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IS Memo No. 6631
28 January 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, SR/CI

ATTENTION: Mr. Duncan *Stewart*

SUBJECT: Soviet Documentation Information Concerning OVIR
(Visa and Registration Section) of MVD in the
Fall of 1959 - Case 4390

REFERENCE: Your oral request for TSD/DS Support on 30
December 1963

1. This memorandum confirms the information passed verbally to Mr. Stewart of SR/CI by Mr. Bosanko of TSD/DS on 31 December 1963. The information consisted of TSD/DS comments on questions presented by Mr. Stewart in his verbal request on 30 December 1963. The attachment includes additional information on OVIR organization, subordination, and functions as related to its control over foreigners visiting the USSR. Primary attention will be given the period (fall 1959) concerned in the request.
2. Please sign the attached original Request For TSD/DS Support Form (D-108) and return to TSD/DS.
3. If TSD comments are being considered for further distribution, it is requested that the transmitting correspondence be coordinated with this office.
4. Any questions on this matter can be referred to Messrs. Bosanko or extension 2654, 221 West Out Building.

ALVIN R. TRECHENAS
Chief, TSD/DS

Attachment: as stated

Distribution:

Original & 1 - Addressee w/atts.

1 - IS File, 1 - IS Chrono

1 - BI File, 1 - Case 4390

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DD/P/TSD/DS/1: D. Bosanko:prk



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THE COMPOSITE ON OVIR (VISA AND REGISTRATION SECTION) OF THE USSR

Your specific questions are answered below with additional information related to each question.

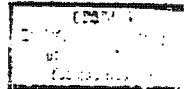
Question A. What is OVIR?

Answer - OVIR is the abbreviation for OTDEL VIZ I REGISTRATSIIY (Visa and Registration Section) which in 1955 was subordinate to the Main Administration of Militia, MVD (Ministry of Internal Affairs) on the All-Union level and to either the UM (Opravleniye Militsei) or UVD (Upravleniye Vnutrennikh Del) on Republic, Oblast or City level. The MVD was replaced by MVDP (Ministry for the Protection of Public Order) in the latter part of August and during September 1962. OVIR's primary function is the exercise of control over foreigners in the USSR. Branches of OVIR are located in most of the large cities of the Soviet Union. Some serve an entire oblast or republic rather than just a city.

Additional Information - A stay in the USSR, even of short duration requires that the visitor register with the Soviet authorities. Since the fall of 1959 and until September 1962 this registration has taken two forms, as described below.

1. Hotel Registration - Most tourists have been registered by the hotel where they spent their first night in the USSR. In many cases the first hotel registration is all that is placed in the tourist's passport regardless of the itinerary of the tourist. In a few cases subsequent hotel registrations have been added. There is no known reason for the variance in procedures. An "In tourist" representative, a member of the hotel administration or possibly an OVIR representative at hotels may handle hotel registrations and the passing on of those passports which require an OVIR extension or change. We are not sure of OVIR's role in simple hotel registrations.

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2. OVIR Registration - Travelers not having tourist visas (excepting diplomatic personnel) normally must register with OVIR, or with PFO (Passportno-Registratsionnyy Otdel - Passport Registration Section) which is subordinate to the Militia on city and oblast levels and which executes OVIR functions in those areas not having an OVIR. This registration takes place in the city where the first overnight stay is made. Generally the authorized itinerary is placed in the registration cachet. In some cases the registration is handled by the traveler personally but "Intourist" and hotel authorities have assisted by passing the traveler's passport to OVIR.

Regardless of type of visa (except diplomatic) all extensions or changes must be made by OVIR. Since 1960 most visitors simply receive hotel registrations. OVIR entries are made only when extensions or changes are required.

Question B. How many OVIRs are there in Moscow?

Answer - Based on a review of validating cachet numbers, OVIR registration numbers and OVIR officer signatures it is believed that in 1975 there was only one OVIR in Moscow. It was to this office that passports collected by hotels, militia passport offices (Passportnyy Stol), PFOs and the "foreign sections" of universities, were sent or brought personally by the bearer for OVIR registrations or changes.

