FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/PRIVACY ACTS SECTION

COVER SHEET

SUBJECT: KATHERINE OPPENHEIMER

FILE 100-309633
To: Lieutenant Colonel John Lansdale  
Office of the Chief of Engineers  
War Department  
Washington, D.C.

From: J. Edgar Hoover  
Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Date: May 22, 1944

Subject: KATHERINE OPPENHEIMER

I thought you would be interested in the following information from the files of this Bureau relative to the activities of Katherine Oppenheimer, the present wife of Professor Julius Robert Oppenheimer. It is noted that little information has been developed concerning Katherine Oppenheimer's activities during the period from 1924 to 1936. In fact, between December, 1932, and the time when she met her third husband, Richard Stewart Harrison, in England during 1937, nothing was developed regarding her activities although it was indicated that she might have been in Germany during a portion of that period.

Katherine Oppenheimer was allegedly married to one Joe Dallatt, a Communist organizer reportedly killed in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. In July, 1930, Joe Dallatt was a member of the Executive Committee of the National Council of Unemployed of the Trade Union Unity League. Also on this Committee was one Steve Delson of Chicago, Illinois. In the summer of 1930 Joe Dallatt lived at 1071 East 45th Street, Chicago, Illinois, with one Barbara Band. During this period he was Secretary of District Number 6 of the Metal Workers Industrial League of the Trade Union Unity League in Chicago, Illinois. In either December, 1932, or January, 1933, he went to Youngstown, Ohio, and it is known that Barbara Band was living with him in Youngstown as late as March, 1933.

Dallatt was active in Youngstown, Ohio, in the Communist Party during 1934, 1935 and 1936 and was Section Literature Agent for the Youngstown Section of the Party in December, 1934. During this same period he was District Secretary of the Steel and Metal Workers Industrial Union of the Trade Union Unity League in Youngstown, Ohio.

One Kitty Dallatt became prominent in Youngstown in the Communist Party in February, 1935, when she taught a class in English at the Communist Party Workers School in Youngstown. During the summer of 1935 she was Literary Agent of the Youngstown Section of the Communist Party. She was replaced, however, in August of 1935 by one Betty Moore, a woman Communist Party agitator of long standing and experience because the Section Bureau of the Party was dissatisfied with Kitty Dallatt's results, presumably because of her inexperience. However, Kitty Dallatt was in Youngstown, Ohio, Section of the Communist Party and Joseph Dallatt, her husband, was an Organizer for the WPA, also a member of the Section Committee and National Bureau of the Communist Party in Youngstown.
It has also been reported that Joseph Dallett is carried in the records of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade as having died October 13, 1937, in Fuentesa, Spain. His wife was shown as Kitty Dallett, 206 South 43rd Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. You will recall that 206 South 43rd Street, Philadelphila, is a rooming house in which Katherine Funing (Katherine Oppenheimer) resided from January, 1938, until January 1939. There would seem to be no doubt as to the identity of Kitty Dallett and Katherine Oppenheimer.

(100-7060-215)
In addition to the letter dated June 1, 1953, which
informed the President himself of the professional abilities of
[Redacted], the information provided in this report is
considered to be confidential. The recipient is advised that to
quote transfers between [Redacted] and [Redacted] on March 29,
1952.

[Redacted]
1943, HELSON stated that he formerly was very intimate with J. ROSSOPFENHISER not only through Party liaison but also through a personal relationship that OPENNHER's wife was formerly the wife of one of his, HELSON's, best friends who was killed in Spain.

On page 236 of the same report, second paragraph, during an interview by Agents of the San Francisco Office, OPENNHER informed that he was acquainted with HELSON and explained that their acquaintanceship was brought about through the association of his wife, KITTY OPENNHER, with HELSON. OPENNHER stated his wife was previously married to a man who was killed while fighting with the Spanish Loyalist Forces and that HELSON brought the news of his husband's death to KITTY in Paris.

