

November 22, 1943

**Federal Bureau of Investigation Report on Activities
of Mikhail Konstantin Kalatozov**

Citation:

"Federal Bureau of Investigation Report on Activities of Mikhail Konstantin Kalatozov", November 22, 1943, Wilson Center Digital Archive, FOIA release. Obtained and contributed by Val Golovskoy. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/134021>

Summary:

Report on the arrival of Soviet film director Mikhail K. Kalatozov in Los Angeles and his activities meeting with members of the movie industry as an official representative of the Soviet film committee. A reception in his honor was given by the National Council of Soviet-American Friendship which was attended by Charlie Chaplin.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

104836

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT

LOS ANGELES

FILE NO. 100-19404

REPORT MADE AT

LOS ANGELES

DATE WHEN MADE

11/22/43

PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE

8/9-14, 20-23, 28, 9/1-3, 20-22, 10/25-29, 11/1-5/43

REPORT MADE BY

TITLE

MIKHAIL KONSTANTIN KOLOTOZOV, with aliases;
 Mikhail Kolotosoff, Mikhail Kalatozov, Mickael
 Kolotozov, and Mikhail Colotosov.

CHARACTER OF CASE

SECURITY MATTER (R)

b7C

SYNOPSIS OF FACTS

Subject with wife and child arrived Los Angeles 8/9/43 to take up position as representative of Soviet motion picture industry to Western Hemisphere. Will be here approximately one year. Subject in contact with Soviet Consulate officials, Los Angeles; also visited by Vice Consul GREGORY KHEIFETS, San Francisco Soviet Consulate. Subject lived with [redacted] believed to be member of Communist Party, Los Angeles, before locating present residence. Subject traveled to San Francisco early part of October and to New York on 10/9/43 where he is at present. Subject feted by National Council of Soviet-American Friendship at large reception in his honor, and other luncheons and banquets in and around Los Angeles. Consulate officials present at these banquets and prominent persons in movie industry also present. Account of arrival of subject KOLOTOZOV in official capacity given in People's World newspaper article written by VIRGINIA WARNER. Additional members of KOLOTOZOV household noted. Photograph of KOLOTOZOV being retained in file.

P.

b2

DETAILS:

This investigation is predicated on information received from Confidential [redacted] which indicated that the subject was coming to this country to be located in Los Angeles as the official representative of the Soviet motion picture industry to the Western Hemisphere. (S) u

[redacted] Clark Hotel, 426 South Hill Street, advised that on August 9, 1943, Mr. and Mrs. M. COLOTOSOV with their child registered and were assigned Room 621. They resided in this hotel until August 17 at which time they checked out and left no forwarding address. A description of subject KOLOTOZOV given by [redacted] is as follows:

ED AND
ARDED.SPECIAL AGENT
IN CHARGE

DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES

b7C

COPIES DESTROYED

62-11169/80-249539-1

COPIES OF THIS REPORT

Bureau

New York (Info.)

San Francisco

Los Angeles (1 File #100-18710)

104837

Height: Approximately 5'9-10"
 Weight: 160-170 pounds
 Hair: Black, somewhat wavy, held close to head by use of hair oil
 Complexion: Fair
 Nose: Prominent
 Age: 40-45 years
 Clothing: Usually wears dark suits, no hat

b7C

Investigation conducted by the writer reflected that upon leaving the Clark Hotel subject moved to the house of [redacted] Los Angeles. Information in the files of the Los Angeles Field Office reflects that [redacted] which company handles Russian films in the United States. The files further reflect that [redacted] is believed to be a Communist Party member and is definitely known to be in close contact with and well regarded by Soviet Consular officials in Los Angeles. (S) u

b2

b7C

Information received from Confidential [redacted] reflects that the personnel of the Soviet Consulate in Los Angeles expected the arrival of someone to represent the Soviet motion picture industry on the West Coast and that his arrival was anticipated for a considerable period of time prior to August 9, 1943, on which date he arrived. [redacted] further advised that upon his arrival KOLOTOZOV was readily accepted by members of the Consulate as the person to fill this position and as such was feted by them and introduced by them to various persons in the movie colony and other people in contact with the Soviet Consulate. During a visit made by GREGORI KHEIFETS, Vice Consul from the Soviet Consulate in San Francisco, between October 24 and 30, 1943, KOLOTOZOV was contacted twice at his home by KHEIFETS. A confidential source of information advised that during the first part of October, approximately October 3-6, subject KOLOTOZOV made a trip to San Francisco. This same source indicates that on October 9, 1943, subject departed to New York City where he has remained up to and including the date of this report. (S) u

