

Running SOLO: FBI's Case of Morris and Jack Childs, 1952–77

Harvey Klehr and John Earl Haynes

Operation SOLO was a long-running FBI program to infiltrate the Communist Party of the United States and gather intelligence about its relationship to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, China, and other communist nations. It officially began in 1958 and ended in 1977, although Morris and Jack Childs, two of the principal agents in the operation, had been involved with the Bureau for several years prior. The files range from March 1958 to April 1966.

—Description of Operation SOLO given in <https://vault.fbi.gov/SOLO/>

In the early 1950s, the FBI instituted a program dubbed TOPLEV, in which FBI agents discreetly approached mid- and senior-level members of the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA) seeking informants who could provide information about the reasons people joined and the ways the party operated. Frequently, the bureau received rude and obscene rejections. However, some members, among them Jack and Morris Childs, responded positively. In relatively short order the brothers would become the most fruitful CPUSA informants the FBI ever recruited.

During the more than 20 years of the brothers' association with the FBI, the Bureau spent enormous amounts of time, money, and manpower to oversee and supervise their activities in the operation named SOLO.

- Two FBI offices assigned dedicated agents to handle logistics, covers, and interrogations—Chicago for Morris (agent number CG 5824-S) and New York for Jack (agent number NY 694-S).
- Between 1958 and 1977 the Childs brothers made nearly 60

trips to communist countries as CPUSA emissaries and met with leaders ranging from Fidel Castro to Leonid Brezhnev to Mao Zedong.

- After each trip they underwent extensive FBI debriefings. The Bureau tracked more than \$28 million in cash that Jack received from KGB couriers for CPUSA coffers and monitored his regular communications with the KGB via coded radio messages from New York.
- The FBI's files on Jack and Morris, including the SOLO file and its main files on the two exceed more than a million pages of which the material released in 2011 and 2012 under the Freedom of Information Act represents a significant part. The FBI has state that material from after 1965 is still being processed.

In scope and difficulty, SOLO rivaled the Soviet Cheka's brilliant and successful creation of a fake opposition network, the "Trust," in the Soviet Union from 1921 to 1929. Bamboozling foreign intelligence organizations and Russian dissidents

in the West, the Cheka fed false information to its enemies, closely monitored intelligence operations launched from abroad, and killed or otherwise neutralized spies dispatched to the Soviet Union. For all its successes, however, the Trust operated for less than a decade. SOLO lasted nearly three times as long.¹

Although a full description of SOLO must await further releases, enough is available to allow a preliminary account of the multiple obstacles the FBI confronted in running a counterintelligence operation of this scope. They included:

- Managing Morris Childs' precarious health.
- Providing for the expenses of an otherwise destitute Morris without tipping off the source of the money, the FBI.
- Addressing the security risks posed by knowledge or suspicions of friends and family.
- Dealing with other US government agencies, e.g., the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that threatened legal

The views, opinions, and findings of the authors expressed in this article should not be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations or representing the official positions of any component of the United States government. © Harvey Klehr and John Haynes, 2022.



I. BACKGROUND DATA REGARDING DEVELOPMENT OF CG 5824-S AS FBI INFORMANT AND HIS SUBSEQUENT ADVANCEMENT TO NATIONAL LEADERSHIP POSITION IN COMMUNIST PARTY, USA:

A. BACKGROUND OF INFORMANT:

CG 5824-S was born in Chadorkow, Russia, on June 10, 1902. He entered the United States in New York City on December 28, 1911, and was subsequently granted citizenship on October 18, 1927, at Chicago, Illinois. He is a charter member of the Communist Party, USA, and attended the Lenin School in Moscow from 1929-1932. During the period 1933 to 1935, he was a leading functionary of the Party in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In 1935, he returned to the Chicago area where he remained a leading functionary of the Party's Illinois District until 1945. In December, 1945, he was appointed as editor of "The Worker" and the now defunct "Daily Worker." In June, 1947, he was removed from this position due to ill health.

During the period 1947-1952, due to the precarious condition of his health, he discontinued his Party activities and returned to Chicago, Illinois. In April, 1952, he was contacted by an Agent of our Chicago Office and agreed to attempt to reactivate himself in the higher echelons of the Party where he would operate as an informant of this Bureau. Since that time he has gradually worked himself back into a position where he is once again recognized as one of the leading Party functionaries on a national and international scale.

Morris Childs in an FBI file photo (left). Morris was the older of the two brothers. Above, a portion of a March 1959 FBI backgrounder on CG 5824-S addressed to J. Edgar Hoover. In 17 pages, the memorandum detailed two trips Morris Childs had taken abroad in 1958 and 1959—to the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. See page 35 for a portion of the report from the CPSU party congress.

action over immigration or tax status.

- Adjusting standard FBI surveillance practices to protect the Childs against exposure.

The Beginnings of CG 5824-S and NY 694-S

Morris Childs joined the US Communist Party in 1921, when he was 19 years old and just 10 years after arriving in the United States from Kiev. By the mid-1920s he was a protege of Earl Browder, a rising figure in the CPUSA. In 1929, Childs received an appointment to the Comintern's International Lenin School in Moscow. He returned to the United States in 1932 and served in increasingly important party positions in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Illinois. In 1946, Eugene Dennis, Browder's successor, picked Morris to become editor of the *Daily Worker*, the party's chief newspaper.

Jack Childs followed his older brother into the CPUSA in the 1920s. He, too, became a Browder protege and was appointed business manager of the Young Communist League. In 1932, he went to Moscow but not for the ideological and leadership training that Morris had received at the Lenin School. Jack got technical instruction in short-wave radio operations and clandestine courier work. He undertook two undercover trips for the Comintern, both to Berlin to deliver money to the German Communist Party. When he returned to the United States, Browder assigned him to a variety of jobs at CPUSA headquarters, including acting as Browder's chauffeur and bodyguard. He also handled tasks connected to the party's secret apparatus.

In March 1947, Morris Childs became the first CPUSA emissary sent to Moscow to reestablish direct contact with the Soviets—contact that had been lost during World War

II. He brought back cautious guidance about the political direction the CPUSA should take in the 1948 US presidential election. Then, in September 1947, Moscow organized the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) which promoted a harsh, anti-Western line. CPUSA leaders regarded the Cominform as a signal to adopt an aggressive policy hostile to the Truman administration and the Democratic Party in 1948. They further concluded that Childs had misinterpreted Moscow's advice and fired him as editor of the *Daily Worker*. Childs then suffered a severe heart attack in 1949, which left him a home-bound invalid for several years. To Jack's dismay, the CPUSA declined to help with Morris's medical and financial needs. Jack, meanwhile, quietly dropped out of party employment and activity. He supported himself with a small business, and paid his brother's medical bills.²

In the course of the TOPLEV program, the FBI first approached Jack

Concerning the request of Chicago as to the step the New York Office has taken and contemplates taking toward the reactivation of NY 694-S, the Bureau was advised by letter dated February 19, 1952 under the caption "NY 694-S" that NY 694-S has stated that he has completely divorced himself from the Communist Party and that he is now trying to lead a normal life for himself and his family. Further, that the informant divorced himself from the Party in the early part of 1946 and one of the main reasons he divorced himself was due to the treatment which the informant's brother (CG 5824-S) received from the Party from 1947 to date, this situation being that the informant's brother was removed as editor of the "Daily Worker" by JOHN GATES at the time GATES and the younger element took over the control of the Communist Party. Since that time the Communist Party has done nothing for the informant's brother and eventually he was pushed out of any Communist Party activities.

Further, that since the informant's brother has been seriously ill the Party has done nothing for him and has contacted him in no way. NY 694-S advised that in view of this ill treatment by the Communist Party of his brother, he (NY 694-S) also has an ill feeling toward the Communist Party.



