI reports on CHARTOK, it should be noted that CHARTOK has been the subject of an intensive investigation by the FBI, and also in Mexico and South America by the U.S. It is noted further that [redacted] shortly after the outbreak of World War II, advised [redacted] that CHARTOK was known [redacted] to [redacted] as being a Soviet espionage agent. According to [redacted] [redacted] had reportedly [redacted] served as an agent of both the OGPU (now KGB) and Red Army but did not [redacted].

Inasmuch as this initial investigation of CHARTOK failed to reflect his implication in intelligence activities, the case was closed by the FBI on April 12, 1944.

On May 1, 1946 the FBI investigation of CHARTOK was re-opened on the basis of an anonymous letter postmarked March 23, 1946 at New York City, which alleged that CHARTOK had made no secret trips to the Soviet Union, had large sums of money but no visible means of support, and had met in 1941 with a number of Russians from Canada. The letter alleged further that on his frequent trips to Mexico CHARTOK always visited the Soviet Embassy and that he had been a personal friend of Soviet Ambassador Constantin RUMYANTSEV, who, you will recall, was killed in a plane accident in Mexico City. In addition, the letter stated that CHARTOK intended to visit the Soviet Union in the near future and frequently visited the Soviet Consulate in New York, as well as the Arctic Trading Corporation in New York, examining plant projects in both cities. It was alleged in the letter that CHARTOK had excellent contacts in the Department of State and was a personal friend of one "Carp" of Connecticut. It is interesting to note that considerable information was available prior to CHARTOK's death clearly indicating his at least indirect participation in Soviet Intelligence activity. The "Carp" referred to is the father of identified ComBDRM who frequently has been reported as a brother-in-law of Lyudmila "Lydia" Soviet Foreign Minister, and who is known to have maintained close Soviet connections for many years.

As a result of the re-opening of the investigation of CHARTOK, it was ascertained that on June 26, 1946 he wrote to Curtis Publishing Company, Inc., stating that he had just returned from Europe, having been there on business eight times during the preceding two years. In this letter he offered to represent the LUMINOLIGHT Company in negotiations with the USSR and made grandiose claims concerning the value of his Soviet contacts for this purpose.

It was also ascertained upon the re-opening of the investigation that CHARTOK was identical with the individual, who on June 12, 1941 reported to the New York office of the FBI that the Arctic Trading Corporation, which, it is noted, is the primary Soviet purchasing medium in the U. S. and an official

SECRET

Soviet agency was the "biggest spy organization in the United States". CHIKATOK failed to furnish any substantiating details for this statement and his motivation in so reporting to the FBI was never made evident.

It was also ascertained at this time that on March 23, 1946, ~~CHIKATOK~~^{SECRETARIAL} of the Soviet Embassy in Washington, D. C., advised A. K. KUZNETSOV of the Chain Belt Company of Milwaukee, Wisconsin to contact the Astor Trading Corporation in New York for information concerning CHIKATOK, i.e. connection with TROTSKY's desire to use CHIKATOK as a representative in the Soviet Union after World War II.

On March 5, 1946 CHIKATOK made an appointment to see Major Alexeievich ~~XANTYU~~, General Secretary of the Soviet Commodity Commission, Moscow. It is of particular interest inasmuch as information exists indicating that KUZNETSOV was implicated in Soviet Intelligence Aviation and that late in 1945 he may have replaced First Secretary of the Soviet Agency Anatoli Ivanovich KUZNETSOV (now KUZNETSOV) as NKVD (now KGB) Agent Resident. You will recall that KUZNETSOV was the Soviet agent known as "M" who was responsible for the operation of an extensive NKVD espionage organization centered in objects of the U. S. Government, the investigation of which by the FBI is commonly known as the Groves Case.

On March 19, 1946 CHIKATOK advised CHIKATOK that General Levitt ~~SECRETARIAL~~ of the Soviet Government Purchasing Commission, would like to do so. It is recalled that KUZNETSOV, who was Chairman of the Purchasing Commission at this time, was identified by the Soviet defector VILNIUS ANDREYEVICH KALINOV as an important representative in the U. S. of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

It was subsequently ascertained early in 1946 that DR. JOHN COOPER, attorney and member of the Board of Directors of ~~CHIKATOK~~ described CHIKATOK as a complete rascal who had previously been employed by KUZNETSOV. At present it is known that CHIKATOK had been in contact with DR. JOHN COOPER, Acting Soviet Consul General in New York. On March 30, John Cooper was unable to go on with Soviet officials concerning his application for a visa to travel to the Soviet Union.

On October 7, 1946 the FBI ascertained that CHIKATOK had approached the Central Intelligence Group to request its assistance for him, personally, to the Soviet Union. The refusal of his application for a passport for this trip is described above in the section entitled "Background". It is interesting to note that on August 7, 1946 CHIKATOK made a long distance call from New York City to Washington, D. C., phone number National 8-1148, which is listed to the White House.

In connection with this investigation, according to the FBI, failed to reflect that CHIKATOK was engaged in Soviet espionage, the area was closed on May 12, 1947.

OCIO TRACCS

A complete review has been made of the OCO files concerning CHIKATOK. The only pertinent additional information contained therein is that the investigation presently being conducted by OCO of Atlanta, Georgia, and OCO, referred to above, has substantiated his association with CHIKATOK.