

**June 13, 1944**  
**Federal Bureau of Investigation Report on Activities  
of Mikhail Konstantin Kalatozov**

**Citation:**

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**Summary:**

Report on contacts made by Soviet film director Mikhail Kalatozov with Soviet embassy officials and members of the American film industry, including Orson Welles.

**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Original Scan

# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1  
THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **LOS ANGELES**

FILE NO. **100-19404**

REPORT MADE AT <b>LOS ANGELES</b>	DATE WHEN MADE <b>6/13/44</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE <b>4/15-5/28/44</b>	REPORT MADE BY <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></div>	<b>GIF</b>
TITLE <b>MIKHAIL KONSTANTIN KALATOZOV, w.29.</b>			CHARACTER OF CASE <b>INTERNAL SECURITY (R)</b>	

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WHERE SHOWN OTHERWISE~~

**SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:**

Activities of KALATOZOV from April 15, 1944 to May 28, 1944 set out. Continues to contact leading figures in the U.S. motion picture industry both socially and professionally, apparently for the purpose of arranging for the purchase of U.S. films and the distribution of Russian films in the U.S. His contacts continue to include members of the Communist element within the industry. Recent press releases distributed nationally have criticized his activities as Soviet propaganda agent in the U.S. GREGORI KHEIFETS, Soviet Vice Consul in San Francisco, during his periodic visits to Los Angeles, continues to hold conferences with KALATOZOV. *Jau*

11-13-97  
 CLASSIFIED BY *SP7/6/84*  
 DECLASSIFY ON: 25X 1, 6  
 # 329 571

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**REFERENCE:**

Report of Special Agent   
Los Angeles, April 15, 1944.

**DETAILS:**

AT LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Information received from confidential informants and through physical surveillances of MIKHAIL KALATOZOV, has reflected he has been extremely active in the motion picture industry in Hollywood, California arranging for the purchase of United States films to be shown in Russia, and the development of a plan involving the exchange of artists and motion pictures between the United States and Russia.

9-6-75  
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In addition, he has maintained contacts with GREGORI KHEIFETS, Soviet Vice Consul at San Francisco, California, whose espionage activities are being followed in another investigation. (S) u

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The physical surveillance which was conducted of GREGORI KHEIFETS during his recent visit to Los Angeles reflected that on April 25, 1944, at 10:40 A. M. KHEIFETS left the Russian Consulate on foot, carrying a manila envelope and walked to MIKHAIL KALATOZOV'S house, 4744 Los Feliz Boulevard, where he entered. At 12:55 P. M. KALATOZOV was observed to drive up to the house and enter the driveway in his own car. A woman, who is believed to be [redacted], was noted to be in the front seat of the car with him. At 2:05 P. M. KHEIFETS left the KALATOZOV residence with KALATOZOV in the latter's car, accompanied by [redacted]. They drove west on Los Feliz Boulevard to Hollywood Boulevard and Yucca Street, where KHEIFETS got out and continued west on Hollywood Boulevard on foot. (S) u

At 4:40 P. M. on April 28, 1944, KHEIFETS again entered KALATOZOV'S residence. He was also noted to be carrying an 8 x 11 inch manila envelope at this time. At the time of this visit it was also noted that a 1941 red Chevrolet convertible coupe, bearing California license [redacted] was parked in front of KALATOZOV'S house. This automobile is registered to [redacted]. It is to be noted that [redacted] has been in contact with KALATOZOV on several occasions. At 4:45 P. M. [redacted] left the KALATOZOV residence and drove to his home, where he was observed to enter his house. However, he was not in possession of the previously mentioned manila envelope. (S) u

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At 6:00 P. M. KHEIFETS emerged from KALATOZOV'S house and walked to the Russian Consulate. KHEIFETS subsequently returned to San Francisco aboard the Southern Pacific "Lark" at 9:22 P. M. on April 28th and did not recontact KALATOZOV during the interim. (S) u

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[redacted] advised that a check of MIKHAIL KALATOZOV'S account at the Bank of America, Vermont and Melbourne Branch, reflected that on April 24, 1944 KALATOZOV had a present balance of \$3,065.48. The account had an opening balance of \$2,685.93 and on March 31, 1944, a deposit was made by telegraphic transfer from New York in the amount of \$1,650.00.

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A review of the cancelled checks in KALATOZOV'S account failed to reflect any items of interest with the exception that on March 27th and on April 7th KALATOZOV wrote checks in the amount of \$20.00 and \$10.00 respectively to [redacted] 4655 Russell Avenue. [redacted] is believed to be [redacted] Hollywood, California.