Jack Childs passport photo (right), ca. 1932. Courtesy of Childs' son Philip. Above, a portion of May 1959 New York office memorandum to Bureau headquarters concerning the possibility of recruiting Jack Childs, who expressed bitterness at the treatment of his ailing brother by the CPUSA. At the same time, the report recounted Jack's reluctance to reengage with CPUSA in the service of TOPLEV.

in September 1951. Deeply disenchanted with the CPUSA's treatment of his brother, he was ready to cooperate, and he persuaded Morris to hear the Bureau out. The FBI picked a talented counterintelligence agent, one well-versed in Marxism, to make the approach. He succeeded: in April 1952 Morris also agreed to cooperate.

At the time, the CPUSA was in a deep crisis and facing a severe shortage of cadres. In 1951 in *Dennis v. United States*, the US Supreme Court had upheld the convictions of 11 top party leaders for violations of the Alien Registration Act of 1940 (aka the Smith Act).³ In response, several jumped bail and went into hiding. Hundreds of party cadres were ordered to leave their jobs and homes and go underground. Dozens of party leaders in a number of states were indicted under the Smith Act. Others were sent abroad.

How to Use Morris?

The question of how Morris was to be used was important. He was reassured the FBI was not primarily interested in his becoming a witness against his former comrades. The possibility of his reactivation in the CPUSA and use as an informant was predicated on his physical recovery and whether party leaders heard of his private disaffection. Morris waffled on the issue and worried about his security, but he finally agreed to try and warned that it would have to be a slow process.⁴

The odds that both would be believable to CPUSA members was improved by the fact that neither Morris nor Jack had been caught up in the post-WWII government dragnet against the CPUSA and neither had publicly broken with the CPUSA—and could reasonably be presumed to have gone underground with others. Thus, the Childs's potential value was far greater than just the information they

could provide from their decades within the movement.

By late 1953, the Childs brothers had become founts of information. Morris had provided details about more than 500 top American communists, including Comintern agents, underground workers, and Lenin School attendees. Jack had supplied information about the CPUSA's ring of wealthy donors and financial operations, including the key role of Stanley Levison, information later to become politically explosive, when Levison emerged as a key adviser to Martin Luther King Jr.⁵

Cover and Money Concerns

When he agreed to assist the FBI, Morris was living in Chicago with Sonny Schlossberg, who later became his second wife. Still largely bed-ridden, he was visited frequently at Schlossberg's residence by FBI agent Carl Freyman, who quickly established a rapport. In meetings always

In 1953, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) had begun to prepare a denaturalization case against Morris, which the Bureau discretely managed to end.

prearranged over the telephone, discussions often lasted for hours. In 1954, the Chicago office contacted Morris by phone twice a day and held at least one face-to-face meeting a week.⁶

At first, the FBI's national office was reluctant to spend too much money on its new assets. Morris's health prevented him from using a streetcar, so the Chicago office sought permission to buy him a car, but Washington refused, suggesting he use taxis. It also balked at Morris's request for \$10 a week to buy CPUSA literature; it finally authorizing \$20 a month for expenses. In turn, Morris complained that the Bureau lacked trust in him and pressured it to allow him to buy a car and party literature without nitpicking.⁷

By August 1952, as Morris's value became apparent, the FBI provided him with \$800 a month to be used at his discretion. While delighted by the intelligence the brothers provided, the FBI nonetheless remained cautious. It secretly installed a microphone in Jack's New York office without informing him in 1958 and periodically monitored telephone conversations between the brothers.⁸

The first and most serious issue the FBI had to confront was Morris's serious coronary illness. While the FBI was willing to consider paying for advanced medical care, it needed a plausible explanation of where the money had come from and how to deal with his current doctor, who was a party member. Jack Childs suggested that, to explain funding sources, he would inform some

friends in the CPUSA that he was raising money for Morris's medical treatment while the FBI furnished Jack the money to pay Morris's expenses. The FBI approved this plan.⁹

Within a few weeks of Jack's leaking this news, a party leader who had gone underground contacted Morris. The leader indicated that the party was interested in helping. By July 1952, he had an appointment at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, and the FBI had advanced money to pay for his consultation. Morris underwent testing there in August.¹⁰

Doctors at the Mayo Clinic diagnosed coronary sclerosis with angina pectoris. He was placed on a low-fat diet, regular nitroglycerin doses, urged to reduce his work levels, and told there was no cure or medication that would reverse his condition. Nonetheless, Morris would conduct an exhausting and nerve-racking series of trips and missions for the FBI over the next two decades. Although he tired frequently, his health held up. He died in 1991, just five days short of his 89th birthday.¹¹

Keeping the Secret From Friends and Family

For several years after Morris's 1949 heart attack, both he and Jack had virtually no contact with the CPUSA. While they were still friendly with individual communists, friends and acquaintances and even some relatives assumed they were no longer committed party members. The more people who knew the real reason for their reattachment to the CPUSA, the greater the danger that

a chance comment or an indiscreet remark would endanger the operation.

By 1952, Sonny Schlossberg had become ardently anti-Communist, and while she encouraged Morris to cooperate with the FBI, she was reluctant to reengage herself with the CPUSA. She had become a naturalized citizen in 1942 after quitting the party and feared that rejoining would open her up to deportation. Her fear was not unreasonable: in 1953, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) had begun to prepare a denaturalization case against Morris, which the Bureau discretely managed to end. Moreover, her brother, a US Army officer, was already facing difficulties because of her past communist ties, causing her to worry that he would be further endangered if she rejoined.¹²

Morris also was concerned about his wife, Helen, and son. He had separated from Helen in 1938 and they were divorced in 1952. By then, she lived in Florida with their son, Bill, whom Morris had seen only intermittently for more than a decade. Bill was in college and enrolled in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps. The FBI paid to enable Morris to travel to Miami to visit and tell his son about his communist past and explain that he was now doing his patriotic duty.¹³

Although there is no explicit indication that he also told Helen, Bill told Morris that an old communist acquaintance had been in touch with his mother, and she wanted to know if she should be friendly. This information sparked concerns that the CPUSA was vetting Morris as his reactivation was under way. That she would ask also suggested that she had at least an inkling of what

Morris was doing. In May 1960, Morris visited Bill, who by then had a son, in California and with the FBI's permission read him a letter of appreciation from Hoover "under secure conditions."¹⁴

Jack had been inactive in CPUSA affairs for several years before the FBI recruited him in 1951. But his family was even more firmly embedded in the communist milieu than Morris's. Jack's wife, Rosalyn, had worked as a secretary in the Comintern in the 1930s. She had left the CPUSA around 1940. While she was unaware of Jack's having reestablished his party ties—and did not learn about his FBI connections



Jack Childs on a fishing excursion, possibly with CPUSA leader Gus Hall. 1967 photo courtesy of Jack's son Philip.

until 1964—she knew that Morris had become an important party member in the 1950s and she accepted Jack's trips to the Soviet Union as a favor for his brother. Neither of Jack's sons knew anything about their father's activities, only that he read communist publications and in the 1960s was

The money the FBI had been providing Morris since he agreed to provide information helped Morris out of utter destitution, but the payments created problems of their own, particularly in the first few years of the 1950s.

friends with party leader Gus Hall, with whom he often went fishing.¹⁵

The Surveillance Conundrum

To reestablish ties with the CPUSA required cultivating party leaders with whom Morris and Jack had been close in the past. It also meant relaxing FBI surveillance and targeting of those leaders. William Weiner, who lived near Jack and had long been friendly with him, had overseen party finances for many years. Morris had concluded that his support was crucial to getting back into the party's good graces. But Weiner, who also had a serious heart condition, was under an INS parole and prohibited from engaging in party activities.¹⁶