b2

b7C

[redacted] indicated that on August 9 [redacted] who described himself as [redacted] of the motion picture industry in the United States conversed with much difficulty with subject KOLOTOZOV due to KOLOTOZOV's inability to speak the English language. [redacted] stated that he wanted to welcome KOLOTOZOV to the motion picture circles and advised that the latter could call on him for anything (S) u

b2

b7C

Confidential [redacted] on August 13, 1943, indicated that HERBERT BIBERMAN met [redacted] member of the Communist Party for the Northwest Section, and stated, "I understand you have a man in town whom I should meet". [redacted] advised that this was true and BIBERMAN wondered how he could meet him. [redacted] stated that BIBERMAN knew [redacted] and if he would give [redacted] a call the latter would arrange it. The unknown person referred to may be identical with subject KOLOTOZOV. (S) u

b7C

Special Agent [redacted] checked the Los Angeles Times "morgue" and obtained the following information:

104838

~~SECRET~~

An item dated July 5, 1943, at Moscow carried in the July 6 issue of the Times stated that KOLOTOSOFF, a Georgian by birth and a Soviet film producer, was to come to Hollywood as a representative of the Soviet film committee which controls the production and distribution of all Soviet and foreign films in Moscow. The item further stated that the subject would be the first Soviet representative to make a permanent position in Hollywood.

Subject allegedly was originally a chauffeur from Tiflis, who later studied at the Georgian Academy of National Art, where he became a studio director. It was indicated that he recently cooperated in making a picture about Leningrad entitled "Invincible".

Special Agent [] received information from Confidential [] indicating that there was to be a reception for subject KOLOTOSOFF at the Mocambo on Sunset Boulevard on August 22, 1943, from 4 to 7 P.M. This source stated that he did not intend to go to this affair and therefore put his invitation at the disposal of the office. This invitation stated that the National Council of Soviet-American Friendship would give a reception in honor of subject and wife on the above date and that there would be a showing of the subject's newest film, "The Unconquerable". (S) u

b2

b7C

b7D

This invitation was later given to Confidential [] who agreed to attend the reception and to report her observations. On August 24 this source gave the following information to Special Agents [] [] She advised that she had attended the reception from 4 to 6:30 at which time the affair broke up owing to the fact that subject's picture could not be exhibited because of fire restrictions. She indicated that the receiving line at the reception was composed of subject and his wife, the Soviet Consul, [] who presented the guests, and Mrs. HARRIS who acted as an interpreter for the subject and his wife who speak no English. (S) u

Throughout the reception the Soviet Consul moved about among the guests considerably and appeared to informant to be well acquainted in the film colony. Several short talks were made at the reception first by Dr. THOMAS L. HARRIS, who spoke on Exchange of Cultural Ideas between the United States and U. S. S. R. HARRIS further mentioned that meetings to foster better cultural relations with the Soviet Union were anticipated and that persons interested in such activities should address him at the Arcade Building, Los Angeles. (S) u

Later CHARLIE CHAPLIN addressed the group stating, "There is a great deal of good in Communism. We can use the good and segregate the bad." He also stated, "I am not a Communist; I am just a broken down comedian." (S) u

Various newspaper articles have appeared in and around Los Angeles regarding the subject and a few of these articles are noted as follows:

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

104839

1. The "Daily Variety" on September 9 carried an article which indicated that MIKHAIL KOLOTOZOV spoke on the 8th of September at a luncheon at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel given in his honor, and in his speech he emphasized the interest taken by people of the Soviet Union in American pictures. KOLOTOZOV said that his present visit here is a direct result of his countrymen's interest in American film offers. He said, "I am here not alone because of the interest of the Soviet people in American pictures, but really because of the interest of Soviet people in American people and because the motion picture is the best medium through which one people may learn about another. It is no exaggeration to say that America is the colossus of nations to the Soviet people, because of its great efficiency and its moral characteristics."

2. The "Hollywood Reporter" on September 13, 1943, contained an article which stated that LEONID ANTINOV, special representative of the Soviet Cinema Committee in the United States leaves the United States for a new post in London and that his work would be continued by subject KOLOTOZOV.