France. According to HELSON's statement and parade OPENNHER informed their acquaintance began in France in the summer part of 1943 or early 1944. HELSON stated that his ex-wife and his family would on occasion drop in to pay a visit.

It is believed that the information contained in this letter suggests possible leads unless the Bureau or New York Office has already considered some in previous investigations not made known to the Detroit Office.
Katherine Puening Oppenheimer, according to records of the Manhattan Engineering District, was born August 8, 1910, at Recklinghausen, Germany. Her father, Franz Puening, was born March 16, 1881, at Muenster, Germany, and her mother, Kaethe Vissering Puening, was born May 25, 1882, at Norden, Germany. Katherine Oppenheimer claims derivative citizenship, through the naturalization of her father February 17, 1922, in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania. Katherine Oppenheimer entered the United States May 11, 1913, at New York City aboard the SS Kaiser Wilhelm Der Grosse. She attended Aspenwald High School, Pittsburgh, Pa., 1921, to 1928; the University of Munich, in Munich, Germany, in 1929; the University of Pittsburgh, University of Wisconsin, and University of Pennsylvania between 1930 and 1933, and the University of California at Los Angeles from 1937 to 1939.

Katherine Oppenheimer married Frank W. Ramseyer, Jr., at Boston in 1933. This marriage was subsequently annulled in Superior Court, in the State of Wisconsin on December 20, 1933.

Dr. Stewart Harrison, a former husband of Katherine Oppenheimer, advised MIB agents that she was formerly the common law wife of one Joseph Dallet, a Communist from Pittsburgh, Pa. Joseph Dallet was active in the CP in Youngstown, Ohio, in 1935, 1935, and 1936.

In February, 1935, Katherine Oppenheimer, then known as Kitty Dallet, reportedly taught an English Class at a CP worker's school in Youngstown, Ohio. During the summer of 1935 she was letterly agent for the Youngstown section of the CP. In March, 1936 she was special dues secretary for the Youngstown, Ohio, section of the CP, and her husband was an organizer for the WPA. Joseph Dallet reportedly fought for the
Spanish Loyalists, and records of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade indicate he died October 13, 1937, in Fuentes, Spain. His wife was listed in the records as Kitty Dallet, 208 South 43rd Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

Dr. Stewart Harrison advised that after Dallet's death Katherine Oppenheimer was contacted by Steve Nelson in Paris, France, and Nelson arranged for her to return to the U. S. In 1938 she married Dr. Stewart Harrison, a member of the faculty of the California Institute of Technology. She obtained a divorce from Harrison at Virginia City, Nevada, on November 1, 1940.

A review of available facts pertaining to the subject Kitty Harris shows that she was born May 24, 1889, or May 24, 1899, at San Francisco, according to records of the Department of State. Her father was listed as Nathan Harrison. Several informants advise that an individual by the name of Kitty Harris, possibly identical with the subject, resided with Earl Browder at Chicago, Illinois, during the early 1920's.

The above facts indicate that Katherine Oppenheimer is apparently not identical with the subject and no active investigation, particularly on a college campus, is warranted to resolve any questions regarding such identity. Newark is requested to confine its activity along these lines to a review of all available facts and report any pertinent facts which appear to merit attention for consideration in further clarifying this matter.

Washington Field is requested to conduct a check of the passport records of the State Department and ascertain whether the subject was born May 24, 1889, or May 24, 1899, according to records of the Department of State. The Bureau copies of the Washington Field Office report reflecting a review of the records of the Department of State show that two dates were reported and that the matter should be clarified.
A. H. Belmont

W. A. Branigan

Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer

INTERNAL SECURITY - H

PURPOSE:

Katherine Oppenheimer, wife of subject, admitted during an interview with Bureau agents that she was formerly an active Communist Party member in Youngstown, Ohio, from about 1934 to 1936. She could name only six publicly known CP functionaries as her former Communist associates. She professed an anti-Communist belief at the present time and stated that she would welcome any additional inquiries or a re-interview if desired.

It is recommended that Katherine Oppenheimer be re-interviewed and exhibited photographs of Communist Party members reported to have associated with her and her husband in California during the period 1940-47.