Too much FBI pressure or surveillance of Weiner might persuade party leaders that it was too risky to use him as a contact with the Childs brothers and thus complicate Morris's efforts. Morris also urged the FBI not to arrest or harass his other high-level CPUSA contacts, Phil Bart, Jack Kling, or Bill Sennett. When CPUSA General Secretary Gene Dennis got out of prison after his Smith Act conviction, Morris urged the Bureau not to harass him. When Morris was informed that he was to meet a leading figure in the party underground to discuss his reactivation, the FBI suspended

surveillance of Morris lest it alert the CPUSA, which had obtained the license plate numbers of FBI cars. When it turned out the secret contact was Phil Bart—and Morris met with him for 20 hours in a Chicago area hotel—the FBI did not aggressively seek to locate and arrest Bart even though there was a standing order to arrest him on sight.¹⁷

Similarly, one of Morris's old friends, Lena Scherer, became an excellent source of information on inner-party factionalism and maneuvering, unknowingly giving the FBI valuable information. She too was facing arrest on immigration charges, and the FBI had to persuade the INS to put her case on hold and to consult with the FBI before initiating anymore investigations of her and her husband.¹⁸

More about Money—and the IRS

The money the FBI had been providing Morris since he agreed to provide information helped Morris out of utter destitution, but the payments created problems of their own, particularly in the first few years of the 1950s. The money was Morris's only income, and he worried that if he filed income tax returns under his real name, indicating his sources of income, the information might come to the attention of the CPUSA via a leak from within the IRS. Jack had been supporting Morris financially and claimed him as a dependent on his own tax returns.¹⁹

The FBI's investment in time and money began to pay off almost immediately after the two reconnected with the CPUSA. Jack Childs quickly was enlisted to serve as a liaison with the Communist Party of Canada (CPC).

Nor did that end the financial complications. Jack's wife, who had access to his finances, might become curious about how Morris's new income was derived. Morris's marriage to Sonny in 1952 after his divorce from Helen further complicated his situation. Since Sonny was privately employed, their cover story was that she was his sole support; if they filed a joint return, she would be compelled to list his income. The FBI's solution was to have Morris file his income tax under an alias, using the address of an FBI agent in the Washington, DC, area. His FBI payments would be listed under "Other Income," not under Schedule C. Sonny, meanwhile, would file under her maiden name.²⁰

The question of how to account for Morris's income from the FBI remained a problem. One solution was to have Jack's company, Aristo Grid Lamp Products, hire Morris as its Chicago representative. Jack would tell his partner that the purpose would be to aid Morris in his physical recovery and that he would personally pay him out of his share of the firm's income. Morris, in turn, would endorse the business checks and return them to Jack, who would report this as income. This ploy would also give Morris an excuse to travel to New York to meet with CPUSA higher-ups under the guise of conducting business.²¹

While Jack's partner was amenable, this solution created yet other problems; for one, how to handle social security payments. Since Morris was going to file income taxes

under a fictitious name, how would he account for this income coming in under his real name? While a temporary solution, this arrangement was unsustainable. Hoover was skeptical, worried that all these transfers would come under the scrutiny of New York and Federal tax officials.²²

In any event, this plan foundered as Jack's company, Aristo, ran into financial difficulties in 1954 and was forced to dissolve. Its income had plummeted from \$100,000 in 1951 to \$65,000 in 1952 and \$50,000 in 1953. The majority partner had supervised manufacturing while Jack oversaw sales. But his efforts on behalf of the FBI had reduced the time he had available for business. With both Morris and Jack at loose ends, the FBI had to provide a cover business for the two of them.²³

If Morris were forced to find another job in Chicago, it would reduce the time he could devote to his FBI work. Jack suggested he set up a small office in Manhattan as a sales agency for manufacturing companies but doubted he could qualify for a bank loan. That meant that to continue the charade that Jack was a successful businessman, the FBI would have to provide start-up money—which it did.²⁴

The cover business was never successful, but it was hardly intended to make a profit. While the FBI reminded Jack that if it did start making money, the FBI would have to be repaid, he spent barely two hours a day on it, and it limped along. Morris was employed as Chicago representative

of the Manhattan agency, although the company did little business in the city. In 1958, it made a \$400 profit. Jack drew a nominal salary of \$150 a month and the FBI provided a yearly subsidy of between \$8,000 and \$9,000 to enable the company to function. The virtue of this scheme was that it provided a plausible cover for the Childs brothers' seeming business acumen and incomes, which, in fact, depended almost entirely on what they were paid by the FBI.²⁵

By 1959 both were receiving \$1,000 a month plus expenses. Over the years, their salaries continued to rise, reaching \$2,500 a month by 1975. As of 1991, Morris had been paid a total of \$1,099,240, about two thirds for his services and the remainder for expenses. The Bureau also paid for office space in New York and Chicago.²⁶

In addition to the expenses noted above, the Bureau had to foot the bill for many of the SOLO trips to Moscow, which the FBI encouraged Morris to have the CPUSA fund. Morris was reluctant to do so, arguing that both Gene Dennis and Gus Hall (who succeeded Dennis as General Secretary in 1959) believed the Childs were well-to-do businessmen, easily able to afford paying their own way. So, the FBI encouraged Morris to draw on the Soviet subsidies that he kept in safe-deposit boxes for Dennis and Hall and for which there was little accounting.²⁷

The Payoff in Investment

The FBI's investment in time and money began to pay off almost immediately after the two reconnected with the CPUSA. Jack Childs quickly was enlisted to serve as a liaison with the

Communist Party of Canada (CPC). For years in the 1930s and 1940, he had worked with leading figures in that party in cross-border clandestine activities. Since Jack was co-owner of an apparently successful lighting business, he had plausible business reasons for traveling to Canada. Jack established a liaison with Elizabeth Mascolo, the long-time girlfriend of CPC leader Tim Buck, through which she acted as a courier for Soviet funds transferred to the CPUSA.²⁸

Jack's frequent visits to Canada to meet prominent communists, however, caught the attention of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, which queried the FBI about him. In 1961 Hoover prohibited the Childs's travel to Canada without prior Bureau approval; there was some indication that the RCMP suspected Jack was an FBI informant.²⁹

The more important the tasks Jack and Morris were assigned by the CPUSA, the greater the likelihood that they would come to the attention of the Canadian and US governments. And that created a dilemma; if government agencies paid too much attention to them, it would reduce their effectiveness in carrying out their communist tasks. If it paid too little attention to them, it might make their communist superiors suspicious. No issue highlighted this dilemma like the question of passports for travel abroad.

When Gene Dennis designated Morris to serve as the CPUSA's contact with the Soviet Union in July 1957, the FBI was ecstatic; the "type of intelligence and evidence" he could get "would be invaluable." But a significant problem quickly arose. Morris would have to obtain

Morris's intelligence was a bureaucratic coup for the FBI. In 10 years, Morris would produce more than 7,000 reports, without anyone in the CPUSA becoming aware of his activity.

a passport; as a prominent, known communist for many years, his application was sure to be flagged by the US Passport Office. If the FBI pulled strings to push its approval, the Soviets would undoubtedly be suspicious about how he could travel under his real name at a time when communists faced significant difficulties in obtaining passports. Complicating the issue, Sonny was scheduled to travel with him on his first mission. The solution was to obtain false passports under the names of Martin and Sylvia Camp.³⁰

The two left on April 24, 1958. During their three months abroad, Morris met with the head of the International Department of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), members of the Party Secretariat, and traveled to China where he spoke with Mao Zedong and other prominent Chinese communist leaders. His report on the trip was sent to the White House, Central Intelligence Agency Director Allen Dulles, and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. Even though it had violated the law by obtaining false passports, the FBI felt "the value of this operation and intelligence to be gained makes this procedure a worthwhile undertaking."³¹

Less than two years later Dennis tapped Morris to attend the 21st Soviet Communist Party Congress as an American delegate. He specifically ordered him to travel under his real name, so Morris obtained a valid passport. James Jackson, a prominent black communist, and Alexander

