

## Washing White:

### ***The Nation* Persists in Espionage Denial**

*By John Earl Haynes & Harvey Klehr*

Few issues have generated as much scholarly dishonesty as the study of communism and, more recently, the revelations from once-closed Cold War archives about Americans who spied for the Soviet Union.

In 2003 we published *In Denial*, which discussed how an embarrassingly large number of academics denied, minimized, avoided noticing, or, the last resort, justified Soviet espionage against the United States as well as such Stalinist mass murders as the [Great Terror](#) and the [Katyn massacre](#). It was bad enough that such deplorable history was written prior to the 1990s. But our outrage was prompted by the sad spectacle of supposedly trained historians continuing to distort evidence from Russian and East Bloc archives that contradicted their biases.[\[1\]](#)

And it still goes on. One conclusion we have reached is that many of those who continue to write historical nonsense about Soviet espionage and communism are not consciously dishonest. It is not a matter of them knowing the truth and lying about it (although there is some of that). More frequently, we are dealing with intellectual “true believers,” ideological zealots who are mentally incapable of accepting or processing information that undermines their historical world view. To use a metaphor coined by the historian Aileen Kraditor, it is as if they wear special glasses that can only see what conforms to their world-view. Information that contradicts their fiercely held view is denied, explained-away, or, most often, simply ignored.

A recent example of espionage denial is [James M. Boughton’s review](#) of Benn Steil’s [The Battle of Bretton Woods](#), published in *The Nation* magazine. A former Indiana University professor and historian of the International Monetary Fund, Boughton has long denied that White ever cooperated with Soviet espionage; a section of *In Denial* was devoted to exposing his fallacious arguments. Similarly, *The Nation* has a [long history](#) of refusing to accept that such left-wing icons as White, [Alger Hiss](#), or [Julius Rosenberg](#) could be guilty as alleged. Not until 1995 did it offer a concession about Rosenberg, although even then it resisted the claim that he was a major atomic spy. While *The Nation* has published letters-to-the-editor objecting to its distortion of history, such

communications cannot lay out in detail just how mendacious its authors are and how much evidence they ignore.[2]

Steil's book examines the [differing approaches of the British economist John Maynard Keynes and White](#) toward construction of a post-war international financial regime, and the resolution of their disagreements at Bretton Woods (the American White mostly carried the day). Steil notes White's espionage, but that is, at best, a tertiary theme in his book. Anyone reading *The Battle of Bretton Woods* and expecting an espionage thriller will quickly find himself enmeshed in a sophisticated history of the institutional evolution of international finance and economic theories that try to make sense of that history. Whatever its merits (which seem to be minimal), Boughton's criticism of Steil's economic history is not our concern or expertise.

Boughton roundly denounces Steil, however, for noting that Harry White was not only the chief architect of the post-WWII international financial system but also a Soviet spy. Contrary to Boughton's silly claim that Steil presents the IMF as a "Communist plot," the author generally treats these as two separate strands of White's life, just as he keeps Keynes's homosexuality at arm's length from Keynes' views on international monetary exchange.[3]

As we noted in our 2003 critique of Boughton, there was more than ample evidence then that Harry White had begun to cooperate with Soviet intelligence in the mid-1930s and continued that cooperation until at least 1945. Subsequently, in 2004 Bruce Craig published an admiring biography of White that was harshly critical of his detractors. Yet even Craig realized the evidence of White's espionage was too powerful to ignore, and conceded in the end what an espionage denier like Boughton is reluctant to admit: Harry Dexter White consciously provided information to Soviet intelligence and was involved in "a species of espionage." Although Craig went on to both minimize White's espionage and justify it, he clearly saw that outright denial was a lost cause.[4]

Since that time even more archival evidence has come to light, corroborating and adding considerable detail to White's career as a Soviet intelligence agent. The chief additional source is [Alexander Vassiliev's handwritten notebooks](#), with their extracts and summaries of KGB archival documents about Soviet espionage in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s. (The notebooks in the original handwritten Russian and translated into English along with a detailed index can be found at the Woodrow Wilson Center's [Cold War International History Project's virtual archives](#); the originals are held in the [Manuscript Division](#) of the Library of Congress). It is no surprise that in his 2013 *Nation* review, Boughton does not even hint of having any familiarity with the Vassiliev notebooks. To a denier, contrary evidence is often invisible.

