

Special Collections and  
University Archives

UMass Amherst Libraries 

## Theodore Yantshev Papers

1947-1958

1 box (0.5 linear feet)

Call no.: MS 141



[About SCUA](#)

[SCUA home](#)

[Credo digital](#)

[Scope](#)

[Inventory](#)

[Admin info](#)

[Download](#)

[xml version](#)

[print version \(pdf\)](#)



[Read collection overview](#)

On June 23, 1946, a young Bulgarian refugee, Theodore Konstantin Yantshev, arrived in Baltimore as a stowaway aboard the S.S. Juliet Victory, intending to seek asylum in the United States. Despite the intervention of influential supporters including John F. Kennedy and Leverett Saltonstall, and the services of the Boston legal firm Powers and Hall, Yantshev was deported to Argentina in 1948. Efforts to secure a legal to the states eventually succeeded, yet poverty prevented Yantshev from following up.

The files retained by Powers and Hall in the case of Theodore Yantshev are focused closely on the plight of a Cold War-era refugee and would-be immigrant from Communist Bulgaria. The collection includes memoranda and summaries of the

Yantshev's case compiled by Powers and Hall and an apparently complete set in incoming and outgoing correspondence from the beginning of the case in 1947 through its final, failed disposition in 1958.

See similar SCUA collections:

Cold War culture

Communism and Socialism

Immigration and ethnicity

## Background on Theodore Yantshev

On June 23, 1946, a young Bulgarian refugee, Theodore Konstantin Yantshev, arrived in Baltimore as a stowaway aboard the S.S. Juliet Victory, intending to seek asylum in the United States. Born in Sofia on Jan. 17, 1926, to Konstantin Dimtshev Yantshev and Antoinette Robert Goinareva, Yantshev was studying electrical engineering at the Bulgarian University of Technical Sciences in 1945-1946 when he became a student leader in the anti-Communist Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (Bulgarian Peasant Party), and allegedly a friend of the party head, Nikola Petkov. The tightening of Communist power in Bulgaria early in 1946, however, and the threat to his safety convinced Yantshev to flee.

From Baltimore, Yantshev headed to Boston with the help of an American sailor, and secured work at the Red Coach Grill, a restaurant in the Back Bay, where he absorbed enough English to find work as an electrician, and by November, he reached his goal by landing an electrical technician at MIT. His luck did not hold. When police conducted a routine investigation into a burglary in July 1947, they discovered that Yantshev lacked appropriate papers and handed him over to the FBI.

Through a local minister, Yantshev began to marshal support in hopes of delaying or preventing deportation. Reuben H. Markham, the Balkan expert for the Christian Science Monitor, offered valuable assistance and Attorney William Gray of the Boston firm Powers and Hall provided legal counsel. Winning Yantshev's release on bond, Gray quickly went about calling in Massachusetts politicians to intervene, including John F. Kennedy, Leverett Saltonstall, Henry Cabot Lodge, and Richard Wigglesworth. Nevertheless, Yantshev was ordered to be deported on August 7, 1947, and after some minor delays, he obtained a passport and "voluntarily" left for Argentina on Apr 27, 1948.

Once settled in Argentina, Yantshev began putting together his case, retaining Powers and Hall to support his application for admission to the United States under the Bulgarian immigration quota. With the quota flooded by requests from Bulgarian refugees, however, it took years for Yantshev's name to come up, and by the time it did in April 1955, Yantshev had married an Argentine woman and claimed to have fallen on hard times. Claiming financial distress due in part to the need to assist his remaining family in Bulgaria, he never returned to the U.S. In the face of Yantshev's hardships in 1958, Powers and Hall dropped their pursuit of unpaid funds for legal services rendered.

## Scope of collection

The files retained by the Boston legal firm of Powers and Hall in the case of Theodore Yantshev are focused closely on the plight of a Cold War-era refugee and would-be immigrant from Communist Bulgaria. The collection includes memoranda and summaries of the Yantshev's case compiled by Powers and Hall and an apparently complete set in incoming and outgoing correspondence from the beginning of the case in 1947 through its final, failed disposition in 1958.

Included are photocopies and translations of Yantshev's Bulgarian birth certificate and educational records, and several interesting character references from friends in the United States and abroad, including one from G. M. Dimitrov, President of the Bulgarian National Committee for a Free and Independent Bulgaria, in which Yantshev is described as "a staunch fighter against the Communists." Correspondence from 1957 and 1958 is between Yantshev's Boston attorney (Francis Newton, following Gray's death in 1952) and an Argentinian firm, Marval and O'Farrell regarding the Boston firm's attempts to recover payment for their work on his behalf during the years 1947-1955.

# Inventory

---

"The Y File:" description of collection by Goodspeed's Book Shop

1986

Folder 1

Gray, William: Interview with Theodore Yantshev

ca.1947

2 copies

Folder 2

Gray, William: Memorandum on Theodore Yantshev

ca.1947

Folder 2

Gray, William: Theodore Konstantin Yantshev: Brief in support of petition of Theodore Konstantin Yantshev for permission to return to the United States for the purpose of immigration after having been deported

ca.1947

Folder 2

U.S. Department of Justice Code of federal regulations Title 8: Aliens and nationality [notes and copies]

ca.1947

Folder 3

U.S. Department of Justice Code of federal regulations Title 8: Aliens and nationality [notes and copies]

ca.1947

Folder 3

Correspondence and notes on Yantshev case

1947 Aug.-Dec.

Folder 4

Correspondence and notes on Yantshev case

1948

Folder 5

Correspondence and notes on Yantshev case

1949

Folder 6

Correspondence and notes on Yantshev case

1952 Jan.-Apr.

Folder 7

Correspondence and notes on Yantshev case

1952 Sept.-Dec.

Folder 8

Correspondence and notes on Yantshev case

1953

Folder 9

Correspondence and notes on Yantshev case

1954

Folder 10

Correspondence and notes on Yantshev case

1955

Folder 11

Correspondence and notes on Yantshev case

1957

Folder 12

Correspondence and notes on Yantshev case

1958

Folder 13

---

## Administrative information

### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Provenance

Acquired from Goodspeeds Bookshop, 1986.

## Processing Information

Processed by I. Eliot Wentworth, June 2017.

## Language:

English

## Copyright and Use (More information )

*Cite as:* Theodore Yantshev Papers (MS 141). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

## Search terms

### Subjects

Bulgaria--History--20th century

Communism--Bulgaria

Emigration and immigration

Political refugees--Bulgaria

### Contributors

Yantshev, Theodore **[main entry]**

Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963

Gray, William

Powers and Hall

### Link to similar SCUA collections

Cold War culture

Communism and Socialism

Immigration and ethnicity



Special Collections & University Archives

University Libraries : UMass Amherst

154 Hicks Way : Amherst, Mass. 01003-9275

Ph. 413-545-7282 (545-SCUA)