Trachtenberg, head of International Publishers, were also going to the USSR for the same conference. Normally, the FBI would have alerted the State Department, but it did not want to identify Morris and felt that providing the other two names but not his, would raise red flags. So, it kept all three names secret. This ploy backfired when the Soviets publicly listed Morris as a delegate and his name was published in the *Chicago Daily News* on January 26, 1959. The FBI quietly contacted U.S. Customs and, claiming they had an investigative interest in Morris, arranged to have him pass quickly through Customs without publicity or confiscation of the vast amount of material he had brought with him. Ultimately Morris would frequently travel under an alias with false documentation.³²

Jack faced passport issues as well, especially after the Soviets had accepted him to serve as the recipient of their money transfers to the CPUSA. He had traveled to the USSR on a false passport in 1932, which had come to the attention of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HCUA) in 1950. Thus, obtaining a new passport under his real name would present difficulties. The FBI eventually decided to have him travel on a false passport, because the Soviets also might be aware of his earlier passport issues. Jack traveled in late 1959 as Joseph Brooks, using a fake driver's license and birth certificate to obtain a passport.³³

As discussed above, the FBI had to balance the need to pretend an

The Bureau also worried that CPUSA hunts for informants within its ranks could expose either Jack or Morris. The scariest moment for the SOLO operation came in 1964.

interest in Morris as a prominent communist and avoid so publicizing him that it spooked the Russians. When the HCUA pondered subpoenaing the American delegates to the CPSU party congress, the FBI was unable to intervene but became very anxious. While any publicity about Morris in the US media was worrisome, keeping his identity secret from other branches of the US government was also a priority. In 1965, the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee asked the FBI for the names of three CPUSA observers mentioned in press reports as attending a recent Moscow conference. Morris, in fact, had been the fourth, but had traveled under a false passport. The FBI declined to provide the information, fearing it might endanger him.³⁴

**Exceptional Reporting,
Exceptional Security**

Morris's intelligence was a bureaucratic coup for the FBI. In 10 years, Morris would produce more than 7,000 reports, without anyone in the CPUSA becoming aware of his activity.³⁵ His output enhanced FBI's status in the Intelligence Community and the State Department and the White House, where its summaries of his reports on the thinking of high-ranking Soviet officials on relations with the United States and the Sino-Soviet rivalry were eagerly read. For example, in 1963 Morris was in Moscow when President Kennedy was assassinated and his description of the reaction of Soviet leaders was crucial in convincing the US

government that Lee Harvey Oswald was not a Soviet agent.

Naturally, the officials who received these reports wanted to know their author. The Bureau had to fend off such queries from both the State Department and CIA. John Foster Dulles wanted his name, hoping to be able to plant information on the Soviets, but "State is being furnished absolutely nothing which would indicate the identity of this source." Allen Dulles called the source "simply incredible and amazing." While there is no written evidence CIA knew Morris's name, it is likely that his public naming in 1959 and frequent trips to communist countries, albeit using false passports, enabled its analysts to at least guess his status.³⁶

To guard against any internal leaks, the FBI carefully compartmentalized SOLO material. All files on Morris, Jack, and SOLO were moved to a Special Mail Room in the Records and Communication Division, isolated from the rest of the files. Any request to review the files had to be approved by designated supervisors.

The Washington headquarters also closely monitored the way the Chicago and New York offices handled their assets. While the Chicago office was extraordinarily protective of Morris, FBI headquarters often bristled at some of his demands. For example, when Morris pushed back about the FBI's demands for regular meetings, Chicago recommended giving him the authority to decide dates of meetings. Hoover was less accommodating: "I want to make it

specifically clear that [Morris] is not running this operation."³⁷

By 1961 the FBI had also tightened its procedures for meeting with Morris in Chicago. Personal encounters were held to a minimum, lest a chance sighting might expose him. When necessary, an FBI agent would rent a room in one of the Loop's largest and most respectable hotels, no more than an hour before the meeting. Morris would call the agent from a pay phone and get the room number, while the hotel would be identified by a code. Both the agent and Morris would take circuitous routes to the hotel. Morris would call the room by house phone to make sure it was safe to come up. All material he provided was oral, so he had no written material in his possession and did not have to take time to write out his report. The agent wrote it all down. After the meeting Morris would leave alone.³⁸

Most contact with Morris was by phone. A devoted unlisted telephone line he used went directly to an agent and not through the Chicago FBI's office. Sometimes Morris would mail documentary material to a Post Office box. Other times, he would park his car in an underground garage and give the location in a phone message. An agent with a duplicate set of keys would remove the material. When in Chicago, Morris was often in touch with the FBI several times a day. His residence and phone were regularly swept for taps. In 1961 he moved into a new multi-apartment building, the address of which was not known to the Chicago Communist Party. His younger brother Benjamin would stop by his office when Morris was out of town to collect mail and fill orders. Bewildered by his older brother's

connections to the CPUSA, he cooperated out of family loyalty even as Morris declined to explain.³⁹

The Bureau also worried that CPUSA hunts for informants within its ranks could expose either Jack or Morris. The scariest moment for the SOLO operation came in 1964 while Jack was in Moscow. Victor Riesel, a prominent New York newspaper columnist, published a column claiming that the FBI was aware of the channels by which Soviet money flowed to the CPUSA. A scheduled meeting for Jack with a KGB representative was suddenly canceled. Jack was “shocked and stunned,” believing that “the lives of my wife and myself were at stake.” Although Jack was ultimately able to convince the Soviets that Riesel’s information was unreliable, he and Morris were deeply worried that the leak might have come from within the FBI and concerned that Jack would be under intense Soviet and CPUSA surveillance for months.⁴⁰

To direct possible attention away from the Childs, the Bureau decided to invent an informant. It set out to frame William Albertson, head of the New York Communist Party. It fabricated a hand-written letter seemingly addressed to an FBI agent, and planted it in a car driven by a Party official ferrying Albertson to a meeting. When the driver discovered it under the car seat, he turned it over to Party leaders. It led to a frantic effort by the CPUSA to authenticate the letter. Hall arranged for both Morris and Jack to participate in that effort, enabling the FBI to monitor the chaos it had unleashed. Albertson was eventually expelled from the party, and the Childs escaped unscathed. There would be other scares, but, largely

Jack and Morris knew the risks they had undertaken as SOLO developed. As Morris transformed from a source within the CPUSA to the liaison between the CPUSA and the USSR, the pressure on him intensified, and he began to fear for his life.

thanks to FBI caution and attention to security tradecraft SOLO’s good fortune held out to the natural end of the operation.⁴¹

Growing Pressure on SOLO

Jack and Morris knew the risks they had undertaken as SOLO developed. As Morris transformed from a source within the CPUSA to the liaison between the CPUSA and the USSR, the pressure on him intensified, and he began to fear for his life. His new role as a courier meant that if the Soviets uncovered him, they would “hound him to the ends of the world” and not shrink from assassination.⁴²

In December 1960, while he was in Moscow, Morris caught a finger in a door. It became infected and Soviet doctors wanted to operate. He refused anesthetic, afraid that he might blurt out something incriminating. The injury then brought on a slight heart attack. In July 1961, during a month-long trip to Moscow for training in using microfilms, invisible inks, ciphers and codes, Jack was informed that his return to the United States was being postponed. Fearing he was in trouble; he flushed his notes down a drain. A few years later, during the imbroglio over the Riesel column, Jack once again faced suspicions from the KGB.⁴³

The added pressure especially took a toll on Morris. After his return to Chicago in March 1959, the

Chicago office wrote that “we should not be inhuman and push him for additional information at this time.” It worried that “we have never seen this couple [Morris and Sonny] in worse physical condition. . . . he’s on the ragged edge.” The FBI authorized paying for a vacation and a visit to the Mayo Clinic. Additionally, Hoover wrote a glowing letter to Morris, praising his patriotism and referring to the FBI as his “associates.” Morris was visibly moved.⁴⁴