Before looking at the new evidence Boughton ignores, his mistakes and false statements about the old evidence are worth revisiting.

In his autobiographical *Witness*, [Whittaker Chambers](#) stated that in the mid-1930s White was a source in his Soviet military intelligence network, which encompassed mid-

level government officials who were secret members of the Communist Party USA or sympathizers with it. At that time, White was a rising monetary official in the Treasury Department, which, overall, was not involved in issues of much interest to the Soviets. White was valued more for his talent and potential than for his actual productivity.

Chambers noted that White was not a CPUSA member but ardently sympathized with the Soviet Union; he cooperated with the Communist underground on his own terms and was not under party discipline. He did, however, provide information both in oral briefings and in written summaries. Chambers hid one of White's summaries together with material from his major source, Alger Hiss, in 1938 when he dropped out of espionage work. The hidden material was Chambers's so-called "life preserver" to discourage the Soviets from retaliating against him after his defection. In 1948 Chambers produced the summary during his clash with Alger Hiss. The White memorandum consisted of four sheets of letter-sized yellow paper, handwritten in pencil in White's own hand. Three pages were written on two sides and the fourth on only one, with material dated from 10 January to 15 February 1938.<sup>[5]</sup>

What did Boughton say about this? First, he dismissed Chambers outright as one of the "notorious fabulists" whose testimony about Soviet espionage should never be given any credence. This despite the fact that all the archival evidence that has become available about Soviet espionage since the end of the Cold War corroborated Chambers's account. When National Security Agency released the Soviet intelligence cables decrypted by its "[VENONA project](#)," for example, the official introduction to what is regarded as one of the most valuable and reliable documentary source of Soviet intelligence noted, "The VENONA decrypts were . . . to show the accuracy of Chambers's . . . disclosures."<sup>[6]</sup>

As for the papers written in White's own hand, Boughton opined: "Chambers dramatically produced a microfilm for the FBI, dubbed the 'Pumpkin Papers,' literally pulling it out of a pumpkin on his farm in 1948. The film contained, among other items unrelated to White, images of four pages of lined paper on which White had scribbled notes on various topics. Anyone who has worked in a bureaucracy like the Treasury Department would recognize these pages as the kind of notes taken during the meetings that consume so much of an official's day."<sup>[7]</sup>

Boughton got everything wrong in this statement. The papers were not on microfilm, they were real hard-copy, and they were not pulled out of a pumpkin. White's memoranda was part of the collection of espionage material from 1938 that Chambers lawyers delivered to Alger Hiss's lawyers in response to a discovery motion by the latter in Hiss's slander suit against Chambers. In the historical literature this collection is often referred to as the "Baltimore papers" due to their being produced at a legal discovery meeting of Hiss and Chambers's lawyers in Baltimore. (Both sets of lawyers quickly agreed to hand the papers over to the Department of Justice.) The "Pumpkin Papers," meanwhile were an entirely separate collection of material on microfilm later turned over to the House Committee on Un-American Activities, film that Chambers had melodramatically hidden for one night in a pumpkin.

As for Boughton's claim that the pages contained only routine notes—the summary, in fact, covered a wide variety of issues: State Department reports about Swiss financing of Japanese economic projects in Manchuria; the bomb-proofing of Japanese oil storage sites; diplomatic reports about a possible French alliance with the USSR against Germany; and the gist of Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau's conversations with President Roosevelt on economic policy toward Japan. At the time White held a senior but nonetheless mid-level position at Treasury—he was director of the Division of Monetary Research. As such, “It is difficult to fathom any purpose in the line of official duties for which White could have put together this disparate collection of news in a single memo,” as the historian Allen Weinstein has written. It easy to fathom, however, why a Soviet intelligence source would prepare such a memo.[\[8\]](#)

[Elizabeth T. Bentley](#) was another former Soviet agent who, like Chambers, was a witness to White's participation in Soviet espionage—in Bentley's case, during the years 1942-1944. Boughton disparaged her as a “notorious fabulist” too and declared that “Even the FBI had serious doubts about her credibility.” It is true that when Bentley first confessed to the FBI in the fall of 1945, counterintelligence agents, who had no clue about her role as the supervisor of several rings of Soviet sources, wondered if she was a nut confessing to imaginary crimes. But after hearing her out and checking her story, within weeks the agents were convinced of her authenticity and launched a major investigation of the “Gregory” case, to use the FBI's code name for the massive investigation that followed. Subsequently, the FBI never wavered in its judgment that Bentley was an utterly reliable informant on Soviet espionage. No less than three independent scholars who have explored the relationship between Bentley and the Bureau found that the FBI's confidence in her authenticity and reliability remained firm after the initial skepticism. Only in the denial land of Boughton's imagination does the unqualified characterization that the FBI entertained “serious doubts” about Bentley's credibility persist.[\[9\]](#)

