

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION, August 28, 1946

The Communist underground in Washington is believed to have been set up sometime in 1933 after the inauguration of President Roosevelt. My informant does not know how or when it was set up, but he believes that Harold Ware had a prominent part in creating the underground and in enlisting key members. Ware, of course, would have acted pursuant to orders from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the United States.

My informant entered into the Washington picture in the summer of 1935 and left it and the Party at the end of December, 1937. The group was already in being and functioning actively. His superior was the Hungarian known as J. Peters, the national head of the Communist underground movement. My informant acted as a courier between Washington and New York. He participated in oral discussions in Washington with the group which Peters himself conducted. They met only the top layer -- in ~~xxxx~~ other words, leaders of cells of the Communist underground in Government circles.

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The heads of the various underground groups in Washington who met with Peters were the Hisses, Kramer (Krivitzky), Henry Collins, who was either Secretary or

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Treasurer of the group, John Abt, Lee Pressman, Nat Perlow, and Nat Witt. These men met regularly at special meetings with the exception of Donald Hiss, who did not have an organiza-

Treasurer of the Group, and Nat Witt. These men met regularly at special meetings with the exception of Donald Hiss, who did not have an organization they headed parallel organizations. But they did not know the personnel of the different organizations.

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There were other underground Communist groups operating in Washington, but this was the elite policy-making, top-level group.) This group did not exchange secret documents from the Government Departments, but did give sealed reports on the membership of the groups and on policy. It was not a spy ring but one far more important and cunning because its members helped to shape policy in their Departments. Henry Collins as Secretary or Treasurer, delivered most of the sealed reports to my informant. At that time Henry Collins was believed to be working ⁱⁿ the Forestry Division of Agriculture.

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My informant asked Alger Hiss personally to break with the Party in early 1938, but Hiss refused with tears in his eyes and said he would remain loyal to the Party.