

NY 65-14920

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

On January 14, 1949, MR. EDWARD R. STETTINIUS, Jr., former Secretary of State, was interviewed in his office at the Savoy Plaza Hotel by SAs Robert F. X. O'Keefe and John F. Sullivan. It was explained to MR. STETTINIUS that the Bureau was desirous of knowing certain facets about ALGER HISS' life and activities which covered the period when HISS would have been in contact with him officially and unofficially.

MR. STETTINIUS mentioned to Agents that he thought it would be best if he gave a running summary of all his associations with ALGER HISS from the first time he met him in 1944 to the present, and if the summary did not cover all points in issue, Agents should feel free to ask him any necessary questions.

MR. STETTINIUS related that in 1944, he could not recall the exact month, he was in London on a secret mission for President ROOSEVELT conferring with WINSTON CHURCHILL and ANTHONY EDEN with respect to a revision of the Post War World Organization. While in London the Dumbarton Oaks Conference was conceived in Washington D.C. Consequently, upon his return he found that MR. CORDELL HULL had begun the preliminary organization of the Conference by assigning EDWARD WILSON, at that time Ambassador to Panama, to a position of planning the organization of the Conference. ALGER HISS had already been selected as the Executive Secretary in charge of the technical aspects of the Conference. MR. STETTINIUS added that he, himself, was to be the "brass hat" and "front man" for the Conference. This was the first time that he had ever heard of ALGER HISS and, as he recalled it, ALGER had previous to his selection as Executive Secretary been assigned to the Far Eastern Section of the State Department under STANLEY HORNECK.

During the Dumbarton Oaks Conference ALGER HISS, according to MR. STETTINIUS, handled his assignments with the Russians with the same degree of firmness that had been exhibited by any other American at the Conference. He admitted that although he had not known ALGER HISS he made no attempt to check on his background or case history, explaining that he had had over 5,000 men under his supervision and to make specific checks of HISS' character would have been impossible. He stated that during this period there were no such things as security files on individuals, and he believed all information on ALGER HISS would be contained in the latter's administrative file.

At this time MR. STETTINIUS pointed out that during the last few months of 1943 and the first few months of 1944 he had been painfully aware of the lack of security in the State Department and had called Mr. Hoover for the purpose of having a check made on security within the Department. He believed that Mr. Tamm and he, Mr. Stettinius, had had a conference and the problem had been discussed, which resulted in a survey having been made by, he believed, Mr. Gurnea. The Bureau's report he believed was received sometime in February 1944, and he turned it over to G. HOWLAND SHAW, Assistant Secretary of State in charge of administration who handled security matters for the Department. MR. STETTINIUS was quite

Kisseloff-12182

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

R.J.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

NY 65-14920

sure that there had been no reference in this report to either of the HISS brothers which would have brought them to his attention and placed him on guard.

It was brought out that the Berle Report, which allegedly contained the accusations against members of the State Department, as given to MR. BERLE by WHITTAKER CHAMBERS had not been brought to his attention. He added that he did not know whatever became of this Report, but believed that he had heard, in connection with the testimony in instant case, that it had been brought to the attention of DEAN ~~ACHESON~~.

The next time he had contact with ALGER HISS was at the Yalta Conference when ALGER again was appointed Executive Secretary and took on the same duties as he had had at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference. When asked who had sponsored ALGER HISS for both the Dumbarton Oaks and Yalta positions, MR. STETTINIUS stated that he did not know. He again pointed out that when HISS had been picked for the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, he was in London and had returned to find him in the position; however, STETTINIUS was in Washington when the Yalta Conference was conceived and prepared, but he could not recall who picked ALGER for this one.

He recalled one incident that he believed might shed some light on the matter. Prior to the Yalta Conference there had been a family squabble in Government circles between LEO PASVOLSKY of the State Department and FEIST in Secretary STIMSON's War Department. FEIST had made some accusations concerning PASVOLSKY and circulated unflattering rumors concerning him, which he added did not help PASVOLSKY. Under normal circumstances, PASVOLSKY would have gone to the Yalta Conference instead of HISS, but due to internal friction, the resultant rumors, and the further fact that PASVOLSKY was not a very personable individual and MR. ROOSEVELT liked to be surrounded with personable people, PASVOLSKY was left at home. This was accomplished by telling PASVOLSKY that everyone had to fly to the Conference, and inasmuch as it was known that PASVOLSKY would never fly it presented an easy and diplomatic out.

At the Yalta Conference ALGER HISS, he stated, had again done a commendable job and had met the Russians in a "tough, realistic fashion." He likewise had won the confidence of all who attended the Conference. He believed that ALGER HISS' selection for Secretary General in charge of the San Francisco Conference came automatically as a result of his previous experience at the Dumbarton Oaks and Yalta Conferences.

