



FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

**JOHN STEINBECK**

**FILE NUMBERS: 9-4583  
AND 100-106224**

SUBJECT John Steinbeck

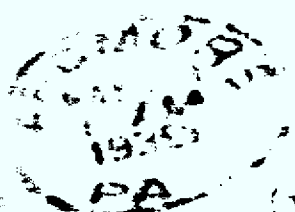
FILE # 9-4583

SECTION \_\_\_\_\_

PAGES REVIEWED 10

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THIS SIDE OF CARD IS FOR ADDRESS

Joe Whaling  
302 S. 10th St  
Anderson, Pa.

9-4583  
Released in total  
with no excisions  
10/28

C

D

10-11-59

you are going to be an judge will  
 do it if I don't take this card  
 to police at least then you do  
 as you will do worse than a  
 to do it now it is 1959



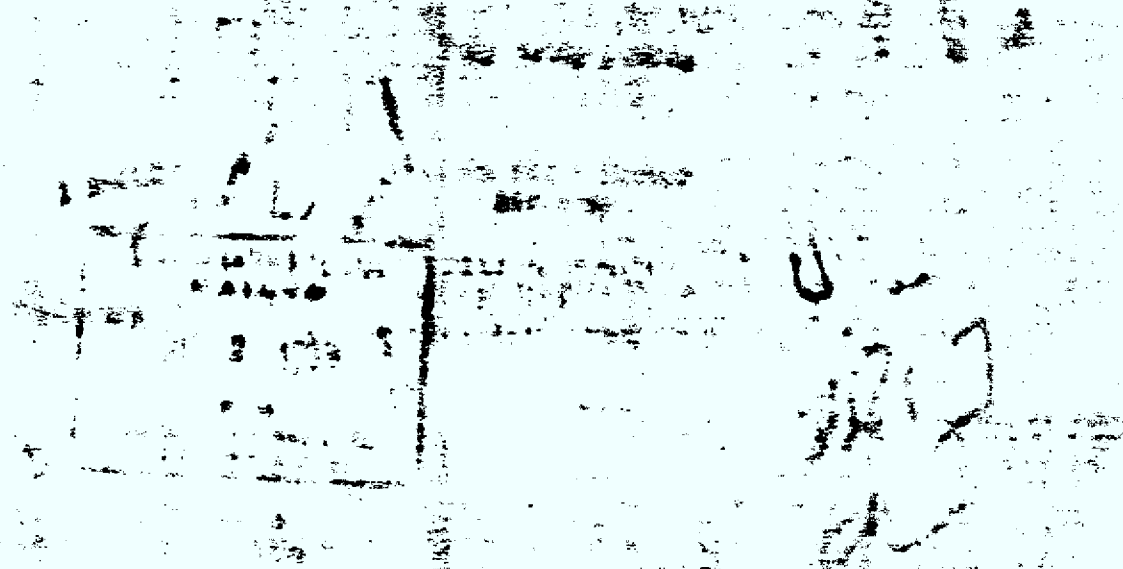
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Centre

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117

### STEINBECK GETS EXTORTION THREAT

SAN JOSE, Cal., May 28 (AP) - Sheriff's deputies announced today that novelist John Steinbeck had received a letter and telegram from Reno, Nev. demanding money, "or else."

Deputy Jack Gibbons and Eugene Denton said the letter was signed "Mauley B. Campbell" and demanded \$200. The telegram, signed "Melancholy Black" offered no specific sum. The deputies said they believe the letters were sent by some kind of organized arrangement.

Reno police and postal inspectors are co-operating with the sheriff's office in an investigation.

STANDARD 215  
EXHIBIT 101



**Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice**

San Francisco, California,  
June 13, 1939.

Director,  
Federal Bureau of Investigation,  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

RE: **WALTER H. CAMPBELL;  
JAMES W. WILSON, Victim;  
Extortion.**

Reference is made to Bureau letter dated June 6, 1939, in the above captioned matter.

WALTER H. CAMPBELL, 711 1/2 12th Street, San Jose, California, has information relative to information contained in Bureau letter of reference. He stated that JAMES WILSON, a Democrat, residing in Santa Clara County, had received a letter asking for \$200.00 and later received a telegram requesting money. He stated no letters were made in either of these communications, that inquiry was made of ALBERT W. SMITH, United States Commissioner at San Jose, California, and at his request Post Office Inspector in Charge, C. E. WATKINSON, at San Francisco was notified and he suggested that these two documents be forwarded to his office on May 22, 1939. WILSON advised that he did not

by his failure to do so. WILSON stated that he did not recall the letter and that he was not sure of the date of these communications and that he did not recall the name of the person who is said to have written the letter.

ALBERT W. SMITH, Chief of Santa Clara County, was interviewed and had no additional information. Deputy Sheriff JAMES WILSON, who investigated this case was out of town and not available for an interview.

Inquiry at the office of C. E. WATKINSON, Post Office Inspector in Charge, San Francisco, disclosed the facts do not indicate a violation within the jurisdiction of the FBI since the letter and telegrams were requests for financial assistance and no threats were made. They were sent to H. S. BROWN, Post Office Inspector, Reno, Nevada, for appropriate investigation and no copies were received. WALTER H. CAMPBELL is reported to have lived at the Wilson Hotel, Reno, at the time these letters were written.

WALTER H. CAMPBELL

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

JUN 14 1939

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE




Letter to Director  
from S.A.C. San Francisco

June 19, 1939  
- page 2 -

In accordance with Bureau instructions, no investigation is being made at this Division, although copies of this letter and Bureau letter, with enclosure, are being forwarded herewith to the Salt Lake City Field Division for its information only and as a basis for further investigation, should the Bureau desire that office to conduct any investigation at Reno, where the original letter and telegram were apparently written.

Very truly yours,

  
S.J.L. PIMMER,  
Special Agent in Charge

ALA:fb  
9-173

AIR MAIL  
a/m. 1939.

cc: Salt Lake City  
S.A.C.

The first defendant, one **James Earl Ray**, was arrested at the Fort Victoria  
 military installation in London, England, on 14 June 1968. He is alleged to be the  
 assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Memphis, Tennessee, on 4 April 1968.  
 The trial of Dr. King's assassin is in progress. The trial  
 was the result of information indicating subject had engaged in  
 the assassination of Dr. King with one **John Edgar Hoover**, Director of  
 the FBI. Subject is a citizen of the United States and has been  
 advised as a result of the allegations of his arrest. He has  
 advised that he is not guilty of the charges against him. He has  
 advised that on one occasion he had been arrested and that he  
 had been subject to this procedure and that he had not been at the  
 trial of Dr. King's assassin.

Name: **James Earl Ray**  
 Date of Birth: **512 00000 0000**  
 Place of Birth: **London, England**  
 Religion: **None**  
 Race: **White**  
 Height: **5' 10"**  
 Weight: **170 lbs**  
 Eyes: **Blue**  
 Hair: **Black**  
 Occupation: **Formerly a professional writer and now  
 a freelance writer.**  
 Marital Status: **Single**  
 Education: **High School Graduate**  
 Previous Service: **None**

**A description of subject as contained in Army records is as follows:**

Name: **James Earl Ray**  
 Social Security No.: **1-000-000000**  
 Date of Birth: **512 0000 0000**  
 Place of Birth: **London, England**  
 Religion: **None**  
 Race: **White**  
 Height: **5' 10"**  
 Weight: **170 lbs**  
 Eyes: **Blue**  
 Hair: **Black**  
 Occupation: **Formerly a professional writer and now  
 a freelance writer.**  
 Marital Status: **Single**  
 Education: **High School Graduate**  
 Previous Service: **None**

Page  
Number  
Date

Page  
Number  
Date

Subject

The following information was obtained from the records of the  
Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, and the  
Bureau of Reclamation, and is being furnished to you for your  
information. It is noted that the information is being furnished  
to you in confidence and is not to be disseminated outside of  
your agency.

The information is being furnished to you for your information  
and is not to be disseminated outside of your agency.

CHARGE

[Faint, mostly illegible text, possibly a list of charges or a report body]

[Faint text, possibly a signature block or a specific section header]

4-1583

SUBJECT John Steinbeck

FILE # 100-106224

SECTION \_\_\_\_\_

PAGES REVIEWED 107

PAGES RELEASED ~~██~~ 105

PAGES REFERRED ~~██~~ 0

From  
**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

TO  
**Official indicated below by check mark**

**MEMORANDUM**

**ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
 HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
 EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
 OTHERWISE**

- Solicitor General . . . . .
- Assistant to the Attorney General . . . . .
- Assistant Attorney General Arnold, Anti-Trust . . . . .
- Assistant Attorney General Clark, Tax . . . . .
- Assistant Attorney General Shea, Claims . . . . .
- Assistant Attorney General Littell, Lands . . . . .
- Assistant Attorney General Berge, Criminal . . . . .
- Assistant Solicitor General Fahy . . . . .
- Mr. Hoover, Director, FBI . . . . .
- Mr. Bennett, Director of Prisons . . . . .
- Mr. Schofield, Immigration and Naturalization . . . . .
- Judge Martin, Director, War Risk Bureau . . . . .
- Mr. Lawrence, Director, Bond and Spirits . . . . .
- Mr. Quinn, Administrative Assistant . . . . .
- Mr. Holtzoff, Special Assistant . . . . .
- Mr. Townsend, Special Assistant . . . . .
- Mr. Smith, Special Defense Unit . . . . .
- Mr. Lyons, Pardon Attorney . . . . .
- Mr. Palmer, Director of Personnel . . . . .
- Parole Board . . . . .
- Mr. Donaldson, Chief Clerk . . . . .
- Mrs. Plumley, Appointment Clerk . . . . .
- Mr. DiGirolamo, Division of Records . . . . .
- Mr. Adler, Division of Supplies . . . . .
- Mr. McKavitt, Librarian . . . . .
- Mr. Carus] . . . . .
- Mr. Allen . . . . .
- Miss Bell . . . . .
- Mrs. Johnson . . . . .
- Miss Lanke . . . . .
- Miss Coulson . . . . .
- Mr. Franke . . . . .

