

WC AND THE UNDERGROUND (INTERVIEW AT LUNCH WITH ALGER HISS ON 8/6/69)

1. AH told me ~~xxxx~~ that he met Ella Winter (for the first time) when she was here in the USA last Fall; and that she told him the following story:

a. sometime in the early 1930's a man came to ~~see~~ look her up in Carmel, Calif (where she and Steffens were living) and said something to the effect of whether she would like to "help"; it was all very mysterious, very vague -- except that she was given to understand ut had something to do with CP secret activities of some sort (or some sort of left activities, or of some activities helpful to the USSR)

b. soon afterwards, when she was in New York City at the New Weston Hotel, a man came to see her, reminded her of her conversation in the west coast, and made certain requests of her

[she was supposed to be used as a mail drop; or supposed to go down to Washington and remove some papers from the desk of someone in the State Dept., or some thing that sounded both very dangerous -- and (in retrospect) very foolhardy at the same time]

c. this man was Whittaker Chambers; she doesn't remember what name he used to introduce himself [or does she remember and Hiss didn't include that in his story] ??????

d. WC kept coming to see her at the New Weston every day for a month talking about this request.

e. Ella Winter had talked to Steffens about it, and he urged her to listen, to see how far the request would go, but not to do anything about it; finally, she turned WC down -- and had lots of pangs of guilt, if not remorse, for doing so.

f. hence, at time of Hiss trial, Ella Winter (who claims never to have been a CP member herself) was/ absolutely positive that WC was telling the truth about himself although (for some reason not clear to me, WAR) she thought he had been lying about AH.

g. the way this whole thing was worked: with a confederate on the west coast making the original request and then WC turning up later in NYC to follow up convinced Ella W that WC was genuine, that he was engaged in some conspiracy, just as he claimed to be, etc., etc.

2. AH asked Ella Winter if she would be willing to see me and talk to me about what she had told him; she said that she was afraid to do so, afraid to have the story get in print (mentioned that political fears were one of reasons she and her husband had gone to England, etc., etc).

3. Altho she refused to see me (AH ment me by name, he says, but she gave no sign that she had ever known or heard of me), she did agree to talk to John Lowenthal which she did, purely for the archives -- with the info to be used if anything came up by way of a motion for new trial

ADDITION TO ELLA WINTER (BASED ON TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH AH 8/7/69)

1. the businbess with WEC and Ella W in NYC took place, she thinks, in 1933, in ealrly days of New Deal; she dates it by their return to NYC from Calif.

2. Altho WC kept coming around to see her for a month, their conversation (and she was pretty much of an innocent øyoung girl at the time; have to get her exact age from Who's Who or something) was almost all chit-chat: they talked about literary matters, poetry, philosophy, religion, etc etc -- nothing serious, nothing specific, except for two things:

1. when WC found out she was going to be going to Washington, he then made the request that she try and get something for him from someone's desk in State Dept.

2. WC also made one other request: he asked her if she would be willing to take a sum of money for him to someone on the West Coast

3. These are only two requests he made of her; and she turned both down.

4. Name that WC used was the same name as the man on the West Coast had given her (Ella W remembered it, but AH didn't; maybe John Lowenthal has the name.)

5. During this month-long chit=chats every morning, Ella W never knew that WC was WC (she knew him under a different namne; never made a connection between this man and man, WC, whom Steffens had priased for his short stories.)

6. Sometime later in the 1930's, Ella was on streets with someone (it may have been Robt Cantwell) when WC walked by and then, for first time, she realized that WC was same man of chit-chat sessions.

7. AH makes this point (not completely sure if he is making inferences or just reporting what Ella W herself felt) that the fact that WC spent an entire month coming around to see her and talk, for the most part, mere idle gossip shows that he wasn't very busy at this time -- and had lots of free time on his hand [WAR: could this have been about the time his wife was getting ready to give birth????????]