Boughton also attempted to discount White's well-documented relationships with associates who were identified later as secret Communists and Soviet spies. These were nothing but guilt by association, according to Boughton. In his review he wrote “White had several friends and associates who were involved with the US Communist Party. He certainly knew they were sympathetic to communism and the Soviet Union, and he seems to have been indifferent to their political views and activities.”[\[10\]](#)

While testifying before a congressional committee in 1948, however, that was not White's story. He vehemently denied knowing or even suspecting that any former associates had Communist sympathies. If Boughton's judgment is taken at face value—that White “certainly knew they were sympathetic to communism and the Soviet Union”—then at the very least he perjured himself.

The lengths to which White went to protect secret Communists, in and of itself, suggested that he wasn't as naïve as he claimed to be in 1948. One of his subordinates at the Treasury Department was [Harold Glasser](#), both a secret Communist and a Soviet spy. In December 1941 the Secret Service, the Treasury Department's investigative arm,

forwarded a report indicating that it had evidence of Glasser's involvement in Communist activities. The report went to Harry White, nothing happened, and Glasser was able to continue his espionage.

Another White associate was [Nathan Gregory Silvermaster](#). Silvermaster, a government economist who had been a secret Communist since the early 1920s, organized a Soviet espionage network of extraordinarily large size during World War II. Indeed, White himself was one of the agents in Silvermaster network. In 1942, Silvermaster faced security scrutiny after transferring from the Department of Agriculture's Farm Security Administration to the Board of Economic Warfare (BEW). Neither agency came under the jurisdiction of White's Treasury Department (by this time White had risen to the post of assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury). White nonetheless contacted Under Secretary of War Robert Patterson and told him that suspicions about Silvermaster's Communist leanings were baseless. Consequently, Patterson overruled military counterintelligence and allowed Silvermaster to take the job at the Board of Economic Warfare.

Two years later, after Silvermaster's BEW tenure ended (by then BEW had merged into the Foreign Economic Administration), he sought to return to the Agriculture Department. There were security concerns about him although no adverse action had been taken against Silvermaster despite two probes. White intervened again on his behalf, and Under Secretary of Agriculture Paul Appleby endorsed Silvermaster's return to USDA employment.

An undergraduate writing a term paper who exhibited such an embarrassing pattern of errors, omissions, and misstatements would surely earn a stern lecture on the need to report accurately on facts, and to include evidence that contradicted one's thesis, if only to attempt to refute it. Boughton is unashamed by such scholarship—which probably explains why when an entirely new tranche of archival information about White became available in 2009—the Vassiliev notes—his response has been to ignore it.

Rather than write a detailed narrative of what the Vassiliev notes reveal and/or confirm, attached is a [summary](#) excerpting nearly all of the information relevant to Harry Dexter White that is to be gleaned from the VENONA decrypts and the Vassiliev notebooks dealing with Harry White.

The overlapping evidence from independent sources clearly implicates White as a long-standing Soviet source. The excerpts make mincemeat out of James Boughton's claims, revealing him to be either incompetent or suffering from ideological blindness. That White was fearful and hesitant, reluctant at times to give the Soviets everything they wanted, or had prickly relations with his main American connection to the KGB were all true. That he was not a spy is nonsense. Any reasonable scholar, reviewing all of these documents, would conclude, as we have, that White knowingly, consciously, deliberately, and covertly cooperated with, facilitated, and assisted Soviet espionage operations.

## Washington Decoded

John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr are members of *Washington Decoded's* editorial board and the authors of many seminal works on espionage and American Communism, including most recently (with Alexander Vassiliev) [\*Spies: The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America\*](#) (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009)

[1] John Earl Haynes & Harvey Klehr, [\*In Denial: Historians, Communism, and Espionage\*](#) (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2003).

[2] Walter Schneir and Miriam Schneir, "Cryptic Answers," *The Nation*, 14–21 August 1995, 152-153.