Moreover, Sonny’s death in 1960 left Morris isolated and depressed. His desire to find another wife naturally caused the FBI to worry. He told the Bureau that he had to find an “anti-Communist communist woman.” He succeeded. Eva Lieb had been a relatively inactive Party member from 1940 to 1956, but she had gradually drifted away. A widow for eight years, and a member of a wealthy family, working as a caseworker for the Cook County Department of Welfare, she was indoctrinated into SOLO after the FBI vetted her, including tapping her telephone. She even agreed to rejoin the CPUSA after marrying Morris in 1962.⁴⁵

Beginning of the End

Issues related to SOLO’s handling of Soviet funding of the CPUSA began to create new concerns that FBI leaders feared could not be circumvented. As the deliveries accumulated (see textbox) party leader Hall pushed Morris to invest some of the funds rather than leave them sitting

idle in safe deposit boxes. Morris did, but the decision backfired when he bought stock in an Illinois bank owned by his new wife's relatives. When the bank became ensnared in an SEC investigation that led to criminal charges, Morris, Eva, and Jack were all publicly named as unindicted coconspirators. Although Morris and Jack appealed to the FBI to intervene, Hoover ordered that "nothing be done to forestall any prosecution." As to Hall, if he learned about the case, he did not lose his faith in the brothers.⁴⁶

As if involvement in financial fraud was not worrisome enough, the FBI also fretted that Hall was skimming Soviet money to assist his children and brothers, prompting Hoover to express a rare note of sympathy for members of the CPUSA: Hall's "purpose is to provide financial security for his loved ones, regardless of the cost to the Communist Party, USA, or any individual members thereof." He was, however, more concerned when the IRS launched several investigations of Hall for tax evasion, since that threatened to expose the Childs for funneling Soviet money to the party leader. Nothing in the files thus far released indicates if the FBI intervened with the IRS, but Hall was never indicted.⁴⁷

The FBI fretted that by acting as a middleman, it could plausibly be accused of funding the CPUSA. If, however, the Childs abandoned possession of the money or the procedures for receiving it, Hall might lose confidence in them and give the job to someone else, leaving the FBI in the dark about the subsidies, and having lost a valuable intelligence tool. "Our position," the Bureau concluded, "is sound."⁴⁸

Following the Money

One of the biggest headaches the FBI faced as SOLO matured was how to handle the increasingly large amounts of money being funneled to the CPUSA by the Soviet Union. SOLO's role in moving cash to the CPUSA caused the Bureau to worry that it was laundering Soviet money.

Between September 1958 and May 1959, Jack received some \$166,000 in cash, which he put into a safe-deposit box at in a New York bank; he later gave some to Morris, who also put it in a safe-deposit box in a Chicago bank.

In April 1959, the spigot quickly opened. The USSR's UN-based courier, Vladimir Barkovsky, had shown up at Jack's office and handed over \$50,000 in \$20 bills; he returned in June with another \$21,000. By the end of September 1960, \$519,885 had come in from the Soviets and another \$50,000 from the Chinese Communists. Of that, \$326,044 had been disbursed, while Jack held \$130,396 and Morris had \$113,445. By September 1963, \$1,641,385 had been received and nearly \$300,000 was stashed in various locations. By mid-1965 \$3,257,463 had been received. Through April 1968, the total reached \$5.78 million.

For a while, the FBI recorded every serial number of every bill, hoping to trace their sources and later use. As that became impractical with the torrent of small bills, it recorded the first and last serial numbers of each stack.^a

The FBI knew more about the CPUSA's money than the CPUSA itself. Jack, who distributed the money to Hall when asked, did not have to offer any accounting to either the party leader or to the Soviets. Hall frequently appealed to the USSR for more money, claiming penury even with more than a million dollars stashed in safe-deposit boxes.^b

a. Memo SOLO Funds (September, 1958–June 30, 1965), September 1965, SOLO-94, 3–26; F. J. Baumgardner to A.H. Belmont, June 29, 1959, SOLO-13, 9; F. J. Baumgardner to A.H. Belmont, June 4, 1959, SOLO-12, 1. SAC New York to Director FBI, June 16, 1959, SOLO-13, 1.

b. SAC New York to Director FBI, January 24, 1966, SOLO-98, 104; SAC New York to Director FBI, July 1, 1966, SOLO-107, 243–44.

One solution, briefly considered, was to invest the Soviet money in US Government bonds. When the operation terminated, public disclosure would place the CPUSA and USSR "in the untenable position of having contributed to U.S. Government operations and thereby endorsed U.S. action in Vietnam, the prosecution of the CPUSA, and other matters deemed by the international communist movement to be utterly repulsive. You can well imagine the reaction of Communist China to such a revelation."⁴⁹

Planning a Transition

Whether or not the timing was precipitated by the Childs

involvement with a bank and securities scandal, in June 1967, Hoover urged the Chicago office to develop concrete proposals for finding a replacement for Morris. Not only was he "plagued by problems of ill health and advancing age," but key FBI personnel who had handled the case beginning in 1952 were nearing retirement. Moreover, "we squarely face the unavoidable conclusion that external factors over which we have no control can kill the present SOLO operation at any time."⁵⁰

A conference in Washington that month assessed what to do if either Morris or Jack suddenly died. The money they controlled was largely

B. IMPRESSIONS, COMMENTS AND OPINIONS OF CG 5824-S ON THE
AIMS, PURPOSES AND RESULTS OF THE 21ST CONGRESS OF THE
COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION:

While the ostensible purpose of the 21st Congress was to discuss the Soviet Seven-Year Plan, it was also utilized as a means to mobilize the entire communist movement throughout the world to give moral support to the Russians; to get the aims of the Seven-Year Plan propagandized throughout the world; and to prepare for concrete struggle on a world-wide scale in order to keep the imperialists off guard. It was the most international gathering in the history of the communist movement.

The Soviets placed considerable stress upon the participation of foreign delegates at the congress. In so doing, the Soviets accomplished a twofold purpose. First, they showed the Russian people they have friends and allies in all parts of the world. Second, the foreign delegates were afforded a personal opportunity to observe and enjoy the luxuries of life under communism.

In attempting to accomplish this second objective, the Soviets furnished the foreign delegates every possible convenience. Once in Russia they were placed in luxurious living quarters, and were given servants, attendants, chauffeurs, clothing, lavish gifts and medical care. Special theater performances included a ballet by Ullnova, the outstanding Russian ballerina. None of the foreign delegates had to spend any money. They could get anything they wanted free of charge. They were also given thousands of rubles to purchase such items as souvenirs and could obtain more money for the asking. All transportation was furnished free of charge to the delegates. This included transportation to any place in the Soviet Union by means of jet planes or the most luxurious trains. It also included the availability of a car and chauffeur at all times.

Needless to say, the foreign delegates began to feel that this luxurious living is possible only because the Communist Party rules the Soviet Union. This type of treatment at the hands of the Soviets also made some of these foreign delegates feel that they are now obligated to the Russians for these favors. Those foreign delegates from backward countries, especially if their social status is low in their particular country, feel that if they can overthrow their present social system, they can live like they lived in Moscow all the time.