- Mr. Tolson . . . . .
- Mr. E. A. Tamm . . . . .
- Mr. Clegg . . . . .
- Mr. Glavin . . . . .
- Mr. Ladd . . . . .
- Mr. Nichols . . . . .
- Mr. Rosen . . . . .
- Mr. Tracy . . . . .
- Mr. Carson . . . . .
- Mr. Coffey . . . . .
- Mr. Hendon . . . . .
- Mr. Kramer . . . . .
- Mr. McGuire . . . . .
- Mr. Quinn Tamm . . . . .
- Mr. Nease . . . . .
- Miss Gandy . . . . .

12 7 1956  
 3 30 07 1956

OFFICE OF  
THE ATTORNEY GENERAL



May 11, 1942

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. HOOVER

Will you note the attached  
letter of John Steinbeck, the playwright?

*h/b*  
Francis Biddle  
Attorney General

Mr. Tolson.....
Mr. E. A. Tamm.....
Mr. Clegg.....
Mr. Glavin.....
Mr. Ladd.....
Mr. Nichols.....
Mr. Rosen.....
Mr. Tracy.....
Mr. Carson.....
Mr. Coffey.....
Mr. Hendon.....
Mr. Kramer.....
Mr. McGuire.....
Mr. Quinn Tamm.....
Mr. Nease.....
Miss Gandy.....

100-106224-1  
 FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
 15 MAY 22 1942  
 U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

RECORDED

I ENCL. 25  
 5/18/42  
 mkb  
 mkb

5/18/42  
 mkb  
 mkb

EX-1



May 11, 1943

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. HOOVER

Will you note the attached  
letter of John Steinbeck, the playwright?

Francis Biddle  
Attorney General

U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE  
F. B. I.  
RECEIVED-SECURITY DIV.

MAY 25 1943

td

THE BEDFORD  
118 East 40th Street  
New York

Caledonia 5-1000

Dear Mr. Biddle:

I'm very sorry I haven't been able to see you.

Do you suppose you could ask Edgar's boys to stop stepping on my heels? They think I'm an enemy alien. It's getting tiresome.

Congratulations on the S.S. matter,

/s/ John Steinbeck

COPY

100-106224-1

KTD:lem  
5-18-42  
MAY 21 1942  
RECORDED  
EX-100 100-106224-1

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
OTHERWISE

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Reference is made to your memorandum dated May 11, 1942, transmitting a letter addressed to you by John Steinbeck, in which Steinbeck complained that he was being investigated as an enemy alien by representatives of this Bureau.

I wish to advise that Steinbeck is not being and has never been investigated by this Bureau. His letter to you is returned herewith.

Respectfully,

John Edgar Hoover  
Director

Inclosure

SENT FROM D. O.  
TIME 2:00 pm  
DATE 5-21-42  
BY W.M.

RECEIVED  
DEPT. OF JUSTICE  
MAY 20 8 10 PM '42

- Mr. Tolson \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. E. A. Tamm \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Clegg \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Glavin \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Ladd \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Nichols \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Rosen \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Tracy \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Carson \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Coffey \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Hendon \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Holloman \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. McGuire \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Quinn Tamm \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Nease \_\_\_\_\_
- Miss Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

RECEIVED - ROO 4 8 30 PM  
MAY 20 8 03 PM '42  
U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE  
MAY 26 1942

RECEIVED - ROO 4 8 30 PM  
MAY 20 8 03 PM '42  
U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE  
MAY 20 8 10 PM '42  
Handwritten signatures and initials: [illegible], [illegible], [illegible]



Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.

- Mr. Tolson \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. E. A. Tamm \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Clegg \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Glavin \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Ladd \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Nichols \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Rosen \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Tracy \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Carson \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Coffey \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Hendon \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Kramer \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. McGuire \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Harbo \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Quinn Tamm \_\_\_\_\_
- Tele. Room \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Nease \_\_\_\_\_
- Miss Beahn \_\_\_\_\_
- Miss Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

*PR*  
**EX-111**

October 27, 1942

5:05 P. M.

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. E. A. TAMM

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
OTHERWISE

Miss Collins in the Attorney General's office telephoned and advised that the Attorney General wanted to see the Bureau's file on John Steinbeck tomorrow morning (Oct. 28th).

Respectfully,

*[Signature]*  
D. STALCUP.

5:45 P. M. Miss Collins was advised that the Bureau had conducted no investigation concerning John Steinbeck and her attention was called to the Bureau's memorandum of May 21, 1942, in which the Attorney General was so advised.

ds



NOV 7 1942

RECORDED

100-106224-2

12	NOV 28 1942
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EX - 36

J. EDGAR HOOVER  
DIRECTOR



**Federal Bureau of Investigation**  
**United States Department of Justice**  
**Washington, D. C.**  
**October 30, 1942**

CC-287

- Mr. Tolson ✓
- Mr. E. A. Tamm ✓
- Mr. Clegg \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Glavin \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Ladd \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Nichols ✓
- Mr. Rosen \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Tracy \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Carson \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Coffey \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Hendon \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Kramer \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. McGuire \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Harbo \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Quinn Tamm \_\_\_\_\_
- Tele. Room \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Nease \_\_\_\_\_
- Miss Beahm \_\_\_\_\_
- Miss Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

EAT:RFK  
Call 6:05 PM  
Typed 7:45 PM

2/c

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

Re: JOHN STEINBECK - AUTHOR

**ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
OTHERWISE**

173

In response to her previous request I telephonically advised Miss Collins in the Attorney General's office that we had in our possession two pamphlets which concerned the above-entitled individual. One of these entitled "Their Blood Is Strong" was written by the subject and published in 1938 by the Simon J. Lubin Society of California. The material in this pamphlet is similar to that contained in his book "The Grapes of Wrath" and concerns the activities of migratory agricultural workers. The other pamphlet, which was furnished to us in May, 1938, is entitled "Writers Take Sides" and contains the opinions of several hundred authors as to whether they are for or against Franco. I informed Miss Collins that the subject was one of the authors quoted therein and further advised her I would make these pamphlets available to her for whatever purpose she may need them. Miss Collins stated she would appreciate the use of them very much.

Respectfully,

*EAT*  
Edward A. Tamm

~~RECORDED~~  
RECORDED

274

100-126224-3		
F	B	I
15	NOV 8	1942



58 NOV 18 1942

14



West Palm Beach, Florida.

December 3, 1942.

Hon. J. Edgar Hoover,  
Chief of F.B.I. Washington, D.C.

Subject: JOHN ERNST STEINBECK  
Complaint: Proposed agitation of  
Japanese Relocation  
Centers, California & West.

Sir:--

For some time past I have resented books by Steinbeck, for they portray such unrepresentative pictures of our American life in rural districts. I live near the Everglades farms district and most of the migrants out there live better than I do, while they are here for the picking season.

46578

Steinbeck's name is John Ernst Steinbeck. His father was a German, born in Florida of German parents, according to the story in WHO'S WHO in U.S. writing circles. But of course the author furnishes the information about himself.

My reason for writing this is that it is rumored that Steinbeck is now gathering information for a heart-throb about the sad condition of Japanese in Relocation Centers in the West. I think it would be best for all concerned that he be not permitted to issue such a story until after the war-- if ever.

Under strict enforcement of postal regulations, Steinbeck's books would not be permitted to go through U.S. mails, because of their scurrilous and obscene passages. These are held up as examples of the immoral life of the U.S. in foreign countries opposed to us. I understand his books have been translated into German and circulated as "horrible examples," but I cannot prove this.

THIS LETTER DOES NOT NEED A REPLY.  
IT IS ONLY SENT TO YOU. . . . . AS INFORMATION.

You may have all this information from other sources; but I will explain why I am writing it. During the other World War I made reports direct to [redacted] when they did not concern local matters, but came to my attention regarding other sections of the country. I had authority to do this.

Where is Mr. Steinbeck?  
Is he attempting to get information concerning government housing of soldiers?  
He might dress in uniform and hang around incomplete camps like Boca Raton, trying to get information as to inadequacy of camps before they are completed and outfitted perfectly. I hope this will not occur.

RECORDED & INDEXED

Respectfully yours

Mail address [redacted]

b7c

DEC 18 3 35 PM '42

"H-13"  
EX-2

JOHN STEINBECK

Extensive investigation  
conducted in 1942

12-15-42

140

X

100-106224-34  
100-106224-1  
TMB:DCW

46577

Date: December 19, 1943  
To: Mr. Dillon S. Myer  
Director  
War Relocation Authority  
Harr Building  
Washington, D. C.  
From: J. Edgar Hoover - Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Subject: JOHN ERNST STEINBECK

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
OTHERWISE

For your information and whatever consideration you may  
deem advisable, there is set forth below the pertinent portion of  
a communication recently received at this Bureau from one [redacted]  
[redacted] West Palm Beach, Florida

West Palm Beach, Florida,

December 8, 1943.

Hon. J. Edgar Hoover  
Chief of F. B. I. Washington, D.C.  
Subject: JOHN ERNST STEINBECK  
Complaint: Proposed agitation  
of Japanese Relocation  
Centers, California  
& West.

Sir—

"For some time past I have resented books by Steinbeck, for  
they portray such unrepresentative pictures of our American life in  
rural districts. I live near the Everglades farms district and  
most of the migrants out there live better than I do, while they are  
here for the picking season.

"Steinbeck's name is John Ernst Steinbeck. His father was a  
German, born in Florida of German parents, according to the story in  
WFO'S WFO in U.S. writing circles. But of course the author  
furnishes the information about himself.

"My reason for writing this is that it is rumored that  
Steinbeck is now gathering information for a heart-throb about the  
and condition of Japanese in Relocation Centers in the West. I  
think it would be best for all concerned that he be not permitted  
to issue such a story until after the war-- if ever."