At this point in the interview he referred Agents to MR. ROBERT LYNCH, his Executive Secretary, whom he believed would be able to shed some light on who was responsible for the appointment of HISS at least to the San Francisco Conference, because MR. LYNCH had handled for MR. STETTINIUS the detailed administrative planning of the Conference. MR. LYNCH could be reached, he explained,

Kisseloff-12183

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

NY 65-14920

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Fifth Avenue. MR. STETTINIUS called MR. LYNCH and made an appointment for Agents for the following day.

After the San Francisco Conference HISS had again done a brilliant job, according to MR. STETTINIUS, so much so that at the conclusion of the Conference those present had passed a resolution thanking him for the splendid job he had done. He stated that if Senators CONNOLLY and VANDENEERGH, members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee who attended the conference, were interviewed, they would unquestionably endorse his appraisal of HISS' work at the Conference.

At the San Francisco Conference he stated he had resigned as Secretary of State and JIMMY BYRNES had succeeded him. From that time STETTINIUS related he had devoted his time to the construction of the United Nations and ALGER HISS continued on with MR. BYRNES until January 1946. As he understood it, HISS had done a thoroughly commendable job for MR. BYRNES, and had received during this period the full confidence of MR. BYRNES, BEN COHEN and CHARLES BOHLEN.

Subsequent to leaving the State Department STETTINIUS stated he devoted all his time to the organization and administration of the Security Council and he believed that HISS was in charge of the State Department Political Security Division of the United Nations Division of the State Department. He did not come in contact with HISS again until sometime in 1947 when he met him on a train coming up from Washington to New York. HISS was on the train and in the general conversation which ensued HISS had advised him he had become President of the Carnegie Foundation for International Peace.

His next contact with ALGER was at the Mundt-Nixon disclosures made at the hearings of the House Committee on Un-American Activities. These disclosures he readily admitted came as a great shock to him, and MR. STETTINIUS indicated from his comments that he did not believe the charges and had taken the trouble to call HISS on the telephone and tell him despite what had happened "I still love you."

His next contact took place about two months ago when he had asked ALGER over to the Savoy Plaza to review a manuscript of a book which STETTINIUS is writing concerning the truth about Yalta, which he believes he will call "Roosevelt And The Russians". HISS had read the manuscript and had passed various constructive criticisms upon it and had told MR. STETTINIUS that he was glad he was writing it.

MR. STETTINIUS named Dr. WALTER JOHNSON, a professor of history at the University of Chicago, as his collaborator on the book. It was learned later from MR. STETTINIUS' secretary, L. F. WALLACE, that Dr. JOHNSON resides at Kenwood Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, but was presently doing research work at

Kisseloff-12184

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

where was the meeting described in the haunted wood?

NY 65-14920

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Aldernon Library in Charlottesville, Virginia.

MR. STETTINIUS admitted that recently, he could not recall the exact date, WILLIAM MARBURY, who had been a classmate of STETTINIUS at the University of Virginia, visited him at the Savoy Plaza relative to the HISS case. At the outset of MARBURY's visit MR. STETTINIUS stated he had asked MARBURY whether there was anything he should know about ALGER HISS, prefacing his remarks with the comment that he and MARBURY had been classmates together and had known each other over a long period of time before HISS came into the picture, and he wanted a straight answer. MARBURY told him "From all I know and have found out there is nothing you should know." MR. STETTINIUS immediately added, however, that before the interview had been concluded MARBURY had told him that he had four documents which he had found which were in ALGER HISS' handwriting and which he was going to turn over to the FBI right away, but was first going to ALGER HISS' apartment to tell him that he was going to do this. An inquiry of MR. STETTINIUS as to the nature and contents of the documents was unavailing. STETTINIUS stated he had not seen the documents, nor had MARBURY told him what they were about.

It was subsequently learned from MR. WALLACE that MR. MARBURY had called on MR. STETTINIUS at the Savoy Plaza Hotel at 3 p.m. on Thursday afternoon, November 18, 1948. At this time MR. STETTINIUS volunteered without comment the information that after MARBURY's visit and about three weeks ago, he was visited by EASTON ROTHWELL, Librarian at the Hoover Library at Stanford University, Palo Alto, California. ROTHWELL during this visit likewise reviewed STETTINIUS' manuscript on the Yalta story, and in the course of a discussion concerning the HISS case, ROTHWELL mentioned that ALGER HISS had a life long hobby of digesting documents and manuscripts and placing them in a safe for safekeeping. ROTHWELL stated he had learned that at one time the safe had been rifled and some of the contents stolen. STETTINIUS asked ROTHWELL whether HISS had known who had done it, and ROTHWELL had volunteered that HISS had told him he had no idea. Inquiry of MR. STETTINIUS in an attempt to enlarge upon this point brought no further clarification.

With reference to the movement of alleged Communist sympathizers or Communists into the Department of State, MR. STETTINIUS admitted that it had caused him considerable concern and that he recalled he had had a discussion on the matter with HARRY HOPKINS. HOPKINS had agreed not to take any more of the left wing boys into Lend Lease. He recalled there was a considerable discussion with HARRY HOPKINS about the identity of these boys, some of whom were fairly well known, but he does not recall ALGER HISS as having been among those mentioned.