The Soviets also utilized the 21st Congress to go into the affairs of the various foreign communist parties. Prior to the Congress, various communist parties sent representatives to the Soviet Union where their difficulties were presented to the

A page from Tolson's account to Hoover of Morris Childs (CG 5824-S) attendance at the 21st Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. (April 1959)

in safe-deposit boxes rented under assumed names; the FBI had to be ready to seize the funds. The investments ordered by Hall had to be “misdirected” to “reduce gain to CPUSA.” And, the FBI had to “neutralize” logical SOLO replacements, particularly James Jackson, who was not under FBI control. Hoover approved a plan to leak information revealing Jackson’s frequent contacts with the Soviets and suggesting he was trying to bypass Gus Hall. Published in the *New York Sunday News* in November 1967 as “Two Battle to Rule US Red Party,” the article upset the Soviets and, despite Hall’s suspicions it was an FBI provocation, fed his hostility toward Jackson.⁵¹

There were numerous obstacles to securing replacements for Morris and Jack, particularly the former. Morris had for decades operated at the highest levels of the CPUSA and he was respected within the CPUSA for his theoretical acumen and in the international Communist movement as an elder statesman. His training at the Lenin School with men who had gone on to positions of leadership in Communist parties around the globe gave him a gravitas it would not be easy to replicate. Jack’s skills in coding, radio transmission, and courier work were far easier to duplicate.

Neither Jack nor Morris were particularly helpful in searching for replacements. The more people who knew about their activities, the greater the potential danger to them if those replacements were exposed. The FBI also felt they did not want to develop other informants who might compete with them. If it looked as if the SOLO operation would end with Morris and Jack, Hoover opined in

January 1968, the FBI should consider closing it down and publicizing its accomplishments, suggesting that such an option might spur the Childs brothers to search for replacements more energetically.⁵²

The Chicago office was philosophical, noting that even if a suitable replacement for him could be identified, that person would of necessity have to come from New York, where the leading party figures who could duplicate Morris’s advantages were located. Moreover, the flow of political information and international political intelligence that Morris had offered, was now of less interest and value. The real value of SOLO now came from the increasingly insistent requests from the KGB for information about potential US assets it could use—requests that were largely funneled through Jack in New York.⁵³

The FBI’s frustration was only partially justified. It did find someone who might serve as a replacement for Jack. Albert (Al) Freeman had been trained in radio work and had undertaken courier and various clandestine tasks for the Comintern in the 1930s and for the CPUSA in the late 1940s and 1950s. He came to the attention of the FBI through TOPLEV in 1959 and agreed to assist the FBI in 1963. As Jack’s health deteriorated in the late 1960s, Freeman was groomed by the FBI and Jack as Jack’s assistant and replacement. In 1969 he went to the USSR for two weeks of training in KGB radio procedures. However, the FBI has released few files on Freeman’s activities in the 1970s or if his role became untenable after the Childs brothers were exposed as FBI informants in 1981.⁵⁴

FBI files released as of 2019 contain tantalizing hints about people being considered for recruitment and extant informers being inserted into the SOLO apparatus, but, with one exception, no indication of how successful these gambits were or how far they developed. Schroeder Boulton, a wealthy Wall Street investment banker, had contributed money to the CPUSA in the 1930s. Recruited by the FBI sometime in the late 1950s, he was slowly inserted into communist circles by Jack beginning in 1961. High-ranking communists like Gus Hall and others in the Soviet Union regarded him “as an important specialist . . . in the financial-economic field of activity . . . [and] available for other high level special activity.”⁵⁵

The Last Mission

Morris’s last mission to Moscow took place at the end of 1977. Earlier in the year, marking his 75th birthday, he had been guest of honor at a dinner at the Kremlin attended by Leonid Brezhnev, Yuri Andropov, Mikhail Suslov, and other Soviet leaders, at which he received the Order of the Red Banner. In 1978, FBI Director Clarence Kelley traveled to Chicago to thank Morris and Eva personally. But SOLO’s days were numbered.⁵⁶

The Senate Select Committee to Study Government Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (better known as the Church Committee), set up in January 1975 to investigate alleged intelligence agency abuses, demanded FBI records on its investigations of Martin Luther King Jr. By reporting about Stanley Levison, the key King adviser who had worked with both Morris and Jack on communist party finances and money laundering for years, the Childs brothers had inadvertently set

in motion FBI surveillance of King that had included wiretapping and taping of sexual encounters.

While top FBI executives secretly briefed Church about SOLO, and he and key staff cooperated in preventing any mention of it from appearing in the files, the circle of people in the know had expanded well beyond the FBI. More congressional investigations in 1978 threatened to punish FBI agents who had committed a variety of felonies over the years of running SOLO, ranging from procuring false passports to filing false tax returns to laundering large amounts of money illegally brought to the United States. Attorney General Griffin Bell signed a blanket grant of immunity from prosecution for any illegal acts committed during SOLO.⁵⁷

As more and more people heard hints of SOLO and as both Morris and Jack's health declined, the dangers increased. Further trips abroad were prohibited. Jack died in August 1980. That same year Morris transferred to Gus Hall the remainder of SOLO funds in his possession. The dam finally burst in 1981. David

As more and more people heard hints of SOLO and as both Morris and Jack's health declined, the dangers increased. Further trips abroad were prohibited.

Garrow, an academic writing a book on King, heard stories about what had prompted the FBI's interest in Levison, and learned about a pair of unnamed brothers who had worked as FBI informants within the CPUSA with a few biographical details, including their FBI case numbers. He consulted historian Harvey Klehr who was able to put names to numbers.

Armed with that information, Garrow received confirmation from FBI sources that Morris and Jack Childs had bamboozled the CPUSA, KGB, and the USSR for nearly 30 years, and investigative reporter Charles Babcock published the story on the front page of the *Washington Post* on September 17, 1981. When Gus Hall learned of the news, he became ashen according to a friend who was with him at the time.⁵⁸

For years, the CPUSA refused to discuss the issue or admit what had happened. Soviet authorities apparently have never commented. By the time SOLO became public,

the FBI had quietly relocated Morris and his wife to a residence in Miami. In 1987 Morris and Eva received the Presidential Medal of Freedom for Intelligence—Jack received the award posthumously. Morris died in 1991, having lived long enough to see the communist movement in the USSR that had consumed his life near its own end.⁵⁹

Operation SOLO required a huge expenditure of FBI time, money, and ingenuity. The agency had to cut ethical and legal corners, deceive other government agencies, and even facilitate the operations of the CPUSA by transferring Soviet money that enabled the US party to pay its fulltime staff, publish its newspapers, and subsidize travel overseas by its cadres. But, the operation provided the FBI access to the innermost secrets of the US subsidiary of the USSR and vital information about the tactics of the Soviet Union and the secret activities of its intelligence agencies in the United States. It was a remarkable bargain.



The authors: Professor Harvey Klehr is retired from Emory University where he taught for more than 40 years. He is the author of multiple works on American communism and Soviet espionage, many in collaboration with the co-author of this article, historian John Earl Haynes. Dr. Haynes served as a specialist in 20th century political history in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress and is author or coauthor of numerous other publications on US communism and anticommunism. After the fall of the Soviet Union, he worked with former Soviet archivists to acquire once sensitive documents for use by scholars around the world.