- Mr. Tolson \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. E. A. Tamm \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Clegg \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Glavin \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Ladd \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Nichols \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Rosen \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Tracy \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Carson \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Coffey \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Hendon \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Kramer \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. McGuire \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Quinn Tamm \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Nease \_\_\_\_\_
- Miss Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

DEC 21 1943 P.M.  
52 JAN 8 1944

21. 44 45 21 11 31

*[Handwritten signatures and initials]*



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WAR DEPARTMENT  
Military Intelligence Service  
Washington

AUG 13 1943

Subject: Letter of Transmittal.

To: Honorable J. Edgar Hoover,  
Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation,  
United States Department of Justice,  
Washington, D. C.

The attached communications are forwarded for your information and such action as you consider advisable.

For the Chief, Military Intelligence Service:

*L R Forney*

L. R. FORNEY  
Colonel, General Staff Corps,  
Asst. Executive Officer, MIS.

Enclosures:

*M*  
*ENCL 1*  
*35*

*D143 / 2<sup>2</sup> / 158*

DECLASSIFIED BY 2333-PLG Army letter dtd 8-2-79  
ON 1-22-79 LA  
*CA/tha*

RECORDED & INDEXED  
F B  
35 AUG 18 1943

*D143* SE 4  
EX 4

55 SEP 4 1943

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

*Headquarters Western Defense Command and 4th Army  
ACIS, 8-2, Presidio of San Francisco, California -*

IX-0/S-14305c

27 July 1943

SUBJECT: John E. STEINBECK, 15041 De Gado Drive, Sherman Oaks, California

TO : Chief, MIS, War Department, Washington, D. C.

1. Attention is invited to our CI-R1 report dated 27 January 1943, Subject as above, representing investigation conducted in the vicinity of Los Angeles, California, and memorandum report dated 25 April 1943, Subject as above, covering investigation conducted in the Second Service Command previously forwarded your office.

2. Inclosed find CI-R1 report dated 13 July 1943 representing investigation conducted in the vicinity of San Francisco, California.

3. This office does not concur in the recommendations by the reporting agent in closing report. In view of substantial doubt as to Subject's loyalty and discretion, it is recommended that Subject not be considered favorably for a commission in the Army of the United States.

4. Undeveloped leads will not be followed in the absence of request, and this case is considered closed in this office.

For the AC of S, G-2:

BORIS T. PASH  
Lt. Col., M.I.

Chief, Counter Intelligence Branch

1 Incl: (in trip)  
CI-R1 dtd 7-13-43

*John E. Steinbeck*

*MIS Dist: WSH.*

*✓ FBI  
File*

DECLASSIFIED BY 2333 per Army letter dtd 8-2-28

*Caolbia*

*8/11/43*

**CONFIDENTIAL**

*100-106224-3X1*

MILITARY INTELLIGENCE DIVISION

File No. LA-3493 TL-9/S-14306a  
Date 15 July, 1948  
Subject:

Investigation requested by CIC, SAC, San Francisco, Calif.  
Office of origin A G of S, G-3, WDC & 4th Army  
Report made at San Francisco, California  
Report made by C. C. SWINDBE, Agent, WDC  
Period covered 3 Feb, 1948 to 15 July, 1948  
Character of investigation Personnel - S  
Status of Case Closed

JOHN E. STEINBECK  
18041 Pol Wade Drive  
Marina Oaks, California

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION:

By letter dated 16 February, 1948, from the A G of S, G-3, WDC and Fourth Army, Presidio of San Francisco, California, to the CIC, Branch Office, G-3, WDC and Fourth Army, San Francisco, California, it was requested that a proper investigation be made in this area to determine the discretion, integrity and loyalty of Subject, and his suitability to hold a commission in the army of the United States.

DETAILS:

Foreign-point Trade Outline: This CI-MI supplement provides record prepared at Los Angeles, California, under date of 27 January, 1948, made by Special Agent B.L. Johnson, CIC, Los Angeles, California.

1. Personal Data:

Birth: 27 January, 1908, Salinas, California.  
Present Age: 41 years  
Description: Height 5' 11"; weight 207 lbs.  
Characteristics: Loyal, honest, sincere, competent, thorough, sensitive nature. (Names A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H)  
Marital Status: Received interlocutory decree of divorce 12 March, 1948.

2. Family Data:

Father: John Ernest Steinbeck (deceased), born in St. Augustine, Florida.  
Mother: Olive Esther Steinbeck (deceased), born in Salinas, California.  
Sister: Mrs. V.F. Baker, Carmel, California.  
Wife: Carol Steinbeck, interlocutory decree of divorce, 12 March, 1948.

Forwarded, \_\_\_\_\_  
MID, Washington, D. C. \_\_\_\_\_ 3 copies ✓  
IO, Los Angeles Office \_\_\_\_\_ 1 copy  
Procurement District \_\_\_\_\_ copies  
FHRU: BIO, LA \_\_\_\_\_ copies

Reviewed and Approved:  
For the AC of S, G-2:

RICHARD C. HAM  
Major, Inf.  
Chief, Investigations and Section  
Counter Intelligence Branch

Incl #1-2



1-2483 EL-8/2-14306c  
JOHN B. SCHNEBERG

3. Education: 1915 - 1919, Salinas Union School, graduated; 5 years at Leland Stanford University; majored in journalism; did not graduate.

4. Employment: At present working for self as an author; has sold stories to the Motion Picture Industry. March 1942 to December 1942, employed as Special Consultant to the Secretary of War, assigned to the Commanding General, Army Air Forces. Made an exhaustive study of flying and training, and now writing an official book on this subject. No salary. December 1942 to March 1943, employed by the Office of War Information, 370 Madison Avenue, New York City, as a Foreign News editor at a salary of \$3000.00 per year. Also Vice-President of the Pacific Biological Laboratories, Inc., for a number of years where he helped to operate a commercial laboratory.

5. Military History: None

6. Mail and Office Check: None

7. Addresses: 1942 to present, 15041 Del Cade Drive, Sherman Oaks Calif. December, 1941 to March, 1942, New York City, New York. July, 1936 to December, 1941, Los Gatos, California. Subject has lived most of his life near Salinas and Carmel, California, except for the time spent in Los Gatos and on intermittent trips to Los Angeles, New York City, and other parts of the world. (Memos B, H)

8. Residence Check:

Mr. Hugh Porter, 244 California Street, San Francisco California; purchaser of Subject's former residence at Los Gatos. (U) Memo B)  
Mr. F. Rainari, neighbor of Subject at Los Gatos, California. (S) Memo H)

9. Organizations:

- \*Western Writers' Congress, 1936
- \*Committee to Aid Agricultural Organization, 1938. (Memo L)
- \*Schneiderman-Darcy Defense Committee, 1940 (Memo L)
- \*Emergency Youth Assembly, 1937. (Memo L)

LA-3493 EX-0/2-14308a  
JOHN H. STRINECK

9. Organizations: (continued)

- ~~International Union of Revolutionary Writers of Moscow.~~
- ~~League of American Writers, 1941.~~
- ~~National Institute of Arts and Letters, 1939.~~

10. Principal Assignments: Marine Biology.

11. References: No references given in San Francisco, California area.

12. Acquaintances: Mr. Martin Roy, Searsville, California. (S) (Name E)  
Miss Barbara Burke, 3065 Jackson Street, San Francisco, California. (S) (Name G)  
Mr. H.L. Roberts, Cashier, First National Bank, Los Gatos, California. (S) (Name F)  
Mr. Webster Street, of Halsea, Martin & Ferrante, California. (S) (Name H)  
Mrs. Carol Steinbeck, 425 Hardley Avenue, Pacific Grove, California. (S) (Name I)

13. Credit Record: Satisfactory (Name E)

14. Police Record: San Francisco Police Dept. NR (Name L)  
Federal Bureau of Investigation, San Francisco. NR (Name L)  
ONI, 12th Naval District, San Francisco. NR but NO files refer to one, JOHN STRINECK, PO Box 281, Los Gatos, Calif. as subscriber to PEOPLE'S WORLD as of Sept. 1939. (Name L)  
American Legion Radical Research Bureau, San Francisco, California show record of Subject from November 9, 1938 through June 4, 1939. (Name L)  
Sheriff's Office, Santa Clara County, Calif. NR (Name M)  
Los Gatos Police Dept. NR (Name M)  
Salinas, California Police Dept. NR (Name M)  
Carmel Calif., Police Dept. NR (Name M)  
Monterey, Calif. Police Dept. NR (Name M)

ADVERSE INFORMATION:

1. Subject has associated with individuals who are known to have a radical political and economic philosophy, and with some members of the Communist Party. (Names A, B, C and E)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

LA-2492 IL-0/S 143050  
JOHN H. STEINBECK

**ADVERSE INFORMATION: (continued)**

2. Subject received large volume of Communist literature and possessed books expressing radical political and economic views, in his library. (Names B, H)
3. Subject's former wife, Carol Steinbeck, registered as a Communist in Santa Clara County in 1938. (Names B, C, G, H, I, J, K)

**UNDEVELOPED LEADS: Request investigations as follows:**

A G of S, G-3, Red Service Command, Governors Island, New York

- (1) Interview Subject's agents, McIntosh and Otis, 18 East 41st Street, New York City, to determine Subject's associations and activities in that vicinity. Such leads should be developed with particular attention to Communist associations and relations.
- (2) To determine what relations has had with the League of American Writers by contacting the League's headquarters in New York City.
- (3) To contact Major Betweiler, AAF, 25 Broad Street, New York City, who has made allegations that Subject is quite a heavy drinker and has communistic tendencies.
- (4) Make an office and employment check at the office of War Information, 570 Madison Avenue, New York City, where Subject was employed from December 1941 to March, 1943.

A G of S, MIS, War Department, Washington, D.C.