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It was further noted that on April 4, 1944 KALATOZOV paid [redacted] who is believed to be [redacted] \$23.00. In addition, he paid [redacted] \$35.00 on April 13, 1944. There was a final item of [redacted] on April 11, 1944.

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[redacted] who is very close to the KALATOZOV household, advised that on April 4, 1944, [redacted] KALATOZOV'S secretary, was in contact with HARRY WARNER of Warner Brothers Pictures regarding a scientific film. [redacted] stated that she had phoned the Russian Consulate at San Francisco and they had advised that all they had was a two reel picture. [redacted] stated that she wanted a six reel picture, apparently dealing with a scientific matter. Later in the same conversation [redacted] talked to [redacted] who stated that the Consul from San Francisco was down recently and had the picture which she made reference to. [redacted] then advised [redacted] that he must have meant KHEIFETS as he was the person who was in Los Angeles recently. She stated that he is a special representative. [redacted] then stated that he (apparently meaning KHEIFETS) comes down to Los Angeles every two weeks. (\$) u

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Later this same day [redacted] was in contact with [redacted] for Artkino Films, at which time they talked about the picture for scientific purposes. [redacted] then stated that some man [redacted] was talking about a man from the Soviet Consulate in San Francisco who comes here about once each month. She then said that he must have him mixed up with KHEIFETS as the Consul has not been in Los Angeles for a long time. (\$) u

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[redacted] upon being contacted, advised that the [redacted] mentioned above is apparently [redacted] who has an office at [redacted] and who lives at [redacted] California. This source stated that [redacted] is HARRY WARNER'S [redacted] at the studio, especially with the selection of surgical instruments for the Warner Trailers, which were developed as an aid to civilian defense.

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He is described as [redacted] years old, 5'8" tall, weighing 160-165 pounds. In connection with this matter it is interesting to note that [redacted] has advised that HARRY WARNER is interested in securing a passport for [redacted] and others so that they may make a trip to the Soviet Union for the purpose of studying scientific medicine. An investigation is presently being conducted to determine [redacted] activities and his possible connection with GREGORI KHEIFETS.

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[redacted] has also advised that on April 10, 1944 [redacted] contacted [redacted] and asked CHARLES CHAPLIN to send the telegrams to O. K. the use of some of his films for the Russian Festival. On this same day [redacted] sent the following two telegrams via Western Union to Moscow. The first went to [redacted] Committee on Cinema, Moscow, U.S.S.R. and was worded in the following manner: (\$) u

"MR. KALATOZOV INFORMED ME OF SCHEDULED MOSCOW CHAPLIN FESTIVAL IM HAPPY TO HEAR EVEN TRYING WAR CONDITIONS UNABLE PREVENT YOUR STARTING ACTUAL EXCHANGE OF CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENTS BETWEEN TWO ALLIED PEOPLES OF UNITED STATES SOVIET UNION STOP IF THOSE CINEMA WORKERS UNABLE TO ATTEND FESTIVAL DESIRE TO SEE GOLD RUSH I DONT OBJECT TO EXHIBITION OF FILM AT PRIVATE SCREENINGS STOP PLEASE EXTEND MY GREETINGS TO PARTICIPANTS OF FESTIVAL AND WISHES FOR SPEEDY TRIUMPHANT VICTORY. CHARLES CHAPLIN. CHARGE NORMANDY 8363"

The second telegram was to AVERILL HARRIMAN, Embassy of the USA, Moscow, USSR, and stated: (\$) u

"BEHALF OF SOVIET CINEMA INDUSTRY MR. MIKHAIL KALATOZOV APPROACHED ME WITH REQUEST TO SHOW MY FILM GOLD RUSH, WHICH YOU HAVE, TO LIMITED AUDIENCE OF CHARLIE CHAPLIN FESTIVAL BEING ORGANIZED IN MOSCOW. I CONSIDER NECESSARY TO SUPPORT EVERY MOVE WHICH CEMENTS FRIENDSHIP OF TWO NATIONS UNITED STATE SOVIET UNION. THEREFORE REQUEST YOU PERMIT SOVIET CINEMA COMMITTEE EXHIBIT FILM FOR FESTIVAL AUDIENCI AS WELL AS AT PRIVATE SHOWINGS FOR SOVIET CINEMA WORKERS. SIGNED CHARLES CHAPLIN."

