

recollection is it was a little later than August 23, but I wouldn't be certain. The reason for believing it was later is that the Hitler-Stalin pact had been announced, I think, on the 26th of August, and I, or we, felt that war would probably ensue rapidly after that, and my distinct recollection is that it was between the time that pact was announced and the day the Germans invaded Poland, so I should fix the date between August 26 and September 1. If this does not accord with the record, as I say—

Mr. STRIPLING. The date is not particularly important. I think we will agree it was in 1939. That is sufficient.

Mr. BERLE. It was in August of 1939. Mr. Chambers stated that he wanted to disclose certain information about Communist activities in Washington. He related a story to me that he had been a member of the undercover Communist group from 1934 to end of 1937, as nearly as I can recall; that at that time, and apparently as a result of the purge activities which had been going on, he had decided to cut clear of the whole thing. He stated that he had then lived in hiding for a year or more under various names. He appeared to be even then in fear of some sort of reprisal and was obviously under some emotional strain.

He said that in addition to the New York core, the party policy, the Communist Party policy, had been to try to develop a group of sympathizers who might be of use to them later in the United States Government.

This was not, as he put it, any question of espionage. There was no espionage involved in it. He stated that their hope merely was to get some people who would be sympathetic to their point of view. With that in mind apparently a study group of some sort had been formed of men who were interested in knowing something about Russia and Russian policy and the general Communist theory of life, and so on. He said that in that group there had been various people at one time or another but that it had finally come down to four men who had been named at that time as being in or about the Government service, and he mentioned Alger Hiss, Donald Hiss, Nathan Witt, and Pressman, who had previously been in the Department of Agriculture and at that time had got out and was counsel to the CIO. I don't recall the names of these other men. They were not in the Government service, in any event.

He said that these men, it was hoped, would go, as they called it, "underground"; that is to say, that they would not appear as part of the well-known or open Communist group, but that they would simply be there and be sympathetic.

In one respect, what he told me omitted something that he has told you: He did not make the direct statement that any of these men were members of the Communist Party. They were apparently, from what I then gathered, men who were sympathetic to their general point of view and to whom they might have access and perhaps a sympathetic approach in case anybody brought a request there.

I asked whether he had given this information to the FBI, whether they already had that information either from him or secondarily through some other source by which it had been transmitted, and I asked whether he would come forward and state that or whether this was merely an oral communication. He said that he did not want to appear in the transaction at that time; that he tried to cut all his connections. He didn't want to spend the rest of his life with this