Endnotes

1. Raymond Rocca, "The Trust," Center for Intelligence Studies, 1990, republished 2015, <http://www.centerforintelligencestudies.org/the-trust.html>
2. Special Agent in Charge (hereafter SAC) New York to Director and Asst. Director FBI, 9 May 1952, Morris Childs FOIA FBI Chicago file part 1 (hereafter Morris Childs-Chicago-part#), 45 [reference to page number(s)]. This is the main FBI file on Morris Childs. Large portions of it have been posted on the Internet Archive: archive.org/details/foia_Childs_Morris_Childs-Chicago. Major portions of the FBI's main files on Jack can be found at: archive.org/details/foia_Childs_Jack_Childs-NYC.
3. In the *Dennis v. United States* case, the Supreme Court ruled that the First Amendment did not protect the speech rights of a group that advocated violent overthrow of the US government. A lower court had found 11 top CPUSA leaders guilty of violating provisions of an act that prohibited organization, assembly, and speech advocating overthrow of the US government. The ruling would be over-turned in 1969.
4. O'Connor FBI Chicago to Director FBI ATTN: A. H. Belmont, April 21, 1952, 11–12; O'Connor FBI Chicago to Director FBI ATTN: A. H. Belmont and SAC NY, May 6, 1952, Morris Childs-Chicago-1, 34–36; Scheidt FBI NY to Director FBI ATTN: A. H. Belmont and SAC Chicago, May 9, 1952, Morris Childs-Chicago-1, 42.
5. SAC Chicago to Director FBI (ATT: A. H. Belmont), May 1, 1952, Morris Childs-Chicago-1, 20–31; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, 16 October 1952, Morris Childs-Chicago-2, 53–58; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, December 14, 1952, Morris Childs-Chicago-5, 140; SAC New York to Director FBI, February 8, 1952, Jack Childs FOIA FBI New York file part 1 (hereafter Jack Childs-NYC-part #), 3, Internet Archive: archive.org/details/foia_Childs_Jack_Childs-NYC-1; SAC New York to Director FBI, June 19, 1952, Jack Childs-NYC-1, 32; SAC New York to Director FBI, June 24, 1952, Jack Childs-NYC-1, 35.
6. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, July 17, 1953, Morris Childs, Chicago-1, 14.
7. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, July 14, 1952, Morris Childs, Chicago-1, 70–71; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, August 6, 1952, Morris Childs, Chicago-2, 26–28.
8. SAC New York to Director FBI, February 24, 1958, Jack Childs- NYC-sub2, 1. John Barron claimed that the FBI wiretapped Morris and Jack in the mid-1970s to combat CIA counterintelligence chief James Angleton's theory they were double agents. John Barron, *Operation Solo: The FBI's Man in the Kremlin* (Regnery Pub., 1995), 35–36.
9. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, May 1, 1952, Morris Childs-Chicago-1, 25; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, May 14, 1952 ATTN: A. H. Belmont, Morris Childs-Chicago-1, 51–52; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, May 26, 1952, Morris Childs-Chicago-1, 56.
10. Malone FBI Chicago to Director FBI and SAC NY, June 19, 1952, Morris Childs-Chicago-1, 62–63; Director FBI to SAC Chicago, June 25, 1952, Morris Childs-Chicago-1, 64.
11. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, August 6, 1952, Morris Childs-Chicago-2, 25; ASAC to SAC, June 18, 1959, Morris Childs-Chicago-21, 8.
12. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, April 16, 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-3, 79; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, April 29, 1953, 105; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, May 1, 1952, Morris Childs-Chicago 1, 28–29; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, October 7, 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-5, 9–10.
13. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, March 27, 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-3, 60–62; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, April 23, 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-3, 96.
14. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, August 29, 1960, SOLO 23-2; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, September 11, 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-4, 118; F. J. Baumgardner to A. H. Belmont, September 8, 1960, FBI SOLO file, part 23 (hereafter SOLO-part#), 113.
15. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, February 10, 1960, SOLO-18, 46; Phillip Childs to Harvey Klehr, 1 June 2015.
16. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, February 16, 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-3, 21–28; Weatherford FBI Chicago to Director FBI and SAC New York, 20 April 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-3, 82–88.
17. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, 14 December 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-5, 133; FBI Chicago Teletype to Director FBI 9/14/53, Morris Childs-Chicago-4, 119–24; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, September 21, 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-4, 154–82; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, December 14, 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-5, 133.
18. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, 16 June 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-3, 161–63; Boardman FBI New York to Lena Scherer FBI Washington DC, June 18, 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-3, 170–71; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, June 30, 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-3, 184–185; Director FBI to SAC New York July 1, 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-3, 188.
19. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, 6 October 1952, Morris Childs-Chicago-2, 38; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, 19 December 1952, Morris Childs-Chicago-2, 121–22; Director FBI to SAC Chicago, 6 January 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-2, 143; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, 19 January 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-2, 159.
20. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, January 27, 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-2, 167–69; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, February 13, 1952, Morris Childs-Chicago-3, 12–19; Hoover to SAC Chicago, March 5, 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-3, 40.
21. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, 27 March 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-3, 56–59; SAC New York to Director FBI, April 22, 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-3, 91; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, June 1, 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-3, 154–57.
22. Director FBI to SAC Chicago, June 19, 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-3, 176; Weatherford Chicago FBI to Director FBI, June 29, 1953, Morris Childs-Chicago-3, 181–83.

23. SAC New York to Director FBI, March 4, 1954, Morris Childs-Chicago-5, 302–304; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, March 17, 1954, Morris Childs-Chicago-5, 353–54; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, March 25, 1954, Morris Childs-Chicago-5, 373–74; Director FBI to SAC New York, January 8, 1959, Morris Childs-Chicago-20, 3.
24. Ibid.
25. Director FBI to SAC New York, January 8, 1959, Morris Childs-Chicago-20, 3; SAC New York to Director FBI, February 10, 1959, Morris Childs-Chicago-20, 37–43; SAC New York to Director FBI, April 30, 1959, Morris Childs-Chicago-20, 195; SAC New York to Director FBI, July 1, 1959, Morris Childs-Chicago-21, 11; Director FBI to SAC Chicago, July 6, 1959, Morris Childs-Chicago-21, 12; voucher signed by SAC Chicago, July 13, 1959, Morris Childs-Chicago-21, 13; SAC New York to Director FBI, July 30, 1959, Morris Childs-Chicago-21, 69–72; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, September 14, 1959, Morris Childs-Chicago-21, 106; SAC New York to Director FBI, October 29, 1959, Morris Childs-Chicago-21, 142–49; voucher signed by SAC Chicago, November 13, 1959; Morris Childs-Chicago-21, 150.
26. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, January 19, 1959, Morris Childs-Chicago-20, 17–28; From Redacted to Director FBI, February 7, 1991, 100-42491-88 in <https://ia600605.us.archive.org/32/items/ChildsEvaHQ1/Childs%2C%20Eva-HQ-1.pdf>.
27. Director FBI to SAC Chicago, February 7, 1962, SOLO-40, 192.
28. ASAC Norman McCabe to SAC New York, October 19, 1961, Jack Childs-NYC-Sub-A7-8, 178.
29. Legat Ottawa to Director FBI, September 11, 1961, Jack Childs-NYC-Sub-A7-8, 145–49; Director FBI to SACs New York and Chicago, October 9, 1961, 162.
30. A. H. Belmont to L. V. Boardman, August 30, 1957, SOLO-1, 17–19; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, March 4, 1958, SOLO-1, 47–49; A. H. Belmont to L. V. Boardman, March 10, 1958, SOLO-1, 71–73; W. C. Thornton to F. J. Baumgardner, June 19, 1958, SOLO-1, 85–105; Belmont to Boardman, April 17, 1958, SOLO-1, 130–31; A. H. Belmont to L. V. Boardman, April 8, 1958, SOLO-1, 142.
31. F. J. Baumgardner to A. H. Belmont, July 21, 1958, SOLO-1, 167; J. Edgar Hoover to Gordon Gray, July 25, 1958, SOLO-1, 153–56; J. Edgar Hoover to Richard M. Nixon, July 25, 1958; SOLO-1, 157–60; J. Edgar Hoover to the Secretary of State, July 25, 1958, SOLO-1, 161–64.
32. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, December 24, 1958, SOLO-5, 97; SAC New York to Director FBI, December 22, 1958, SOLO-5, 102; F. J. Baumgardner to A. H. Belmont, January 5, 1959, SOLO-5, 107; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, January 15, 1959, SOLO-5, 121; A. H. Belmont to Sizoo, January 26, 1959, SOLO-5, 146; J. A. Sizoo to A. H. Belmont, January 27, 1959, SOLO-5, 147; J. A. Sizoo to A. H. Belmont, March 2, 1959, SOLO-5, 187.
33. Illegible to SAC New York, June 17, 1959, SOLO-12, 7; F. J. Baumgardner to A. H. Belmont, June 16, 1959, SOLO-12, 8–9; F. J. Baumgardner to A. H. Belmont, December 14, 1959, SOLO-17, 5; John Edgar Hoover, to Office of Security, Department of State, January 7, 1960, SOLO-17, 8; F. J. Baumgardner to A. H. Belmont, December 17, 1959, SOLO-16, 145.
34. FBI New York to Director FBI, March 12, 1965, SOLO-84, 51; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, March 26, 1965, SOLO-84, 93–95.
35. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, October 4, 1961, SOLO-34, 62; From SAC Los Angeles to Director FBI 12/4/63, SOLO-49, 218–19.
36. Roach to A. H. Belmont, August 2, 1958, SOLO-2, 41; SAC New York to Director FBI, July 22, 1958, SOLO-2, 42; R. O. L’Allier to Belmont, January 13, 1961, SOLO-27, 47.
37. Director FBI to SAC Chicago, March 24, 1959, SOLO-6, 107.
38. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, October 4, 1951, SOLO-34, 56–62.
39. Ibid. There were four Childs brothers: Morris, Jack, Benjamin, and Phillip. The latter was killed in World War II while serving in the US Army.
40. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, June 3, 1964, SOLO-62, 230–33; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, June 12, 1964, SOLO-63, 9–11; SAC New York to Director FBI, June 9, 1964, SOLO-63, 45–51; J. A. Sizoo to W. C. Sullivan, 17 June 1964, SOLO-66, 21; W. C. Sullivan to A. H. Belmont, June 12, 1964, SOLO-66, 22–28; LCB to Tolson, July 9, 1964, SOLO-66, 29; C. D. DeLoach to Mohr, June 19, 1964, SOLO-66, 30–31; Victor Riesel, “Inside Labor,” column, *New York Journal-American*, April 14, 1964; Victor Riesel, “FBI Bares Red Plotting,” *New York Journal-American*, May 14, 1964.
41. John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, “Framing William Albertson: The FBI’s and ‘Solo’ Operation and the Cold War,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 22, 3, Summer 2020.
42. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, March 10, 1959, SOLO-6, 170–75.
43. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, December 22, 1960, SOLO-25, 199–200; F. J. Baumgardner to A. H. Belmont, December 23, 1960, SOLO-25, 214; SOLO-31, 139–140.
44. Director FBI to SAC Chicago, March 25, 1959, SOLO-7, 12–15; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, March 19, 1959, SOLO-7, 16–17; Director FBI to SAC Chicago, April 16, 1959, SOLO-11, 142; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, April 21, 1959, SOLO-11, 173; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, May 5, 1959, SOLO-11, 200.
45. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, March 2, 1962, Morris Childs-Chicago-25, 208–16; Director FBI to SAC Chicago, March 9, 1962, Morris Childs-Chicago-25, 225–26; SA Richard W. Hansen to SAC Chicago, April 6, 1962, Morris Childs-Chicago-25, 271–75; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, April 11, 1962, Morris Childs-Chicago-25, 280–92.