- (1) To make necessary office and employment check to determine Subject's employment as a Special Consultant to the Secretary of War, assigned to the Commanding General, Army Air Forces. Particular attention to be given to any possible Communist associations and connections.
- (2) To check with FBI, OWI, MIS and Dies Committee files to determine any record extant on Subject. The Dies Committee should have a resume of Subject's activities written by Thomas Cavett for the Los Angeles Office of the Dies Committee.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

LA 2493 EL-O/S 14305  
JOHN R. STEINACK

**REMARKS AND CONCLUSIONS:**

This investigation revealed that Subject is honest, loyal, patriotic and an excellent and sincere writer. Although Subject exercised poor discretion during his early days of writing by associating with some elements of the Communist Party, he was not interested in advancing the cause of the Party but in gathering material for his writings on certain social conditions existing in this country at that time.

Subject wrote various articles which were published by Communist organizations because the economic views expressed were considered radical. However, Subject rejected communist political and economic theories repeatedly and discarded his association with this element when it became apparent that his prestige was being used to further the interests of the Party.

Subject, in this Agent's opinion, possesses the requisites of honesty, loyalty and discretion necessary for a commission in the Army of the United States. Subject is sincere in his beliefs concerning the social and economic situation of the under classes in this country and in his desire to have their lot improved.

Subject is a candid and powerful writer.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

This Agent recommends that Subject be given a commission in the Army of the United States if he can be placed where his writing ability may be utilized.

**G-2 NOTE:**

This office does not concur in the recommendations of the investigative agent, and believing that substantial doubt exists as to Subject's loyalty and discretion, recommends that Subject not be favorably considered for a commission in the Army of the United States. Undeveloped leads will not be followed in the absence of a request, and this case is considered closed in this office.

**APPROVED:**

F. H. FAIRCHILD  
Lt. Colonel, MI  
Officer in Charge

MS: Only previously disapproved  
for a commission by War Dept.  
Personnel Board WAA

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



CONFIDENTIAL

Salinas, California  
May 29, 1943  
Case No. II-O/S-14305c

MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE

SUBJECT: JOHN E. SPRINKER  
425 Hardley Avenue  
Pacific Grove, California

Re: Covering Memorandum.

Three excellent sources of information -- the Bureau Postmaster, Subject's attorney, and Subject's wife -- agree on these points:

1. Subject is not a communist.
2. Subject is loyal, patriotic, honest.
3. Subject is an excellent writer.
4. Subject would make a good officer if his writing ability is utilized.

AGENT'S OPINION

This Agent believes that Subject could pass the requisite of honesty, loyalty and integrity insofar as his commission in the United States Army is concerned. It is the question of whether Subject will be of more value as a civilian employee or as an Officer that higher authorities must decide. If Subject is to be employed by the United States Army in positions in which his great writing ability may be utilized, it is the opinion of this Agent that he should be commissioned.

MARTIN FRANKEL  
Special Agent CIB

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

San Francisco, California  
30 June 1943  
Case No. IX-0/8-14305a

MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE

Subject: JOHN E. STEINBECK  
15041 Del Sado Drive  
Sherman Oaks, California

Re: Interview with Mr. MARTIN RAY, Acquaintance.

On June 9, 1943, this Agent interviewed Mr. MARTIN RAY, intimate acquaintance of Subject. RAY associated with STEINBECK and his former wife, CAROL STEINBECK, during the entire time Subject's residence was in Los Gatos, California. Informant is presently residing on Masson Road, Saratoga, California.

RAY believes Subject to be absolutely loyal to the government although Subject associated with some elements of the Communist Party in his earliest days of writing. Subject repeatedly stated to RAY that he was not a Communist but was interested in the lower-class working people regardless of their particular political creed. RAY explained that Subject had written certain articles for publications which were considered Communistic but that these articles were written to explain Subject's point of view of the social problem involved and not to further the interest of the Communist Party. Subject, according to RAY, gradually realized that he was being used by the Party and severed all connections with this element after his books began to have a wide sale.

CAROL STEINBECK, former wife of Subject, told RAY that she registered with the Communist Party in Santa Clara County in 1938 simply to observe the local reaction and that Subject was strongly opposed to this act.

Following the sale of one of Subject's earlier books, Subject and his wife made a trip to Europe, visiting Sweden and Russia. RAY stated that Subject was deeply impressed by the economic and political policies of Sweden but was not impressed, nor did he discuss, the government of Russia.

Concerning Subject's character, RAY stated Subject's integrity was beyond question. Subject is very sensitive and sentimental; is deeply devoted to his friends and is easily influenced by these friends to grant large favors.

RAY believes Subject should be commissioned in the Army only if Subject's writing ability may be efficiently utilized. According to RAY, Subject would work very hard writing for the benefit of his country but is not qualified to hold a commission in any other situation.

Agent's Notes:

RAY is a close friend of Subject and has tremendous respect for Subject's writing ability. This Agent believes RAY is interested in Subject's welfare as a friend yet was absolutely fair and impartial in his recollections of Subject and Subject's suitability for a commission in the Army.

MEMO B

CHARLES O. SHIELDS  
Agent, CIC

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

San Francisco, California  
June 14, 1943  
Case No. EL-0/S-14306a

MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE

SUBJECT: JOHN E. STEINBECK  
15041 Del Sade Drive  
Sherman Oaks, California

RE: Acquaintance check with Miss Barbara Burke

On June 9, 1943, this Agent interviewed MISS BARBARA BURKE, 3065 Jackson Street, San Francisco, California regarding Subject.

MISS BURKE bought the Subject's first house at Los Gatos and became intimately acquainted as the Subject lived on the premises for a short time thereafter. MISS BURKE believes Subject to be unquestionably loyal, having heard him say that he had never voted the communistic ticket, and was strongly opposed to his wife's registration with the party. MISS BURKE further stated that Subject had always voted Democratic tickets, and was heartily in favor of the policies of the New Deal.

MISS BURKE stated Subject is a very heavy drinker, but she had never seen him intoxicated. Subject's political philosophy, MISS BURKE considered to be merely "leftish" in the social changes calculated to improve the conditions of the working classes, and felt Subject's integrity to be unimpeachable.

Agent's notes: Informant has the greatest respect for the literary work of Subject, but appeared to this Agent to be sincere and candid in her description of Subject's qualities.

---

CHARLES O. SHIELDS  
Agent, CIC

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMO C

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

San Francisco, California

June 14, 1943

Case No. EL-O/S-14306

MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE

SUBJECT: JOHN B. STEINBECK  
150-41 Del Gado Drive  
Sherman Oaks, California

RE: Residence check

On June 8, 1943, this Agent interviewed MR. HUGH PORTER, 244 California Street, San Francisco, California, purchaser of Subject's house in Los Gatos.

MR. PORTER did not know Subject personally, but had Subject's belongings moved from the house. He stated that Subject's second-class mail was tremendous, much of it apparently communistic. MR. PORTER read various parts at random and found it very radical. Subject's library, left in the former residence, contained many radical books.

Informant's opinion of Subject based upon observation of conditions under which Subject lived is that Subject is very impulsive, eccentric, and unreliable socially. Informant had no knowledge of Subject's economic or political views except from the circumstantial evidence stated above.

MR. PORTER stated that Subject employed a Japanese house boy, Joe Higashi, who continued to work after Subject left. HIGASHI had books, ostensibly propaganda containing pictures of Axis leaders and accomplishments. HIGASHI is now evacuated to the interior.

Agent's notes: PORTER did not know Subject, but is very much opposed to economic and political views of Subject as indicated by type of mail received and contents of Subject's library.

CHARLES O. SHIELDS  
Agent, CIC

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMO D



San Francisco, California  
30 June 1943  
Case No. IX-Q/S-14305c

MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE

Subject: JOHN E. STEINBECK  
15041 Del Gado Drive  
Sherman Oaks, California

Re: Residence Check.

On June 8, 1943, this Agent interviewed Mr. F. RAINEORI, Los Gatos, California, neighbor of Subject, during the time Subject resided in Los Gatos.

Informant stated that Subject was friendly but generally very aloof. Subject, according to RAINEORI, apparently made frequent visits out of town while living in Los Gatos. RAINEORI recalled no derogatory remarks concerning Subject; however, informant had heard that Subject was very sensitive and desired to be avoided by the local people so that he could concentrate on his writing without interruption.

Agent's Note:

This neighbor lived approximately one-half mile from Subject and had little in common with Subject.

CHARLES G. SHIELDS  
Agent, CIC

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMO E

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

San Francisco, California  
June 11, 1943  
Case No. HL-0/S-14806

MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE

SUBJECT: JOHN H. STRINECK  
18041 Del Gate Drive  
Sherman Oaks, California

RE: Acquaintance check

On June 8, 1943, this Agent interviewed MR. H. L. ROBERTS, cashier First National Bank, Los Gatos, California.

Subject had an account in the bank from July 1, 1936 to June 26, 1941. ROBERTS impression of Subject was that he is very quiet and reserved. Subject usually is very poorly dressed.

Agent's notes: ROBERTS had no knowledge of Subject's economical or political views, and had not heard any derogatory remarks concerning his loyalty or integrity.

---

CHARLES O. SHIELDS  
Agent, SIC

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMO F

# CONFIDENTIAL

Salinas, California  
May 26, 1943  
Case No. 1100/S-14305e

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE

PROJECT: JOHN E. STEINBERG  
425 Hardley Avenue  
Pacific Grove, California

RE: Acquisition Check

On May 25, 1943 this Agent interviewed HERBERT STREET, of MERRILL MARTIN & BERGANTIE, attorneys, Monterey, California, in connection with the investigation of Subject, who has applied for a commission in the United States Army.

STREET said that he is Subject's attorney, has known Subject since 1921, and would classify him as a generous, large, sentimental Irishman, a bit shy, and yet decisive.