DETAILS:

On April 23, 1952, the results of an interview with Katherine Oppenheimer, wife of Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, were submitted by the Newark Office. She was interviewed in her husband's presence.

Katherine Oppenheimer admitted during the interview that she married Joseph Dallet about 1934, and he was killed in Spain in 1937 while fighting with the International Brigade. She stated that Dallet was a Communist Party trade union organizer in Youngstown, Ohio, during the time they were married and that she also was an active Communist Party member from about 1934 to 1936. She professed to be anti-Communist at the present time and rationalized her former CP membership as being due to her love for Joseph Dallet.


All of the above are, or were, publicly known CP members. Katherine Oppenheimer stated she could not recall any other CP members. She did not furnish any information of substantial value.

May 6, 1952
Katherine Oppenheimer also advised that she had never come to the FBI to volunteer information as she did not desire to do an injustice to persons known to her as CP members during the 1930's who may now be entirely alienated from the CP. She stated she has tried to forget her "CP experiences," and she has not been connected with CP activity since Joseph Dallatre's death.

She informed that she was hazy as to dates, names, and places and that it was difficult for her to recall any of the persons in the CP with whom she formerly associated.

At the conclusion of the interview, both Dr. and Mrs. Oppenheimer stated that they would welcome any additional information that the Bureau wish to make and that they would be available for reinterview if desired.

Newark has requested Bureau authority to reinterview Katherine Oppenheimer and to exhibit photographs of various Communist Party members in the California area whose names have previously arisen in connection with the investigation of Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer during the period 1940-1950.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that Katherine Oppenheimer be reinterviewed and exhibit photographs of Communist Party members in California for possible identification in accordance with Newark's suggestion.

If you agree, there is attached for your approval and instructions to the Newark and San Francisco Divisions:

DIRECTORS' NOTATION:

"O.K." H.
Letter to Newark

Btr: [Redacted]

This investigation is being conducted at the specific request of the Civil Service Commission (CSC), the basis being information alleging communist affiliations on the part of the [Redacted], Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer.

Bullet points indicate that FBI conducted an ANA-A investigation concerning Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer in 1947 the results of which were furnished to the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). He was also the subject of an IS-R investigation by the Bureau, the results of which have also been furnished to AEC. The results of investigations disclosed information indicating that in the early 1940s, Dr. Oppenheimer contributed large sums of money to Communist Party (CP) officials and was regarded by many Communists as having a CP member himself. He associated with many prominent CP officials, at least five of whom were later found to be involved in communist activities and/or Soviet espionage activities directed against the United States. It is noted that in connection with his association with CP front groups, Oppenheimer in his appearance before the AEC Personnel Security Board in 1954, described himself as a "fellow traveler" or as "one who accepts part of the public program of the CP, was willing to work with and associate with communists, but was not a member of the party."

The investigation further disclosed that during the period of 1943-45, Oppenheimer was Director of the Los Alamos Laboratory, Manhattan Engineering District, Los Alamos, New Mexico. During this period he was contacted for the purpose of furnishing secret information re atomic research to representatives of the Soviet Government. Although there is no indication he furnished such information, he did delay for at least six months in reporting this contact to a proper official and he then told this official a number of lies concerning this incident, and stated that while he was not opposed to the Soviet Union getting these data, he would object to its being done in a clandestine manner. Our investigation also disclosed that Oppenheimer opposed the development of the hydrogen bomb by the U.S., and that he refused to support the Department of the Air Forces long range detection program for determining atomic explosions in the Soviet Union. It was also reported that he was less than candid in several instances in his testimony before the aforementioned Personnel Security Board. Complete details relative to his testimony before this Security Board may be found in the AEC publication entitled "In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer: Transcript of Hearing Before Personnel Security Hearing Board, Washington, D.C., 4/13/64 through 5/8/64. In connection with this information, WFO refer its files 118-93 and 100-12353. WFO refer its files 116-93 and 100-33166. WFO characterize Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer."
Letter to Newark

Re: b7C

HK refer to the results of the interview conducted with Katherine Oppenheimer, wife of Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer which took place on 4/23/52. The HK file number in this matter is not readily available at the Bureau.