[3] James M. Boughton, "[Dirtying White: Why Does Benn Steil's History of Bretton Woods Distort the Ideas of Harry Dexter White?](#)" *The Nation*, 24 June-1 July 2013, 44. The same issue of *The Nation* that carried Boughton's review featured a review by Steve Wasserman of *Black Against Empire*, a new book about the Black Panthers. Wasserman's unsparing review was everything Boughton's failed to be: honest, and because it was honest, gripping. Steve Wasserman, "[Rage and Ruin: On the Black Panthers](#)," *The Nation*, 24 June-1 July 2013, 35-40.

[4] R. Bruce Craig, [\*Treasonable Doubt: The Harry Dexter White Spy Case\*](#) (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 14, 263.

[5] Whittaker Chambers, [\*Witness\*](#) (New York: Random House, 1952), 336, 429-430.

[6] Boughton, "[Dirtying White](#)," 44; Robert Louis Benson, *Introductory History of VENONA and Guide to Translations* (Fort Meade, MD: [Center for Cryptologic History](#), July 1995), 3.

[7] Boughton, "[Dirtying White](#)," 44.

[8] Allen Weinstein, [\*Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case\*](#) (New York: Random House, 1997), 212.

[9] Boughton, "[Dirtying White](#)," 44; Hayden B. Peake, "Afterword," in [\*Out of Bondage: The Story of Elizabeth Bentley\*](#) (New York: Ivy Books, 1988); Kathryn S. Olmsted, [\*Red Spy Queen: A Biography of Elizabeth Bentley\*](#) (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Lauren Kessler, [\*Clever Girl: Elizabeth Bentley's Life in and Out of Espionage\*](#) (New York: HarperCollins, 2003).

[10] Boughton, "[Dirtying White](#)," 44.

## **Appendix:**

### **The Archival Evidence on Harry Dexter White**

Below is a summary of references to Harry White found in the Venona decryptions and the Vassiliev notebooks, with some explanatory information added. Both of these primary sources are available on the web at the Woodrow Wilson Center's Cold War International History Project's virtual archives.

#### **1941**

Black notebook. 174-176. White was discussed in an early 1942 KGB Moscow Center summary memo on the status of the American stations, then in a period of rebuilding after the damage done by the Stalin purges in the period 1938-1941. Harry White's cover name at this time was 'Jurist' but previously had been 'Cashier;' he had been recruited by the illegal station in 1941. "In 1941, 'Dir' ('Kid'), 'Pal,' 'Jurist' ('Cashier') and 'Sachs' ('Hello') were also recruited to work for us as agents." The report identified White as "assistant secretary of the Treasury. Secret member of the CP USA." In actuality, White assumed the post of "assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury" in December 1941 but did not become an assistant secretary until 1944. The same 1942 report noted various "highly valuable materials" that a variety of agents had provided, specifying that among those conveyed by White was an "excerpt from a letter from Winston Churchill to Roosevelt."

White notebook #1, 26. A November 1941 report stated: "'Pal' passed along a report titled, 'The Food Situation in Continental Europe.' This is a report written on 30 August 1941 by H D. White, chief of the division of monetary research at the Department of the Treasury, for [Treasury Secretary Henry] Morgenthau and pertaining mostly to Germany and the countries it has occupied. The report cites data that point to the inevitability of starvation by the peoples of Europe even if the Germans capture all of the Soviet Ukraine, since the harvest there would be gathered more quickly than the Germans would capture the territory. The paper presents a great deal of data on the food situation in the countries of Europe."

White notebook #1, 30. A November 1941 Moscow Center memo to Soviet spymaster Vasily Zarubin, then en route to New York, identified White as a member of the Silvermaster network and stated, "'Jurist' [White] represents the most valuable source from this group. His capabilities, thanks to his proximity to Morgenthau, are very substantial. We should focus our work with him on obtaining important documented and verbal information. In this regard it is essential to train the source to transmit exactly what he has heard and to extract from his interaction from Morgenthau's inner circle information that [which] is of most interest to us."

#### **1942**

White notebook #1, 34. A January 1942 Moscow Center cable to Zarubin, newly arrived in New York, repeated the importance Moscow attached to White, calling him “one of the most valuable probationers [agents]” and tasked the American station to get Silvermaster to “work with ‘Jurist’ [White] on his further development in order to prepare the ‘Jurist’s’ transfer to direct communications with our operative.” In other words, Moscow wanted White to be prepared for removal from the CPUSA-linked Silvermaster network and placed in direct contact with a KGB case officer.

