
**Memorandum to Edward J. Brennan,
BoI Division Superintendent, Chicago,
from Jacob Spolansky, Special Agent in Chicago,
July 9, 1921.**

DoJ/BoI Investigative Files, NARA collection M-1085, reel 942, file 202600-2265-4.

MEMORANDUM TO

Chicago, July 9, 1921.

EDWARD J. BRENNAN, ESQ.,
Division Superintendent,
Chicago, Ill.

Reference is made to letter from the Chief of the Bureau [William Burns], dated Washington, DC, June 30th [1921], initialled WWG-AS [Warren W. Grimes], requesting that effort be made to establish the identity of CHARLES E. SCOTT, representative of the AMERICAN AGENCY of the COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL and PAUL HOLT, Executive Secretary of the UNITED COMMUNIST PARTY.

Your Agent has established the following: CHARLES E. SCOTT was a member of the UNITED COMMUNIST PARTY where he was operating under the name of STEWART. His description is as follows: 5'8"; blond, 150 lbs.; resembles a Norwegian or German in appearance; blue eyes; speaks English fluently; was formerly a resident of Cleveland, Ohio.

The description furnished to Agent causes him to believe that CHARLES E. SCOTT is WAGENKNECHT, former National Secretary of the COMMUNIST LABOR PARTY.‡ The fact that SCOTT was a member of the UNITED COMMUNIST PARTY eliminates NICHOLAS HOURWICH.

As to the identity of PAUL HOLT, Executive Secretary of the UNITED COMMUNIST PARTY, the description furnished to Agent resembles that of EDGAR OWENS; PAUL HOLT being described as a cripple; about 5'8"; dark complected; black bushy hair; wears glasses.§

The description furnished in reference to PAUL HOLT eliminates ISAAC FERGUSON, who has been confined in the [DANNEMORA?] PENITENTIARY, New York, for the last eight months.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jacob Spolansky,
Special Agent.*

JS:MMC

†- As of the date of this memorandum, there was no longer a "United Communist Party," the organization having merged with the old CPA to form the unified Communist Party of America at a convention held at the Overlook Mountain House hotel near Woodstock, NY, May 15-28, 1921. UCP national headquarters at 170 Bleeker Street in New York City had incidentally been taken down in a raid on April 29, 1921, but the BoI never did figure out what it had accomplished — nor did the documents gathered seem to have helped much with trivial details like the name of the organization's Executive Secretary or of leading CI emissaries.

‡- "Charles E. Scott" was actually the pseudonym of Karlis Ernestovich Janson, a Latvian who hailed from Roxbury, Massachusetts, not Cleveland. The Bureau of Investigation regularly clogged its analytical faculties with false information that made identifications such as these difficult. Bluntly put: Garbage In — Garbage Out.

§- In Spolansky's defense, the description does sound more like Edgar Owens than it does the actual "Paul Holt" — Alfred Wagenknecht. Wagenknecht-Holt was not crippled, not dark complected, did not have bushy black hair... He actually *was* from Cleveland, however. Despite over 150 specialized anti-red agents in the field, the Bureau of Investigation proved itself chronically unable to solve the most basic pseudonyms through sleuth work.

Edited with footnotes by Tim Davenport.

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