According to STREET, Subject's legal and permanent address is 425 HARDLEY AVENUE, PACIFIC GROVE, CALIFORNIA. Other addresses are temporary, dependent upon the current locale of his work. His personal effects and furniture are at the Pacific Grove address, and this home is used for legal and tax purposes. Subject, said STREET, was finally divorced from IRMA STEINBERG in March, 1943, remarried, to SWEDOLIN STEINBERG, with whom he lived after this marriage in New York City. Subject has a sister in Carmel, another in Watsonville, another in Berkeley, all California cities. The husband of the the sister residing in Carmel is a Lt. Colonel in Africa, attached to the Transport Service, U.S. Army.

Subject's former wife CAROL, stated STREET, lives in Carmel, California. CAROL STEINBERG, against her husband's wishes, registered as a communist. This action reflected unfavorably against her husband.

Subject's father, continued STREET, had been a treasurer of Monterey County, California for fifteen years. His mother was a well known clubwoman in Salinas, California.

STREET said he had received a letter from Subject, May 25, 1943, in which Subject stated he was leaving for England very shortly as a correspondent and special writer of the New York HERALD TRIBUNE.

STREET was positive Subject was not a communist, had no communist leanings, that his honesty, loyalty and integrity were of the best, that he was intensely patriotic, and would make an excellent officer if able to use his writing talent.

### AGENT'S NOTES

Informant, and his law firm, have a reputation in Monterey for conservatism.

MEMO

MARTIN FRANKEL  
Special Agent GIB



**CONFIDENTIAL**

Salinas, California  
May 26, 1943  
Case No. II-O/S-14305c

MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE

**SUBJECT: JOHN E. STEINBECK**  
225 Hardley Avenue  
Pacific Grove, California  
Acquaintance Check

On May 26, 1943 this Agent interviewed **FREDERICK A. BECHOLT**, Postmaster, Carmel, California, in connection with the investigation of Subject, who has applied for a Commission in the United States Army.

**BECHOLT** stated as follows:

1. Subject's wife worked, in 1934, on a DP-sewing project so that her husband, Subject, could continue writing. At this time he was getting material for **GRAPES OF WRATH**. Wife referred to his first wife, **CAROL STEINBECK**, now a resident of Carmel, California.
2. **BECHOLT** said he was well acquainted with Subject in his earlier writing days around 1932-1934.
3. Subject associated with communists and radicals only to get material for his writings.
4. Subject is not a communist. He believed that the communist and Associated Farmers were both squandering the migratory workers.
5. Subject will associate with anyone or any group who will furnish material for his writing.
6. Subject is an excellent writer.
7. Subject's association with the communists is selfish - to learn about them so he can write about them.
8. Subject would make a good officer if he saw his writing valued.
9. Subject understands the leftist element and wouldn't stand for subversive mixing-up writings.
10. Subject is fundamentally a good citizen.
11. Subject is more genuine in his disbelief in communism than a lot of people who call themselves conservative.
12. If Subject had been of draft age he would not have tried in any way to avoid the draft; he would have gladly entered the army, hoping to procure more material to use in his writings.
13. Subject's loyalty, honesty and integrity is of the highest.

AGENT'S NOTES

**BECHOLT** appeared to be very sincere, and attempting to offer fact as well as opinion.

MARTIN FRANKEL  
Special Agent CIC

**CONFIDENTIAL**  
MEMO H

# CONFIDENTIAL

Salinas, California  
May 28, 1943  
Case No. IX-0/3-14305c

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICE IN CHARGE

**SUBJECT:** JOHN E. STEINBECK  
425 Farley Avenue  
Pacific Grove, California

### Re: Acquaintance Check.

On May 28, 1943 this Agent interviewed Mrs. CAROL STEINBECK, Carmel, California, in connection with the investigation of Subject, who has applied for a commission in the United States Army.

CAROL STEINBECK stated that Subject does not have any fixed political beliefs, that he is a registered Democrat, and probably, on a broad basis, favors the New Deal.

CAROL STEINBECK said Subject got all his material for "THE GRAPES OF WRATH" from the Farm Security Administration. His writings, according to informant, come before everything else in his life, and writing has been his passion since childhood.

CAROL STEINBECK said that Subject is not nor ever has been a member of the communist party, or even a sympathizer. She said that she had once registered as a Communist to see what would happen and what the reaction would be in a small town. Now she regrets this move because it caused comment that reflected upon Subject.

According to CAROL STEINBECK, Subject would make an excellent officer of the United States Army if he was assigned to duties wherein he could use his talent for writing. He is loyal, she asserted, honest and his integrity cannot be questioned.

### AGENT'S NOTES

Subject was divorced from CAROL STEINBECK March, 1942, and final March, 1943. Subject has remarried. Informant appeared to be sincere but did not give Subject the benefit of any doubts. She did not volunteer a great deal of information, and seemed to feel that resentful of the mention of Subject's name.

MARTIN FRANKEL  
Special Agent CIC

MEMO I

C O N F I D E N T I A L

San Francisco, California  
June 11, 1943  
Case No. I X-0/S-14305c

MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE

SUBJECT: JOHN E. STEINBECK  
15041 Del Gado Drive  
Sherman Oaks, California

RE: Check of Voter's Registration  
Files Santa Clara County, Calif.

On 9 June 1943 this Agent check the Voter's Registration files Santa Clara County, California to secure information concerning the Subject, who is being considered for a commission in the Army of the United States.

Registration files show that Subject's former wife, CAROL STEINBECK, registered as a Communist in Santa Clara County, 8 November 1938. On 16 September 1939, approximately one year later, Subject's wife registered in Santa Clara County as a Democrat. On the 13 June 1942, CAROL STEINBECK transferred her voting registration to Monterey, California.

No record was found of Subject having registered at any time as a Communist in Santa Clara County.

CHARLES O. SHIELDS  
Agent, C I C

~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~

MEMO J

CONFIDENTIAL

San Francisco, California  
13 July 1943  
Case No. IX-0/S-14306c

MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE

Subject: JOHN E. STENNING  
15041 Del Gade Drive  
Sherman Oaks, California

Re: Credit Check

On 13 July 1943 this Agent checked the records of the Retail Credit Association, 155 Stockton Street, San Francisco, California regarding the Subject. These records include reports from the Retail Merchant's Association of San Jose, California covering Santa Clara County.

The credit records indicate that the Subject enjoyed an excellent rating in 1940, had very good commercial and savings accounts in various California banks. Subject's income stated to be solely from writings and sale of stories to the motion picture industry.

CHARLES O. SHIELDS  
Agent, CIC

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMO K



San Francisco, California,  
May 1, 1943,  
Case No. IX-O/S-14305c.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE

Subjects: JOHN E. STEINBECK, aka Dr. Beckstein,  
15041 Del Gado Drive,  
Sherman Oaks, California.

Re: Police check.

On February 23, 1943, this Agent checked the records of the Office of Naval Intelligence, 12th Naval District, the American Legion Radical Research Bureau, the San Francisco Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the San Francisco Police Department, all of San Francisco, California, regarding Subject.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the San Francisco Police Department reported no record of Subject.

The Office of Naval Intelligence reported the following records:

"DIO files refer to one John STEINBECK, P. O. Box 321, Los Gatos, Calif., who was a subscriber to the PEOPLE'S WORLD as of Sept., 1939. (It should be noted that John STEINBECK, the author, also maintained a home in Los Gatos)"

The American Legion Radical Research Bureau reported the following:

- 11/9-1936: Was Pacific Weekly contributor. Red publication at Carmel.
- 11/15-1936: One of the sponsors of the Assembly of Youth, January 9 and 10.
- 4/1-1938: Contributed article in this issue of Pacific Weekly (Red publication) re: The Racial Prejudice Among the Agricultural Workers in California.
- 10/17: Chairman of the newly formed Committee to Aid Agricultural Organization. (Very Red outfit).
- 8/4-1939: His book "The Grapes of Wrath" was branded as Red propaganda by Father A. D. Spearman, S.J., director of the library of Loyola, U.L.A.

His former wife, Carol Henning Steinbeck, was registered Communist, Santa Clara County - 1938 - while living at Rt. 1, Box 98-D, Los Gatos.

NICHOLAS ZAVINSKY,  
Special Agent, CIC.

12

MEMO L



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

San Francisco, California  
11 June 1943  
Case No. IX-0/S-14305a

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE**

**SUBJECT: JOHN E. STEINBECK**  
15041 Del Gado Drive  
Sherman Oaks, California

**RE: Police Check**

On 8 June 1943 this Agent checked the records of the Sheriff's office, Santa Clara County, California and the Police Department, Los Gatos, California, regarding the Subject.

Police Department, Los Gatos . . . No Record.

Sheriff's Office, Santa Clara County . . . No Record.

CHARLES O. SHIELDS  
Agent, CIC

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMO M

# CONFIDENTIAL

Salinas, California  
May 26, 1943  
Case No. II-QA-14305a

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE

**SUBJECT:** JOHN E. WERNECK  
425 Hardley Avenue  
Pacific Grove, California

### RE: Police Check.

On May 26, 1943 this Agent checked the records of the Salinas Police Department, Salinas, California, the Carmel Police Department, Carmel, California, and the Monterey Police Department, Monterey, California in connection with the investigation of Subject, who is being considered for a commission in the Army of the United States.