During this interview, Katherine Oppenheimer admitted that she was formerly an active CP member in Youngstown, Ohio, from about 1934 to 1936. She said she married Joseph Dallet in about 1934 and that he was killed in Spain in 1937 while fighting in the International Brigade. She said that Dallet was a CP trade union organizer in the Youngstown, Ohio, area during the time they were married. She also named as CP acquaintances during 1934-36, such individuals as Steve Nelson, John Gates, John Stueben, Gus Hall, John Williamson, and Karl Kramer. All of these individuals were publicly well-known CP members. HK characterizes Katherine Oppenheimer and these acquaintances. (160-309633)

The file of the file 100-5656 concerning [redacted] born [redacted] She has admitted being a member of the CP from 1937 through 1941. [redacted] appears to be identical with the [redacted]. HK characterizes [redacted] (100-237735)

Files reveal that another [redacted], born 2/22/40, was the subject of an special type investigation conducted by the FBI in 1947. [redacted] was the secretary for Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer at Los Alamos Laboratory, New Mexico.

Internal Security - A investigation conducted re her and her husband. HK review its files for information re Robert [redacted] (116-7681) (100-344099)

AX check CIA records for information concerning the employee.

WFO check passport and Peace Corps records concerning the employee.

Copies of enclosed CSC reports should be carefully reviewed and information therein utilized in accordance with instructions contained in Manual of Instructions, Volume II, Section 18.B.3.t.

This investigation should be assigned to mature and experienced agents to insure that inquiries are conducted in a careful, discreet, and accurate manner so as to avoid any possible embarrassment to the Bureau.

SEE PAGE 4 FOR FURTHER SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS.
You are authorized to conduct necessary investigation involving persons connected with educational institutions unless your office is aware of a possible problem at a particular school. No such contacts are to be made on campuses except as provided in SAC Letter 67-29. Should a problem exist or should it be felt any other interview on a campus is necessary, furnish the Bureau full details together with your recommendation for specific Bureau authority. It is incumbent upon each office to insure that any such investigation involving persons connected with educational institutions are handled by mature personnel to avoid possible embarrassment to the Bureau. All persons interviewed must be advised that the Bureau is conducting a background investigation of the captioned individual who is an applicant or employee of the Federal Government to preclude any assumption that the investigation is of a criminal or security type.

NOTE: Delay in opening this case was due to the necessity of requesting additional files relating to the employee and her reference, Robert Serber.

Files 116-7681 and 100-344089 presently unavailable. Upon receipt and review of same pertinent information should be forwarded to interested field offices.
Mr. Gale

W. V. Cleveland

November 28, 1969

NEW YORK, NEW YORK
LOYALTY OF EMPLOYEES OF AND OTHER PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has requested investigation of employee under Executive Order (EO) 10422 Employee Loyalty Program based on alleged communist affiliations on the part of Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, who died in February, 1967. He is the well-known former Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) physicist, who assisted in the development of the atomic bomb. His security clearance was denied by AEC in 1954 based on his disregard of security requirements. In his appearance before AEC Personnel Security Board in 1954, Dr. Oppenheimer described himself as a "fellow traveler" or as "one who accepts part of the public program of the CP, was willing to work with and associate with communists, but who was not a member of the Party." In early 1940's, while Director of the Los Alamos Laboratory, Manhattan Engineering District, Los Alamos, New Mexico, Dr. Oppenheimer was contacted for the purpose of furnishing secret data re atomic research to representatives of Soviet Government. No indication was furnished information, but he did delay for at least six months in reporting this contact to a proper official. When he did report same he told a number of lies concerning the incident. It was also determined he was less than candid in several instances in his testimony before aforementioned Security Board.