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[redacted] has further advised that KALATOZOV has had considerable contact with [redacted] Soviet Film Representative in Mexico City; [redacted] Artkino Films, New York; [redacted] in New York City; [redacted] and several other prominent persons in Hollywood engaged either in the production or distribution of films. These negotiations have apparently been for the purpose of securing American films for distribution in Russia and for the popularization and sale of Russian films in the United States. (S) U

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On April 15, 1944, [redacted] associate of CHARLES CHAPLIN, advised [redacted] that he was giving a dinner party for [redacted] prominent Negress dancer, and that he would like Mr. and Mrs. KALATOZOV to attend. [redacted] stated that he would have them come with Mr. CHAPLIN. The KALATOZOVs accepted the invitation. (S) U

On April 18, 1944, [redacted] talked with her husband, [redacted] and informed him that MIKHAIL KALATOZOV had just received the Order of the Red Star upon the recommendation of the Soviet Government. She was at a loss at that time to determine why it had been presented to him. However, at a later date she informed another party that he received the Order of the Red Star for his participation in the Defense of Leningrad. (S) U

The April 7th issue of the "Hollywood Reporter", which is a daily movie newspaper, contained an article which was the result of a press conference which KALATOZOV recently held with the representatives of various Los Angeles newspapers.

This article stated that negotiations were now under way between a major American movie company and KALATOZOV for reciprocal distribution of Hollywood and Russian films in both countries. The purpose of this deal is to start a flow of pictures between the two countries immediately, working out a program of distribution for suitable films acceptable to the peoples of both the United States and the sixteen Soviet Republics.

The article stated that the inference was given that any suitable American pictures from any major studio would be included, "thus obviously giving the American producing organization involved in the deal a strong bargaining weapon in other directions". The article continued that as evidence of a desire on the part of the U.S.S.R. to promote cordial and friendly relations with the American industry, a plan has already been inaugurated for a series of programs to be given at the House of Cinema Workers in Moscow, presenting representative films of various American producers and directors. The program leads of this month with CHARLES CHAPLIN'S outstanding productions. SERGE EISENSTEIN, PUDOVKIN, GERRASIMOV, and other leading Russian directors and writers will read papers on CHAPLIN'S work and then part-

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icipate in general discussions with the audience over a period of a week showing CHAPLIN'S picture.

This procedure will be followed with programs of the film works of D. W. GRIFFITH, JOHN FORD, FRANK CAPRA, ROUBEN MAMOULIN and others. KALATOZOV stated that on all American productions purchased, exhibition rights for showing in the U.S.S.R. will cover five year periods.

He will continue his selection of Hollywood productions, making recommendations to the Moscow authorities on such pictures as he feels will come within Soviet film policy. Last week KALATOZOV negotiated a deal with SAMUEL GOLDWYN of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer for "North Star", "The Little Foxes" and "The Hurricane". It was said that these selections point to the general requirements of the Soviet industry as far as movies were concerned. KALATOZOV said that this policy was part of a plan for the cultural exchange of ideas of all Allied countries looking to a better understanding after the war. He said that these arrangements would be duplicated in other countries that were willing to cooperate.

[redacted] advised that in connection with the above negotiations, KALATOZOV has apparently purchased most of his films to date from SAMUEL GOLDWYN of the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios. He recently purchased the three pictures mentioned above for a price of \$115,000.00 (\$) u

Another matter of interest in connection with KALATOZOV was reported by [redacted] who stated that on May 9, 1944, [redacted] a reporter for "Time" magazine, called [redacted] requesting an appointment with KALATOZOV. [redacted] stated that his New York office asked him to obtain a story which would appear in that week's issue. [redacted] [redacted] advised him that KALATOZOV was tied up during the week and desired that the appointment be made the following week. The conversation terminated with [redacted] and [redacted] being unable to arrive at a definite date for the interview. (\$) u

In a recent conversation [redacted] advised an unidentified man concerning KALATOZOV'S biography. She stated to this newspaperman that when in Georgia, Russia, KALATOZOV entered the Polytechnic Institute where he devoted all his leisure time to reading works of art and philosophy and even tried his hand at painting. At an early age he became fascinated with the idea of film production. Twenty years ago he began working in film production in one of the largest film studios, holding various jobs (\$) u

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from laboratory worker to cameraman. He finally launched an independent production. His first steps were in the field of teacher shorts. After this came his first full length feature, "Gypsy Blood", then "Ten Days", and others. One of his most successful films was a full length documentary picture called "Svanetia" produced in 1931. This same year KALATOZOV began to take an interest in the theory of cinema production. He entered the Academy of Art and Science and after obtaining a degree, was appointed as a director in one of the biggest studios in the Soviet Union. From 1936 to 1943 he was in the Leningrad Studios as a director and that is where he made his picture "Wings of Victory". During the war KALATOZOV collaborated in making the film of the "Siege of Leningrad". In the present war KALATOZOV participated in the Defense of Leningrad and was decorated by the Government with the Order of the Red Star. He was appointed here last year; in June he arrived in America. (S) u