Salinas, California Police Department.....No Record  
Carmel, California, Police Department.....No Record  
Monterey, California Police Department.....No Record

MARTIN FRANKEL  
Special Agent in Charge

MEMO N  
CONFIDENTIAL

Mr. Tolson	_____
Mr. E. A. Tamm	_____
Mr. Clegg	_____
Mr. Coffey	_____
Mr. Glavin	_____
Mr. Ladd	_____
Mr. Nichols	_____
Mr. Rosen	_____
Mr. Tracy	_____
Mr. Mohr	_____
Mr. Carson	_____
Mr. Hendon	_____
Mr. Mumford	_____
Mr. Jones	_____
Mr. Quinn Tamm	_____
Mr. Nease	_____
Miss Gandy	_____

~~SECRET~~

[REDACTED]

Director, FBI

Re: JOHN STEINBECK  
Mexico Latin American Matters

Dear Sir:

There are enclosed for the Bureau's information two copies of a memorandum for the Ambassador dated March 22, 1944, containing information relative to this individual and to ERNEST HEMINGWAY, well-known writer. U

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (S) b1

Very truly yours,

*Birch D. O'Neal*  
Birch D. O'Neal  
Civil Attaché

BDO:N:MKI

Enclosures - 2

11-29-77  
CLASS. & EXT. BY 3907 *par/mb*  
REASON-FCIM II, 1-2.4.2  
DATE OF REVIEW 11-29-87

CLASSIFIED DECISIONS FINALIZED  
BY DEPARTMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE (DRC)  
DATE: 11/29/02

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1257181

CLASSIFIED BY 1257  
EXEMPT FROM GDS. CATEGORY 3  
DATE OF DECLASSIFICATION INDEFINITE 10/4/78  
EX - 19  
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181 27 MAR 27 1944  
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S.I. 93

4 APR 10 1944

~~SECRET~~



SECRET

Re: JOHN STEINBECK

Page Two

[REDACTED]

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~~SECRET~~

HDO'N:MKI

Birch D. O'Neal  
Civil Attaché

cc: Bureau (2)

SECRET

SECRET

43

~~SECRET~~

March 22, 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR THE AMBASSADOR;

Re: JOHN STEINBECK

As you know, John Steinbeck is a well-known writer who is presently working in Mexico City as a correspondent for the "New York Tribune".

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

CLASSIFIED DECISIONS  
BY DEPARTMENT REVIEW (DRC)  
DATE: 11-29-89

CLASS. & EXT. BY 3901 11-25-87  
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CLASSIFIED BY 1259  
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DATE OF DECLASSIFICATION INDEFINITE 10/17/78

*Handwritten signature/initials*

100-106224-4

SECRET ENCLOSURE



# Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Director, FBI  
FROM : SAC, San Antonio

DATE: April 8, 1944

*f*  
*E*

SUBJECT: JOHN ERNST STEINBECK  
Incoming Passenger, Brownsville, Texas  
3/15/44  
FOREIGN TRAVEL CONTROL

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
OTHERWISE

Reference is made to Bureau memorandum to San Antonio dated March 21, 1944, in the above-captioned matter. For the information of the New York City Office, reference memorandum advised that an investigation was conducted by Military Intelligence Division concerning the above-captioned individual to determine his loyalty and suitability to hold a commission in the Army of the United States, and that information had been received by the Bureau indicating that in view of substantial doubt as to the loyalty and discretion of the subject, a recommendation was made that he should not be considered favorably for a Commission in the U. S. Army. *(LXU)*

This is to advise that on March 15, 1944, the subject, accompanied by his wife, GWYN CONKER STEINBECK, entered Brownsville, Texas, via Pan American Clipper enroute from the Reforma Hotel, Mexico, D. F. to their residence at 330 E. 51st Street, New York City. At the time of their entry, it was ascertained that the subject was an American citizen born at Salinas, California, on February 27, 1902, and that his wife was also an American citizen, having been born in Chicago, Illinois, October 25, 1918. It was also learned that the subject is presently employed as a writer by the New York Herald Tribune and that in 1943 he had been on a six-months assignment to England, Africa, and Sicily as a war correspondent.

The subject advised that on that assignment he had been slightly wounded and that the purpose of his present two-months trip to Mexico City had been to regain his health before resuming his work for the above-mentioned newspaper.

The above is being submitted for the information of the Bureau and a copy of this letter has been designated for the information of the New York City Office. No further action in this matter is presently contemplated by this Office.

DECLASSIFIED BY 2333 Pem Army letter dtd 8-2-78 *bp*  
ON 1-22-79

KRM:am

6-22-79  
6-22-79

CC New York City

CLASSIFIED BY 1259  
EXEMPT FROM GDS, CATEGORY 2  
DATE OF DECLASSIFICATION INDEFINITE 10/4/78  
2/2/80

100-106224-4X

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S) OF Dispersed  
DATE 4-22-79  
61 APR 24 1944

RECORDED & INDEXED

EX-2 157

CONFIDENTIAL

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## Found Soviets Eager for Peace, Capa, Steinbeck Tell Trib Forum

The word most frequently heard during their recent tour of the Soviet Union was "peace," author John Steinbeck and photographer Robert Capa told the fourth session of the Herald Tribune Forum Wednesday evening.



GENIE A. CORY, of St. Louis, shared half of the 1947 Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology with her husband, Prof. F. Cory. The other half of the award, which was made in two parts, went to Bernardo A. Houssay of Buenos Aires. The Corys were honored for the joint discovery of catalytic metabolism of glycogen; and Houssay, for his research on

Capa read a joint report of their observations while visiting the Ukraine, Georgia and Great Russian industrial cities as a self-styled "cold war team" of correspondents.

"These people were destroyed and hurt much more than any that I have seen during my ten years of battlefields and they hate war more than any one I ever talked to," declared Capa.

He said a halt of the "vicious and insane game" of recriminations between Russia and the U. S. would find immediate approval among Russian masses. He stated Russians were particularly interested in hearing about "the persecution of liberals" in America and that he and Steinbeck told them "to our knowledge there are no political prisoners in the United States yet."

"I am holding my fingers crossed," he told the Forum audience. . . . "We do not know who started this vicious and insane game of stupid accusation and violent criticism. It is not very important who started it. The important thing is who is going to stop it."

"The people of Russia in our little experience want the same things our people do — food, shelter, security and the ability to raise and feed and educate their children in peace. And this is the really important thing. That is all."

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*Excerpts of info  
on Capa & Steinbeck  
given to Lewis  
Wright 2/20/48*

*G.I.R. 2*

*[Handwritten signature]*

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Jan 18, 1947

Hon. J. Edgar Hoover  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

I trust that your agents in San Francisco are watching these series of articles with much interest.

No doubt you have a file on this John Steinbeck; one of our foremost Commie inspired writers who had written many stories whose theme was to stir up class consciousness. Grapes of Wrath etc.

The most shocking element here is the fact that Steinbeck is even given space on the San Francisco, after being denounced by W. R. Hearst back in 38 or 39. As you know doubt know, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] lauded this picture Grapes of Wrath, seeing the underlying motives.

The very same executives on this paper purged this girl for her constant attack on the Commie themes emanating from Hollywood.

I wrote a letter to [REDACTED] of the Los Angeles Examiner, regarding this Steinbeck, seeking to hold up the articles. Also asking just who was responsible for this right about face. It seems that this is the only nearest sheet that is carrying Steinbeck's series.

How can Steinbeck have such "easy access to "INSIDE THE IRON CURTAIN" when YOU and other LOYAL Americans are forbidden to enter.

San Francisco is a veritable LITTLE MOSCOW to be sure.

I fully realize that the Examiner came out "finally" for the new Local Mayor Robinson, who ran on an Anti Commie platform. But the paper finally entered the picture after Robinson had a commanding lead. [REDACTED] stating that they were Robins... cause they figured he would win... NOT because he was the best man

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mind you or the principles that he stood for..

When I arrived here a year ago , I proceeded to inform Robinson of Frank Havenner's record in Washington, which had been kept very much in the dark on the West Coast. With all this information it was clear sailing to be sure. This RED minority element in San Francisco is plenty dangerous , and a veritable powder keg. Of course I appreciate the fact that I am not telling you any thing that is new.

This Steinbeck running in the Examiner over Ada's dead body, a girl who was willing to sacrifice her very life for her country stands vindicated today for the fight she had even within her own ranks on this paper.

b7c I expected [REDACTED] to bring this matter to Mr. Herast's attention, who is residing as you know , in Beverly Hills..

I trust that this information will prove to be helpful to you.

With kindest regards ,

Yours most/sincerely,

b7c

[REDACTED]  
San Simeon, Calif..



# A Russian Journal -

## Amateur Play: A Club Dance

The play reported here by John Steinbeck, with pictures by Robert Capa, was performed on a collective farm near Kiev, in the Soviet Ukraine. This farm was relatively little damaged by the Nazis, although its livestock were all killed. On the farm, 1,200 people were engaged in raising wheat, rye and corn when these two special correspondents of The San Francisco Examiner and the New York Herald Tribune visited last summer.

### CHAPTER VIII

IN THE evening, we walked down through the village, and past the pond, to the clubhouse. As we passed the little lake, a boat came across it, and there was music in the boat, a curious music. The instruments were a balalaika, a little drum with a small cymbal, and a concertina, and this was the dance music of the village. The players moved across the lake in the boat, and landed in front of the clubhouse.

It was quite a large building, the club. It had a small stage, and in front of the stage chess boards and checker boards, and then a dancing space, and then rows and rows of benches for spectators.

There were very few people in the club when we went, only a few chess players. We learned that the young people come back from the fields, and have their supper, and then rest for an hour, even sleep for an hour, before they come to the club.

There was a little play that night. There were a few people on the table, and two chairs, and a large portrait of the President of the Ukrainian Republic, and set up the instruments, and began to play. Gradually the young people came in, strong girls in bare feet. Their faces were washed and shiny. Only a few young men came. There were very few young men.

The girls began to dance together. They wore bright, light dresses, and head cloths of colored silk and wool, and their feet were almost invariably bare. And they danced with fury. The music had a rapid beat, accentuated by drum and tambourine. The boys sat beat the floor. The boys stood around and watched. Finally we asked a girl why she did not dance with the boys, and she said:

"They are good for married, but there are so few of them here the war that a girl only gets one trouble if she dances with them. And besides they are very faithful." And then she laughed and went back to her dancing and went back to her dancing.

There were so few of them, young men of marriageable age. There were very young boys, but we have not seen any of them there dancing with the girls were dead.

The evening of these girls is unbelievable. All day they had been working in the fields, since day light in the night and yet after one hour sleep they were ready to dance all night. The most of the drum tables played on, unmoved and unshaken by the noise that went on about them.