MR. STETTINIUS was asked who was interested in ALGER HISS and had been instrumental in advancing him in the Government. It was pointed out to him that although ALGER HISS was considered by most people to be a brilliant individual, he nevertheless had had a meteoric rise in the State Department. He took a few

Kisseloff-12185

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

2310

NY 65-14920

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

minutes to think over the matter and stated he was unable to answer the question as he did not know the identity of any individual who had been interested in HISS; however, he did state that EDWARD WILSON, now Ambassador to Turkey and who had been in charge of the planning of the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, would undoubtedly know who suggested to him ALGER HISS for the position of Executive Secretary. Another suggestion was LEO PASVOLSKY, who is now with the Brookings Institute. He further suggested HARLEY NOTTER, who is now a professor of Political Science at some university; EASTON ROTHWELL; and DOROTHY FOSDICK, the daughter of Dr. FOSDICK, former rector of Riverside Church, New York City. He believed that these individuals, who had worked closely with HISS, would probably know the machinations behind his movements and promotions.

MR. STETTINIUS pointed out that there had never been any pressure brought to bear on him to give special consideration to ALGER HISS, and, as he had previously stated, he had never selected HISS for any position. He suggested that G. OWLAND SHAW undoubtedly would be able to shed some light on HISS' activities, as he was the nominal head of the security in the State Department and should have had a file on HISS, which, he added, might contain a copy of the Berle Report.

MR. STETTINIUS when questioned stated that he had at no time, either while in the Department of State or subsequent thereto, either officially or personally, been notified that ALGER HISS was a Communist, sympathetic toward Communism, a member of the Communist underground in Washington, D.C., or was engaged in espionage activities. He also stated that it had never come to his attention officially or unofficially that ALGER HISS had removed files from the State Department for the purpose of turning them over to any unauthorized individual.

He stated that he, until the recent disclosures, considered ALGER a loyal, patriotic, capable, and willing employee. It should be pointed out here, however, that apparently the interview detracted somewhat from STETTINIUS' prior enthusiasm and faith in ALGER HISS, as he repeatedly questioned Agents to determine if investigation had verified CHAMBERS' statements and also to determine whether ALGER HISS is guilty. He mentioned to Agents he could not understand if there was any truth to the disloyalty of the HISS brothers, why TOM CLARK had not warned key Government officials and also DEAN ACHESON, so the latter would not have given such an unqualified endorsement of DONALD HISS and consequently placed himself so far out on the limb.

At this point and as a result of his apparent changed viewpoint on the entire matter since the interview began, he carefully and painstakingly reconstructed once again his association with ALGER HISS and highlighted his previous statements. He reiterated his previous recommendations that the officials whom he had mentioned who were close to ALGER HISS should be interviewed.

Kisseloff-12186

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ 25-10

NY 65-14920

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MR. STETTINIUS informed Agents that he was going to Florida for three or four weeks in order to have some peace and quiet to finish his book. He offered his services to Agents upon his return if he could be of any further assistance.

On January 17, 1949, ROBERT LYNCH, the Executive Assistant to MR. EDWARD R. STETTINIUS, Jr., was interviewed at his office at 521 Fifth Avenue, by SA John F. Sullivan. MR. LYNCH related that he could not definitely state who had been responsible for ALGER HISS' appointments, but was in a position to suggest individuals who would probably be more able to answer that question. He named in the order of probability LEO PASVOLSKY; ISAIAH BOWMAN, now with Johns Hopkins University; G. HAYDEN RAYNOR, now connected with the United Nations in New York City; JACK ROSS, who was vitally connected with the organization of the San Francisco Conference and had been the Directing Officer of Administration and who he stated was now Special Assistant to the United States Delegation to the United Nations in New York; and EASTON ROTHWELL, now with the Hoover Library at Stanford University, who had been LEO PASVOLSKY's right hand man.

In thinking the matter over, MR. LYNCH stated that ROSS roomed with ALGER HISS at San Francisco and was quite close to him; that he was a reliable individual and probably would be a good man to contact on the matter. He also suggested that DR. FREEMAN MATHEWS, presently Ambassador to Sweden and who had been a key man in the State Department on all international conferences, should be contacted as he would know who had picked HISS or had suggested his name.

MR. LYNCH advised Agent that MISS MARY McDONNELL, who had been his secretary for the past eight years and who had accompanied him and MR. STETTINIUS to various State Department and international conferences, was present in the office and might be able to shed light on the problem as she saw most of the executive papers while working for them. MISS McDONNELL was interviewed, but she was unable to supply any information of value.

Neither MISS McDONNELL nor MR. LYNCH when questioned stated that they had ever suspected ALGER HISS of being a Communist or engaged in Communist or espionage activities. MR. LYNCH immediately added that he had worked in the State Department and wished to point out that it was his experience that there had been no security with respect to the handling of files and it would have been a simple matter for anyone to take a file or to borrow it from an official's desk when that party was temporarily absent.

Kisseloff-12187

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ 9510