[redacted] on March 2, 1944 advised that [redacted] contacted [redacted] of the Russian Embassy, Washington, D. C. and stated that he intends to ask the Ambassador to recall KALATOZOV to New York from Los Angeles, stating that he [redacted] could see no necessity for having both him and [redacted] in California while [redacted] has to handle so much of their work in New York. It is of interest to note that [redacted] arrived in the United States from the Soviet Union in February 1944 and went to New York in March, 1944 where he took up duties similar to those of KALATOZOV in Hollywood. [redacted] who arrived with [redacted] subsequently went to Mexico City and is attached to the Russian Embassy there in charge of Soviet film interests. (S) u

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FRANK C. WALDROP, nationally known columnist, writing in the Washington, D. C. "Times Herald" of May 5, 1944 devoted his column to the large number of Russian propaganda agents operating in this country at the present time. He stated that there is pending now before the State Department a proposal by STALIN to confer numerous decorations upon certain persons in Hollywood. Those named were JACK WARNER, SAM GOLDWYN, EDWARD G. ROBINSON, WALTER HUSTON, OSCAR HOMOLKA, VICTOR FRANCEN, JAK LEYDA, MANNART KIPPERT and JORIS IIVENS. He stated that this was the first of a long list to be rewarded and that it was a result of their parts in making "Mission to Moscow" and "North Star". WALDROP stated that KALATOZOV was behind this project and that he had been in Hollywood since August "to strengthen the artistic and commercial ties between the cinema people of the U.S. and those of the Soviet Union". He stated that KALATOZOV is listed with the United States State Department as a diplomatic representative.



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The May 10th edition of the Los Angeles "Daily News" carried an article devoted to KALATOZOV'S activities in the U. S. film industry. It stated that in addition to the mutual exchange of motion pictures to bring about international understanding KALATOZOV was also planning an exchange of talent which will probably have to wait until after the war. The article stated that he hopes to eventually see American directors working in Soviet motion picture studios. In addition he would like to see the United States send technical crews along, both for the understanding it would give them of the Soviet industry and the opportunity it would give the Russians to observe the U. S. methods of work. The article further stated that at the present time there is a CHAPLIN program in progress in Moscow which was previously mentioned in this report and that the future agenda calls for seminar discussions of the work of JOHN FORD, FRANK CAPRA, D. W. GRIFFITH, LEWIS MILESTONE, and a seminar on the acting of BETTE DAVIS. KALATOZOV'S immediate interest in this country is to obtain wider distribution for Soviet films and a broader distribution of American films in Russia. This article also stated that during the months he has been in the United States KALATOZOV frequently has run into the argument that we give only limited distribution to Soviet films because they are rampant with propaganda.

[redacted] has further advised that on May 14, 1944 KALATOZOV gave a dinner party at his home, 4744 Los Feliz Boulevard at which ROBERT ROSSEN, [redacted] ORSON WELLES, [redacted] and several other prominent persons in Hollywood were in attendance. (S) u

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On May 19th this same source advised that KALATOZOV was contacted by a woman in Mexico City representing [redacted] in that country. The woman stated that BOLTANSKI has had talks with Mexican firms regarding distribution of Russian newsreels and feature films. [redacted] further advised that he wanted to meet KALATOZOV and [redacted] in Los Angeles in the beginning of June. KALATOZOV advised that he would wire [redacted] later. (S) u

On this same date KALATOZOV sent a telegram to [redacted] Cinema Committee, Moscow, U.S.S.R. which stated "THIS CABLE MY SECOND REPLY ON STEREOKINO NEGOTIATIONS WITH MORRIS COMPANY AND OTHERS WERE DISCONTINUED IN NOVEMBER DUE ABSENCE YOUR APPROVAL AMERICAN PATENT ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY PROPOSED STEREOKINO DIRECTLY CONNECTED WITH RKO AGREEMENT WHICH ALSO AWAITS YOUR REPLY PLEASE WIRE WHAT FILMS YOU RECEIVE FROM ME." (S) u

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On May 22, 1944 KALATOZOV sent a wire to [redacted] Russian Consulate, 2563 Divisadero Street, San Francisco, stating "PLEASE SHIP IMMEDIATELY FILM QUOTE RUSSIAN PEOPLE UNQUOTE TO [redacted] GOVERNMENT PURCHASING COMMISSION 233 SW SIXTH AVENUE PORTLAND, OREGON." (S) u

[redacted] has also advised that during the period of this report KALATOZOV has maintained contact with and visited practically all of the major studios in Hollywood, apparently with regard to reviewing and purchasing U. S. films. (S) u

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