Meanwhile the company which was to play was preparing the stage, and Capa was setting up the lights to photograph the play.

### PREFER DANCING

It seemed to us that the girls were a little impatient, when the play stopped. They did not want to stop dancing for the play. It was a little propaganda play, it was active and dramatic. The story was to follow: There was a girl on a farm, but she is a big girl, and she does not want to work. She wants to get a town, and paint her nails, and wear a hat, and be obedient and obedient.

As the play opened, she is in an argument with a good girl who is a brigade leader, a girl who has been decorated for her great work in the fields. The decadent girl who wants to paint her nails chooses to go to the stage, and in conversation she goes, whereas the other the brigade leader girl, stands very thoughtful with her hands at her sides and declares her hope.

The third member of the cast is the tractor driver, and the interesting thing is that he is really a tractor driver, and the play had been held up an hour and a half while he fixed the tractor he had been working with all day. The tractor driver had one feminine trick, and only one, he delivered his lines, jerking backward forth across the stage, smoking cigarettes.

### PERIL TO SOUL

Now the tractor driver is in love with the decadent girl who wants to paint her nails. He is really in love with her, and he is in grave danger of losing his soul to the dancing girl, he has, as the program, it is obvious that the tractor driver is ready to throw up his driving a tractor, and helping the economy of the people, to move into a city, and get an apartment and live actively with the decadent girl. But the brigade leader girl, standing very straight, delivers a lecture to him.

It does no good. He is obviously distraught, and he is very much in love with the decadent girl. He does not know what to do. He will follow her to love and become a devil.

Now the decadent girl goes off, leaving the brigade leader



There is a typical scene in the clubhouse of the collective farm, where Capa photographed his thoughts to take his first pictures. That breaks the play wide open. The red-painted girl re-enters behind a bunch of bars, and smart some out for the rest of the scene. The tractor driver is not to blame. The brigade leader is stretched, and what to play to the play, and failed. The rest of the play was done exactly by the tractor driver. It was done like a scene. From the program's last

agreed, when Capa photographed his thoughts to take his first pictures. That breaks the play wide open. The red-painted girl re-enters behind a bunch of bars, and smart some out for the rest of the scene. The tractor driver is not to blame. The brigade leader is stretched, and what to play to the play, and failed. The rest of the play was done exactly by the tractor driver. It was done like a scene. From the program's last



Dancing in the clubhouse of the collective farm. The orchestra is composed of a few women, one guitar and one mandolin played by young farmers.



In the clubhouse of the collective farm a play is performed by young farmers for the whole village.

you and the girls dance. The tractor driver is in love with the decadent girl who wants to paint her nails. He is really in love with her, and he is in grave danger of losing his soul to the dancing girl, he has, as the program, it is obvious that the tractor driver is ready to throw up his driving a tractor, and helping the economy of the people, to move into a city, and get an apartment and live actively with the decadent girl. But the brigade leader girl, standing very straight, delivers a lecture to him.

### APPLAUSE

It wouldn't have known what was about, except that she seemed to be in a hurry. And the play was finally given with sufficient applause. The tractor driver was the only one who had the feeling that the play was over, the audience being two Ukrainian songs. The girls wanted to dance. They were very young, and soon the tractor driver, by its position on the stage, and the tractor driver, on. They were only permitted by the manager that they were to be. It was already a number of 2, and they had to go at 2:30 to the morning to the tractor driver. They were supposed to leave and they would have arrived all right if they had been permitted to.

The tractor driver is in love with the decadent girl who wants to paint her nails. He is really in love with her, and he is in grave danger of losing his soul to the dancing girl, he has, as the program, it is obvious that the tractor driver is ready to throw up his driving a tractor, and helping the economy of the people, to move into a city, and get an apartment and live actively with the decadent girl. But the brigade leader girl, standing very straight, delivers a lecture to him.

### 10,000 Needed To Curb Snakes

WASHINGTON (U.P.), Jan. 18.—Gov. George T. Middleton, announcing estimated expenditures for the Snake River development project, said today that it would cost \$10,000,000 to curb snakes over a six-year period. At a meeting of the Snake River Inter-Agency committee today, a \$10,000,000 estimate was explained as the cost of the project that will eradicate dry areas along the Snake river. The project will include the construction of a dam to store a volume of water to be used in irrigation and to be used especially in the Snake river valley.

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January 26, 1948

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San Simon, California

100-106224-5  
Dear [redacted]

Your letter dated January 18, 1948,  
with enclosures, has been received, and I want  
to express my appreciation to you for having  
brought this matter to my attention.

Sincerely yours,

John Edgar Hoover  
Director

VNP:msl

NOTE: This individual has corresponded with the  
Bureau on several previous occasions on matters  
of similar nature, and now draws the Director's  
attention to John Steinbeck as a Communist in  
connection with a series of articles Steinbeck  
wrote concerning Russia.

- Mr. Tolson
- Mr. E. A. Tamm
- Mr. Clegg
- Mr. Glavin
- Mr. Ladd
- Mr. Nichols
- Mr. Rosen
- Mr. Tracy
- Mr. Egan
- Mr. Gurnea
- Mr. Harbo
- Mr. Mohr
- Mr. Pennington

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*Jan*

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W. J. R.

# Book Parade

## John Steinbeck's 'A Russian Journal'

By Robert Friedman

JOHN STEINBECK'S warm sympathy for people, as evidenced in his *A Russian Journal*, (published today) is the one positive feature of an account of a visit to the Soviet Union which is otherwise overrun with frivolous provincialism and a coy disinclination to face political realities.

Steinbeck has taken out the conventional insurance against criticism by concluding that his journal

will not be satisfactory either to the ecclesiastical Left nor the Lumpen Right. The first will say it is anti-Russian, and the second that it is pro-Russian. Surely it is superficial, and how could it be otherwise? We have no conclusions to draw, except that Russian people are like all other people in the world. Some bad ones there are surely, but by far the greater number are very good.

Now the above is pretty childish stuff. It is a fraudulent 'objectivity' which presumes to be accurate merely because it is inconsistent and superficial enough to draw fire from all sides. And it was a waste of Mr. Steinbeck's time to discover so laboriously that all people are alike. What a reader logically expects from a "Russian journal" is not a platitude but an examination of the way of life of a people which right now is definitely not like that of "all other people."

THIS STEINBECK HAS NOT done, even to the minimum extent required to give the reader impressions as to a more thorough study. This reviewer frankly could not decide whether Steinbeck's failure was due to choice or to an appalling political illiteracy.

What is one to say of a writer to whom the distinctive characteristic of American capitalist society is that it provides a government of "checks and balances"? Or of the malvele which has it that "our government is designed to keep anyone from getting too much power or, having got it, from keeping it"? And, "we agreed," Steinbeck writes solemnly, "that this makes our country function more slowly, but that it certainly makes it function more surely."

It is foolhardy for a man who does not know the facts of life in his own backyard to fare forth as an interpreter of his neighbor.

There is little in *A Russian Journal* to indicate that Steinbeck has any comprehension of Marxism, the cause for war, the fundamental difference between capitalism and socialism. He doesn't like war and he says so. He would hate to see another one. He is fond of children and good, honest people, Russian as well as any other kind.

But his *Journal* is filled with trivia which will not help people understand the first socialist state because Steinbeck himself never bothered to find out.

...IS PROVINCIAL, in a petty way, complaining that Russians of every way think they have discovered or invented products or methods which Steinbeck points out, they really didn't. This, from a native of a land in which U. S. contest winners of all kinds are automatically described as unquestioned world's champions.

He writes feelingly of the reverence throughout the world for the memory of Roosevelt. Yet he complains of a like tribute by the Soviet peoples to Stalin and sneeringly intimates that Stalin was a hypocrite in objecting to adulation.

Steinbeck makes the conventional bourgeois plaint about Soviet censorship and "suspicion" of foreigners and cutely explains them as traditional Russian behaviour. Very possibly and, in the light of the author's political maturity this is not sarcastic—Steinbeck does not know of the 30-year effort through conspiracy and armed attack by capitalist states to destroy the Soviet Union.

One could go on quoting Steinbeck, but what for? *A Russian Journal* is much more enlightening about the kind of culture which develops such intellectual Sad Sad-ery than about the Soviet Union.

Robert Capa's photographs, which illustrate the text are striking and excellently reproduced.

*Robert Friedman*

G. I. R. 9

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Daily Worker

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# Steinbeck Sans Wrath

Reviewed by ALLAN DANE

**RUSSIAN JOURNAL.** By John Steinbeck, with pictures by Robert Capa.  
New York: Viking Press. 220 pages. \$3.75.

**M**R. STEINBECK has joined the fraternity of vodka visitors. For three weeks he toured the Soviet Union under the subtle guidance of VOKS, the government agency for "cultural liaison," saw Moscow celebrate its 800th anniversary, got stomach cramps from overeating on a collective farm, inspected the ruins of Stalingrad, was wined and dined in Georgia, flew back to Moscow, where he chattered with American officials and correspondents, came home and wrote a book.

Now Mr. Steinbeck did see a few things that may prove interesting to the average reader, and Robert Capa contributes a few nice (but not exceptional) shots of life in Russia. There are impressive descriptions of wartime destruction, of the shortage of artificial limbs, of Soviet inefficiency and "snafu." Steinbeck give some curious examples of black market activities in Russia, of transportation difficulties, of the sickening hero-worship of the leaders.

The careful reader will be able to detect a few other interesting bits of information: the survival of deep religious feeling in the country; the greater emphasis on government building rather than on residential housing construction; the utter lack of humor and the depressing serenity of Moscow, as contrasted with the climate of greater spontaneity as one gets further away from the bureaucratic center.