The Challenges of Espionage and Counterespionage Ops

46. SAC New York to Director FBI, April 21, 1967, SOLO-113, 139–41; SAC New York to Director FBI, April 27, 1967, SOLO-I 13, 227–229; C. D. Brennan to W. C. Sullivan, SOLO-I 13, 162–63; Director FBI to SAC Chicago, May 12, 1967, SOLO-I 14, 136; Director FBI to SAC Chicago, May 16, 1967, SOLO-114, 137–38; SAC Chicago to Director FBI May 11, 1967, SOLO-114, 139–42; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, May 19, 1967, SOLO-114, 176–78; SAC New York to Director FBI, May 26, 1967, SOLO-114, 228–29; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, May 29, 1967, SOLO-I 14, 230–31; FBI New York to Director FBI, August 23, 1967, SOLO-116, 194; C. D. Brennan to W. C. Sullivan, August 23, 1967, SOLO-116, 200–201; SAC New York to Director FBI, August 25, 1967, SOLO-116, 214; John Lyons, “Grand Jury Indicts 16 on Charges of Fraud in Hercules Galion Stock,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 24, 1967, 3. C. Sullivan, August 23, 1967, SOLO-116, 200–201; SAC New York to Director FBI, August 25, 1967, SOLO-116, 214; John Lyons, “Grand Jury Indicts 16 on Charges of Fraud in Hercules Galion Stock,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 24, 1967: 3.
47. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, May 24, 1968, SOLO-124, 90–93; Director FBI to SAC Chicago, May 27, 1968, SOLO-124, 97–98; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, May 21, 1968, SOLO-124, 99–101; Director FBI to SAC New York, September 26, 1961, Jack Childs-NY C-sub-A7-8, 150; SAC New York to Director FBI, September 13, 1965, SOLO-93, 181–82; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, May 24, 1968, SOLO-124, 90–93; Director FBI to SAC Chicago, May 27, 1968, SOLO-124, 97–98; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, May 21, 1968, SOLO-124, 99–101. For more detail on Hall’s financial scams, see Harvey Klehr and John Earl Haynes “The American Communist Con-Man,” *Commentary*, October 2020, 42–6.
48. F. J. Baumgardner to A. H. Belmont, August 25, 1959, SOLO-13, 49–50.
49. F. J. Baumgardner to A. H. Belmont, August 25, 1959, SOLO-13, 49–50; SAC New York to Director FBI, January 25, 1966, SOLO-99, 38–42; SAC New York to Director FBI, September 5, 1967, SOLO-116, 240–43; Director FBI to SAC Chicago, March 23, 1966, SOLO-101, 17–19.
50. Director FBI to SAC Chicago, June 6, 1967, SOLO-114, 263; C. D. Brennan to W. C. Sullivan, June 26, 1967, SOLO-116, 10–11; C. D. Brennan to W. C. Sullivan, July 25, 1967, SOLO-116, 124–25.
51. C. D. Brennan to W. C. Sullivan, June 26, 1967, SOLO-116, 10–11; Agenda for FBI conference on SOLO, SOLO-116, 14–15; SAC New York to Director FBI, October 19, 1967, SOLO-117, 186–88; Director FBI to SAC New York, October 25, 1967, SOLO-117, 194; Clipping, “Two Battle to Rule US Red Party,” *New York Sunday News*, November 5, 1967, SOLO-118, 67; SAC Chicago to Director FBI December 12, 1967, SOLO-119, 18–20.
52. SAC Milwaukee to Director FBI, February 1, 1968, SOLO-120, 135–38; SAC New York to Director FBI, February 16, 1968, SOLO-120, 229–230.
53. SAC Chicago to Director FBI, February 16, 1968, SOLO-120, 204–208.
54. Material on Freeman is primarily derived from interviews with his nephew, John Spiegel. Also see SAC New York to Director FBI, December 3, 1963, SOLO-49, 200–204; SAC New York to Director FBI, March 18, 1964, SOLO-59, 10–11; F. J. Baumgardner to W.C. Sullivan, May 19, 1964, 196–99, SOLO-62, 196–99; SAC Chicago to Director FBI, November 21, 1966, SOLO-110, 105–10; SAC New York to Director FBI, February 19, 1968, SOLO-120, 231–35, 265–69; SAC New York to Director FBI, March 8, 1968, SOLO-121, 199–204.
55. SAC New York to Director FBI, May 2, 1962, SOLO-42, 25–28; Director FBI to SAC New York May 23, 1962, SOLO-42, 98–109; SAC New York to Director FBI, June 5, 1962, SOLO-42, 209–11.
56. Barron, *Operation Solo*, 298–99, 304.
57. *Ibid*, 306.
58. Charles R. Babcock, “Soviet Secrets Fed to FBI for More Than 25 Years,” *Washington Post*, September 17, 1981, A1.
59. Barron, *Operation Solo*, xii.

