

Navasky also claimed that Weinstein had exaggerated written comments by novelist Josephine Herbst indicating that her ex-husband, John Herrmann, was involved in the underground with Chambers. He accused Weinstein of distorting comments by Czech historian Karel Kaplan, who had examined Czech secret police interrogations of Noel Field in which Field allegedly identified Alger Hiss as a fellow underground Communist agent. Hede Massing, who identified Hiss and Field as spies who knew each other, was untrustworthy, Navasky wrote, because she faced deportation from the United States and had no corroboration. Both Field and Hiss had denied her story. Navasky also sneered at allegations by "the notoriously unreliable Elizabeth Bentley" that Victor Perlo had headed a Soviet spy ring and ridiculed the letter Perlo's ex-wife, Katherine, had written to the government accusing him of Communist subversion by noting that she was mentally disturbed.⁴

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s new evidence steadily undermined Navasky's claims and those of other critics of Weinstein's conclusions. Russian archives and Venona decrypts supported Elizabeth Bentley's testimony. In a posthumous autobiography, John Abt, whom Chambers had named as a member of the Ware group, finally admitted that he had been a secret Communist and a member of the Ware group and that Peters had indeed supervised the group after Harold Ware's death. Although Abt depicted it as a discussion club, he also admitted that its participants, young professionals who worked for various New Deal agencies, provided the CPUSA with information and analysis of government activities. More evidence of this activity came from Elinor Langer, the biographer of Josephine Herbst. She learned that John Herrmann, Herbst's husband at the time, had been connected to the Communist underground:

From early 1934 until the summer of 1935 he was a paid courier for the Communist Party whose job was to deliver to New York material emanating from the secret cells of sympathetic government employees being cultivated by Harold Ware. There is no doubt that this was an important function. John's superior in the