Katherine Oppenheimer, formerly married to Joseph Dallet who was killed in Spain in 1937 while fighting with the International Brigade. Both Katherine Oppenheimer and Joseph Dallet active CP members during mid 1930's and 1940's and Katherine Oppenheimer and Joseph Dallet active CP members 1937-41. Both CP members contain no information identifiable with the employee.

ACTION: Full field investigation being initiated.

1 - Mr. DeLoach
1 - Mr. Bishop
1 - H.C. Phillips
10-309633
1 - 100-306633 (Katherine Oppenheimer)
1 - 100-307773 (Katherine Oppenheimer)
1 - 100-380608

HCP: mat file 13 12 46 DEC 4 1969

(19) DEC 10 1969
**Federal Bureau of Investigation**

**Records Branch**

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**Name Searching Unit - Room 6527**

**Service Unit - Room 6524**

**Forward to File Review**

**Attention**

**Return to**

**Type of References Requested:**

- [ ] Regular Request (Analytical Search)
- [ ] All References (Subversive & Non-Subversive)
- [ ] Subversive References Only
- [ ] Non-Subversive References Only
- [ ] Migratory References Only

**Type of Search Requested:**

- [ ] Restricted to Localities
- [ ] Exact Name Only (On the Nose)
- [ ] Buildup Variations

**Subject**

**Birthdate & Place**

**Address**

**Localities**

**Rd.** 602 — **Date** 4/17 — **Searcher** Initials N

**Prod.** 25

**FILE NUMBER** | **SERIAL**
---|---
N1 | 100-02-217-212 371 765 9 A
I | 100-19-05 531 79 365 371 7
J | 100-23-25-6 521 77 77 21 212 371 765
J | 100-23-72-9 521 77 77 77 21 212 371 765
N1 | 67-3-1280
N1 | — 8623
N1 | 67-1-56-238
N1 | 100-19-06-7 361 97 765 9
N1 | 100-23-72-9 361 97 765 9
N1 | 100-19-06-25-2664 93 37
N1 | 196-170-38-10-67
N1 | 185-1488 4-31

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**BEST COPY AVAILABLE**

**MAR 20 1970**
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Mr. Tolson
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Mr. Mohr
Mr. Bishop
Mr. Callahan
Mr. Casper
Mr. Conrad
Mr. Felt
Mr. Gale
Mr. Rosen
Mr. Sullivan
Mr. Tavel
Mr. Walters
Mr. Sizoo
Mr. Moore
Mr. Donahoe
Mr. Branigan
Mr. C.D. Brennan
Mr. R.D. Cotter
Mr. Gray
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Mr. Wannall
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Foreign Liaison
1004 3 & D
Domestic Liaison
1018 9 & D

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Routing Unit
General Division
Name Searching, 6527
File Review, 1321 IB
Mail Room, 5531
Reading Room, 5533
Teletype Room, 5646
Courier Service, 1522
Expedite Processing

See Me Please
Call Me Please
Per Call
Please Handle
Note Status and Return
Please Note and Return
Place on Record
and Return
Post in File and
Destroy 0-1 or
FD-205
Send File UTD

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREBY IS ASSIGNED 6703

Rm. 1012 9 & D
X-505
Liaison Section
SECRET

1 - Mr. Scatterday
1 - Mr. [redacted]
1 - Liaison

March 24, 1970

RICHARD STEWART HARRISON

16 153

Harrison has not been investigated by the FBI and review of our Headquarters' files did not uncover any information regarding any Communist Party (CP) or related activities Harrison did come to our attention in connection with our investigation of J. Robert Oppenheimer, deceased atomic scientist.

In the course of this investigation, it was determined that Harrison had married Katherine Puening at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in November, 1938. Puening later became romantically involved with J. Robert Oppenheimer and she and Harrison were amicably divorced. Puening, by her own admission, had been a member of the CP and previous to her marriage to Harrison had been married to Joseph Ballet, a CP leader in this country who was killed fighting with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Spain during the Spanish Civil War.

(100-17828-2055)

NOTE: Classified "Secret" as incoming so classified.