

in 1935—the same incident Hede Massing had recalled. “I knew from what Hiss told me that he was working for the Soviet secret service,” said Field. Surprised by Hiss’s overture, Field “carelessly told him I was already working for Soviet intelligence.” When Field reported his blunder to Hede Massing, “I received a stern rebuke from her. . . . A little later she told me I had done greater damage than I would believe and that because of me the whole network had to be reorganized.”<sup>10</sup>

Not long after this new revelations emerged from the U.S. government. First, in 1993 the State Department declassified documents relating to a security investigation in 1946 that disclosed Hiss had procured top secret reports he was not authorized to see—on atomic energy, China policy, and other matters relating to military intelligence. The investigation was concluded in late November 1946. Two weeks later Hiss notified John Foster Dulles he was available, after all, to head the Carnegie Endowment.<sup>11</sup>

Then, in the summer of 1995, the National Security Agency began to release the Venona traffic, a total of more than two thousand cables sent from U.S.-based Soviet agents to the home office in Moscow. The messages had been intercepted in the 1940s by American counterintelligence officers and in the next years were painstakingly decoded. The most important batch of cables, released on March 5, 1996, confirmed that there had been a large espionage network centered in the federal government. Among those implicated were Harry Dexter White, Victor Perlo, Laurence Duggan, and Alger Hiss, who was implicated in a single cable, dated March 30, 1945.

In the cable Anatoly Gromov, the NKVD *resident* in Washington, reports on a conversation with another Soviet handler, Ishkak Akhmerov, “the leading NKVD illegal” in the United States. Akhmerov had recently interviewed a well-placed unnamed GRU agent within the State Department. The official told Akhmerov he had attended the Yalta Conference and then flown on to Moscow, where he was thanked by Soviet diplomat Andrey Vyshinsky for his devoted service.

The Yalta delegation included only four members of the State Department, all of whom flew on to Moscow. The four were Secretary of State Stettinius; his assistant, Wilder Foote; the director of the Office of European Affairs, H. Freeman Matthews; and the deputy director of the Office of Special Political Affairs, Alger Hiss. In Moscow the contingent met with Vyshinsky. Only Hiss was ever suspected of being a Communist.