And yet, one cannot help questioning Mr. Steinbeck's understanding of Russia. He went to Moscow as an "honest and liberal" man, he says, to concern himself with "politics and the larger issues" but "simply to report . . . neither critically nor favorably." But how can he speak of life in a totalitarian state without constantly referring to the government

and its agencies? How sure is he that he got to the "people" and not merely to a model farm in the Ukraine and to a show-case sanatorium on the Black Sea? If Mr. Steinbeck was merely after the answers to such questions as "Do children go to school in Russia?" He could have saved himself the trouble of going. He speaks no Russian, and all his contact was made through official interpreters. Steinbeck, whom the Russians consider one of America's top figures, was wined and dined, was taken to a Moscow nightclub and to a Kiev cocktail bar, went to the country home of such Soviet millionaires as Alexander Korneichuk — and concludes that the Russians have plenty to eat; he even states that the quality of Russian clothing improved during the few weeks he spent in Russia.

HE ATTENDED the celebration of the 800th anniversary of Moscow with Louis Aragon, the French Stalinist writer, and was impressed by the splendor of festivities. Capa gazed around Moscow by a special official assigned "to facilitate his movements about the city"; "in Red Square

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55 SEP 16 1948

he had a militia man assigned to him to make things easy and stop any unpleasantness"; yet throughout the book Steinbeck never mentioned the MVD.

Most startling, perhaps, is Steinbeck's own attitude toward the Soviet Union. His book is full of what Koestler would call false equations. When Capa is stopped from taking pictures at a lend-leased tractor plant in Stalingrad, Steinbeck reminds us that foreigners may not photograph Oak Ridge either. In his mind, "Moscowitis" and "Washingtonitis" cancel each other out. When he admits that the collective farm he was shown put on a big show for him, he insists that "any Kansas farmer" would do the same for his guests.

Steinbeck wants "peace" and hates all "curtains," iron or otherwise. He does not care about governments, good or bad. He comes up with a conclusion that is neither here nor there: "We knew nothing about the things American papers were howling about — Russian military preparations, atomic research, slave labor, the political skullduggery of the Kremlin." And he still doesn't. As a matter of fact, he is proud of his ignorance. Even Capa is led to remark that "Steinbeck is so goddam innocent that all questions posed by the curious and hero-worshipping Russian population are answered by a friendly grunt. This I do not know." When he is asked if the American people want war with Russia, he replies: "We don't know." Whether the question concerns Wallace's popularity or American foreign policy, the agnosticism and decadence

of American ~~writing~~ or U. S. support of reactionaries and fascists, Steinbeck's answer is invariably, "I don't know . . . no one tells us these things."

Under such circumstances it is not surprising that the world-shaking conclusion to Steinbeck's conducted tour is that "the Russian people are people," "that they are very nice." He adds that they want "the same things all people want — good lives, increased comfort, security, and peace." But he does not tell us if the Russian people are getting any of these.

STEINBECK USED TO BE known as a man with a strong social conscience. *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Tortilla Flat* were full of righteous moral indignation about social and economic injustice. In *The Moon Is Down* Steinbeck made a heated if somewhat pedestrian attack on totalitarian aggression and conquest. Those were the days when Steinbeck could be counted upon to stand up and wield his pen in behalf of democracy and freedom. Even today had he gone to Spain or China, he would surely not have come back to write a book in order to demonstrate that the "Chinese people want good lives and comfort" or that "the Spaniards like peace."



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March 18, 1952

46576 *sub 10-1*

JOHN ERNEST STEINBECK

*Summary*

Reference is made to your request for information subsequent to February 13, 1948, concerning John Ernest Steinbeck, the writer. The FBI has not conducted an investigation on this individual.

A review of the files however, revealed newspaper reviews from the "Daily Worker" dated April 16, 1948, and the "New Leader" dated August 21, 1948, of John Steinbeck's book, "A Russian Journal". This book was published in April, 1948, by the Viking Press in New York and contained pictures by Robert Capa. The publication was based on experiences which the two "self-styled cold war team" had on a three weeks visit to Soviet Russia during the summer of 1947.

The writers of the reviews both seemed to doubt Mr. Steinbeck's ability to portray life in Soviet Russia authoritatively since he was there for such a short period of time.

The foregoing information is furnished to you as a result of a request for an FBI file check only and is not to be considered as a clearance or nonclearance of the individual involved. It is for your confidential use only and is not to be disseminated outside of your agency.

Original to State Department

S. H. Rogers:jar *jar*

- Mr. Tolson \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Ladd \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Clegg \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Glavin \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Nichols \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Rosen \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Tracy \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Harbo \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Belmont \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Mohr \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Egan \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Gurnea \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Harbo \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Pennington \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Quinn Tamm \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Nease \_\_\_\_\_
- Miss Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

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JOHN ERNST STEINBECK 46575

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA:

John Ernest Steinbeck, author, playwright and war correspondent, was born at Salinas, California, on February 27, 1902. He graduated from Salinas High School in 1918 and was a student at Stanford University for five years but did not graduate. He married Carol Henning in 1930 and was divorced from her in March, 1949. He married Gwyn Conger on March 29, 1943, and Elaine Scott on December 28, 1950. He has been the author of a number of books and was awarded the Pulitzer prize in 1940. Among the books for which he is most noted are "Tortilla Flat," 1935; "Of Mice And Men," 1937; "Grapes Of Wrath," 1939; "The Moon Is Down," 1942; "Cannery Row," 1945; "The Salinas River," 1947; and "A Russian Journal," 1948. He was also employed as a war correspondent and as a writer for the "New York Herald Tribune" during 1943, 1944, 1947, and 1948. Steinbeck was Vice President of World Video, Inc., an organization chartered in New York State on December 18, 1947, for the purpose of preparing television programs. ("Who's Who In America," 1952-53: 100-166188-2, [redacted] 100-340922-111, p. 1, 53)

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BUREAU INVESTIGATION:

The Bureau has conducted no investigation concerning John Steinbeck. However, under date of May 11, 1942, Attorney General Bidale forwarded to the Bureau a letter received by him from Steinbeck which stated in part "Do you suppose you could ask Edgar's boys to stop stepping on my heels? They think I am an enemy alien. It's getting tiresome." After checking the Bureau files the Attorney General was advised that Steinbeck was not being and never had been investigated. (100-106224-1)

INVESTIGATION BY G-2:

Steinbeck was investigated by G-2 during 1942 to determine his suitability to hold a commission in the U. S. Army. After investigation the Chief, Counter Intelligence Branch, G-2, recommended he not be considered favorably for [redacted]

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a commission. Investigation developed that Steinbeck's former wife, Carol, had registered as a Communist in Santa Clara County, California, on November 8, 1938, but registered as a Democrat in 1939. According to Carol, she registered as a Communist to see what would happen and to see what the reaction would be in a small town, but regretted this move because it reflected unfavorably on her husband. She and others advised that Steinbeck was a registered Democrat and probably favored the New Deal but he had never been a Communist. (X)(u)

This investigation also revealed that Steinbeck contributed articles to the November 9, 1936, and April 1, 1938, issues of "Pacific Weekly," cited as a Communist publication by the California Committee on Un-American Activities. He also subscribed to the "Daily People's World," west coast Communist newspaper, as of September 1939. (X)(u) Per Army

Associates and friends of Steinbeck advised G-2 that he was honest, loyal, patriotic, and an excellent and sincere writer. They stated that although he exercised poor discretion during his early days of writing by associating with some elements of the Communist Party, he was not interested in advancing the cause of the Party but in gathering material for his writings on certain social conditions existing in the United States at that time. They reported that he wrote various articles which were published by Communist organizations because the economic views expressed were considered radical. However, he rejected Communist political and economical theories repeatedly and discarded his association with that element when it became apparent that his prestige was being used to further interests of the Party. (G-2; 100-166188-2) (X)(u) Per Army

AFFILIATION WITH COMMUNIST FRONT ORGANIZATIONS:

During 1936, Steinbeck granted the Simon J. Lubin Society of California, Inc., permission to republish his pamphlet entitled "Their Blood Is Strong," a story of the migratory agricultural workers in California, which was originally published in 1936. According to the California Committee on Un-American Activities, the Simon J. Lubin Society, Inc., was a Communist front for California agrarian penetration, organized in the Fall of 1936 by Unit 104 of the Professional Section of the Communist Party. (61-7559-2-993)

In approximately 1938, the Committee to Aid Agricultural Workers was organized under Steinbeck's leadership. Steinbeck also served as chairman of this organization which has been referred to as the John Steinbeck Committee to Aid Agricultural Workers. According to one source of unknown reliability, this committee was organized after Steinbeck had exposed the situation of the migrant farmers and "Okies" in his books. This source stated there was nothing political in the work of the committee, the purpose being to gather food and clothing for those in need. Another source indicated that the committee furnished financial assistance to the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America. Many of the supporters of this organization were known to be Communist Party members or people who had been active in behalf of Communist united front organizations. The American Legion Radical Research Bureau described this committee as a "very Red outfit."

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Los Angeles member of the committee;  
100-166188-2; 100-333317-1; 100-6633-2, p. 104;  
100-3-23-16, p. 12)

John Steinbeck was one of the sponsors and delegates to the Western Writers Congress (declared to be a subsidiary of the American Writers Congress, cited by the HCUA) conference held in San Francisco, California, on November 13 and 14, 1936. (Dies Committee Hearing, Volume 9, Page 1996)

Steinbeck was active in the League of American Writers (cited by the Attorney General) during 1938-1940, serving that organization as one of the vice presidents in 1939 and as one of the board of directors of the California League of American Writers in 1940. He also furnished that organization with a statement for publication in a booklet published during May, 1938, and signed an open letter to all Senators and members of the House of Representatives during 1939. (61-7759-667812; 100-7322-8, 16; 61-7551-183110; 61-7561-2-87)

Steinbeck was among those who signed an open letter to the Government and People of the United States sponsored by the Washington Committee to Lift the Spanish Embargo (cited as a Communist front by the California Committee on Un-American Activities) on January 31, 1939. ("New York Times," 121-23278-267112, p. 1506)