3. The Los Angeles "Times" on August 23 carried an article with regard to the reception given KOLOTOZOV at the Mocambo, referred to above, and indicated that some five hundred guests assembled for this reception and that the film which was to have been shown in KOLOTOZOV's honor could not be shown due to fire hazards. It further indicated that CHAPLIN in his reception speech declared that an understanding between the Russians and "us" would prove beneficial in the "post war peace", and urged the sending of an American delegation to Moscow to study not only films but politics as well. This article indicated that CHAPLIN commented as noted above regarding his being a Communist and added that he wondered "audibly" if Representative MARTIN DIES was in the house and then continued, "I'm glad I'm not a ballet dancer--if I were I might be banished from the country." He added that he plays a little tennis himself but he doubted if that could be used against him.

4. The "People's World" on August 28, 1943, carried an article written by VIRGINIA WARNER captioned "Soviet Director honored by Colony". This article stated that subject KOLOTOZOV was already known to the country as the director of "Wings of Victory" which is a screen story of the life of the famous Soviet flyer, VALERIE CHKALOV, and also the more recent "Siege of Leningrad" on which he collaborated with SERGEI GERASIMOV. This article continued by stating that the Soviet Emissary, a handsome man of forty, worked his way up from a job as a mechanic in a cinema theater to his present prominence as a director. Madam ELENA YUNGER KOLTOZOV, who accompanied him, the article comments, could write a chapter of her own because she is an actress of the stage and screen and founder of the Children's Theater. She was also reported to have been in Leningrad during the siege.

This article states that in the movement toward greater friendship between the United States and U. S. S. R., cultural relations are

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

already playing an important part. KOLOTOZOV will have the task of increasing that part, strengthening the artistic and commercial ties between the motion picture industries of the two countries.

Information has been received from Confidential National Defense informant [] regarding the reception given KOLOTOZOV at the Mocambo which is referred to above, and this information further reflects that there were in attendance a good number of people who followed the Communist Party line and also some known active Communists: [] CLIFFORD, ODETS, JOHN GARFIELD, etc.

At a later date subject KOLOTOZOV spoke through an interpreter at the Writers Congress held in Los Angeles which is reported by Confidential National Defense Informant [] to have been Communist inspired, dominated, and controlled.

Confidential [] indicated that subject KOLOTOZOV since his arrival in Los Angeles has purchased a 1942 Dodge sedan which bears license number 3-V-9143, formerly registered to one [] California; further that KOLOTOZOV has had issued for use in this automobile the following ration books: "A" ration book #317541 and "C" book #565834A and 564853A. These books were issued on the basis of an application by subject which stated that 1500 miles of driving were necessary monthly by the subject in connection with official Soviet Government business.

Confidential [] has given generally to the writer his impressions of the []

Confidential [] indicates that the other members of the KOLOTOZOV household are as follows: (x) u

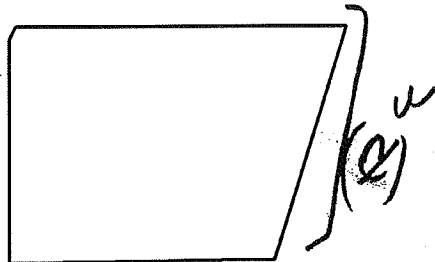
[] whose maiden name was [] and their daughter who is approximately five years old [] and her son, [] approximately six years old One additional person who is reported to be []

[] mentioned above, is reported to be []

This source has indicated that congratulatory messages regarding recovered territory in the Russian war were sent to the following people in Moscow by KOLOTOZOV: (x) u

~~SECRET~~

b7C



A picture of KOLOTOZOV appearing in the Los Angeles Times of August 22, 1943, is being retained in the file.

P E N D I N G

~~SECRET~~
-6-

UNDEVELOPED LEADS: THE SAN FRANCISCO FIELD DIVISION

AT SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

~~SECRET~~

Will report on the activity of KOLOTOZOV's visit to San Francisco during the period immediately preceding October 7, 1943, on which date he returned to Los Angeles. It is requested that this information be restricted to any information developed regarding subject's contacts with Communist Party members and his general activities while in San Francisco.](S)u

THE LOS ANGELES FIELD DIVISION

AT LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Will report information received from the Telephone Company regarding toll calls placed by subject as to contacts being made currently by him.

Will obtain and report contents of telegrams sent from subject's home telephone. (S)u

Will, through assistance of Confidential National Defense Informant ☐ attempt to examine subject's personal effects. (S)u

Will report results of mail cover presently being maintained on subject. (S)u

Will identify ☐ to whom the automobile presently owned by subject was formerly registered.

A copy of this report is being sent to the New York Field Division in view of the fact that KOLOTOZOV is presently in New York and because that office is undertaking investigation of KOLOTOZOV in a separate case.

~~SECRET~~