Additional Information: A single OVIR office also serves the entire USSR and other areas (Cities of Leningrad and Kiev, and the Republics of Azerbaijan, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia). At least in one area, Tashkent, Uzbek SSR, there is evidence that three separate validating cachet numbers were in use during 1975: 118 by OVIR OK (Upravleniye Militarii) Uzbek SSR, 94 by PFO OVIR Tashkent (Upravleniye Militarii) Uzbek SSR and 419 by PFO UM Tashkent (Upravleniye Militarii) Uzbek SSR.

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All OVIR registrations, extensions and changes are validated by an OVIR cachet. There were changes in the text of these cachets in 1961 and late 1962. The text changes reflected government administrative reorganizations. Each OVIR has a two or three digit number which is part of this validating cachet. The number apparently changes annually.

A review of the OVIR registration numbers in Moscow and Leningrad revealed that they are issued in numerical order, indicating a central control in these cities.

Only two different signatures appear on the approximately 50 different 1959 Moscow OVIR cachets reviewed. One of these was always preceded by the word "za" meaning "for" i.e. authorized to sign for. All OVIR registrations and changes in Moscow during 1959 are by OVIR or OVIRI, (the last letter standing for "INOZHITEL'NY" meaning for foreigners), UVD Moskovskaya (Moscow city council). The signatures noted above appeared interchangeably on both registrations and changes. No Moscow Consulate registrations were noted.

As previously noted OVIR registration is normally accomplished at the first major city visited by the traveler, and should other cities appear on the traveler's itinerary they are entered on the registration cachet. Usually no further OVIR entries are made at the other cities (excepting additional hotel registrations in some instances) unless the traveler requests an extension or change. No registration entries appear in the passport upon departing the USSR.

Question C. Where are the OVIRs located in Moscow?

Answer - The location of the OVIR in Moscow is unknown.

Question D. Is an OVIR located at either of the following addresses?

1. Ognyova Ulitsa
2. Bolshaya perovskaya #9

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Answer - No information.

Additional Information - The 1957 telephone directory and the 1950 address book for Moscow locate the following MVD organs as follows:

Glavnoye Upravleniye Milititsii, MVD 5635 - ul. Ogareva, 6
 Upravleniye Milititsii, MVD 8858 - ul. Ogareva, 6
 Upravleniye Vnutrennikh Del Ispolkoma Mosoblsobeta - ul. Balinskogo, 3
 Pasportnyy Otdel UVD Ispolkoma Mosoblsobeta - Durovskiy p., 11
 Upravleniye Vnutrennikh Del Ispolkoma Mosgorobeta - Petrovka, 38
 Pasportnyy Otdel UVD Ispolkoma Mosgorobeta - Leningradskiy Pros., 16
 PZO UVD Mosoblsopolkoma - 2-aya Kuzbchanskaya, 97
 PZO UVD Mosgorisopolkoma - Leningradskoye Sh., 22
 Stol Rashchek (Lost and Found Bureau) UVD Mosgorisopolkoma - Petrovka, 38
 (for information concerning lost documents)

Question E. Is there an OVIR in Minsk?

Answer - The available information indicates that an OVIR was located in Minsk in 1955. Its walking contact number was 309.

Question F. Does the "do plus the date" (until plus the date) in the OVIR registration placed in a foreigner's passport in Moscow mean that he must leave the country by midnight of the preceding date or on the date indicated?

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Answer - A review of a number of legal traveler documents indicates that although many people leave several days prior to or right on the day preceding the "do" date, just as many leave on the "do" date and a few even several days after. These latter instances could be due to the lack of available transportation leaving the USSR. It is SSO/IS's belief that a traveler can be required to leave by midnight of the day preceding the "do" date.

Additional Information - An error similar to that mentioned in our discussion i.e. OVIE entering the wrong date in the visa extension, has been noted in the past. Whether this was intentional or simply an erroneous entry cannot be determined.

An OVIE registration is made valid for the period authorized by the visa. Thus, if the visa authorizes a 30 day stay, the OVIE registration will be good for 30 days from the date of entry into a country (not from the date of registration which may be several days later).

Question 6 - Does the following (taken from the tourist's note book) have any significance?

"VISA - D. A. VISITA"

Answer - SSO/IS cannot determine the significance of this note.

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