Black notebook, 43. An April 1942 KGB Moscow Center outline of plans noted that the American stations had several sources working at the Treasury Department through a network run by Gregory Silvermaster. The memo noted that these agents, of which White was listed as one, were “used without their knowledge.” This phrase meant the agents were not in direct contact with the KGB but delivered their information via a CPUSA-based network; in this instance, the information went from Silvermaster to Jacob Golos, a senior CPUSA official in liaison with the KGB, who turned the information over to the KGB. In all likelihood, these agents, who were all sophisticated men, understood that their information went to Moscow via the CPUSA. The party had little use for the international economic and diplomatic information White and his fellow agents at Treasury provided, but they did not know the precise route or the agencies involved.

White notebook #1, 44. A report from the New York station in August 1944 stated that its links with the Silvermaster network and White were not as close as Moscow believed: “A total misunderstanding has occurred with ‘Jurist’ [White]: you consider him a ‘valuable probationer’ (obviously based on what was reported to you or, rather, was not reported) and here ‘Leonid’ informed us along the same lines. However, when we too had the idea of separating ‘Jurist’ from ‘Pal’s’ [Silvermaster’s] group and taking him over for direct communications, it turned out that he is not only not our probationer, but we hardly know anything about him at all, and ‘Sound’ [Jacob Golos] also knows very little about him and has a very fuzzy concept of the nature of his contact with ‘Pal’s’ group.” ‘Leonid’ was Aleksey N. Prokhorov, a junior KGB officer in the American station prior to Zarubin’s takeover in January 1942. Prokhorov had a high opinion of Golos’s work for the KGB, whereas Zarubin thought it amateurish and did not want to take over his sources until thorough reviews had been completed.

White notebook #1, 48. Zarubin, in an October 1942 report, stated, “According to ‘Sound,’ [Golos] ‘Pal’ [Silvermaster] continues to draw information from ‘Jurist’ [White] while engaging in a friendly relationship with him. ‘Jurist’ is a very nervous and cowardly person and is not getting very close to ‘Pal’ politically. He is more interested in matters of domestic policy and his job.” In this period Moscow Center temporarily rejected Zarubin’s suggestion that a KGB officer should immediately replace Golos as the KGB’s liaison with Silvermaster. Subsequently Zarubin renewed his suggestion, arguing that Golos, from overwork and a lack of training, was unable to properly exploit agents in the Silvermaster network.

White notebook #1, 38. A November 1942 Moscow Center report instructed the American KGB

station: "According to information we have received, 'Jurist' [White] at one time was a probationer [agent] for the neighbors [GRU, Soviet Military Intelligence]. We will communicate detailed information about him separately. He should, at last, be properly recruited for work and taken on for direct communications. In view of 'Jurist's' value and the necessity of adhering to the rules of covert work, we consider it advisable to assign a special illegal to work with him. You should have a better notion of how best to approach the implementation of this task. Wire us your suggestions." This communication corroborated Whittaker Chambers's later congressional testimony that White had been part of Chambers's GRU-linked apparatus in 1937-1938.

### 1943

White notebook #1, 48. In a February 1943 report Zarubin said, "Re 'Jurist' [White] — 'Sound' [Golos] reports that in recent months he has begun to visit 'Pal' [Silvermaster] less often, obviously out of fear for his career, and has almost completely forgotten about his leftist attitudes in the past. According to 'Sound,' 'Pal' says that there are no opportunities to approach 'Jurist.'"

White notebook #3, 49. Harold Glasser, a KGB agent in the Treasury Department, reported that in 1943 Assistant Secretary of State Adolph Berle tried to stop issuance of a diplomatic passport to Glasser; Whittaker Chambers had identified Glasser as a secret Communist in a meeting with Berle in September 1939. But then White intervened to get Glasser the passport.

### 1944

White notebook #3, 14. In March 1944 KGB officer Iskhak Akhmerov met directly with Silvermaster; previously, liaison was only through Golos and Elizabeth Bentley. The report on the meeting states that Silvermaster "knows full well that he is working for us. Besides giving us info[rmation], 'Pal' [Silvermaster] has tried to help us through 'Jurist' [White], 'Peak' [Frank Coe], and other people. For instance, they recently discussed with 'Jurist' how to expedite the issuing of credit to the Soviet Union. At first, they thought they could persuade [Treasury Secretary] Morgenthau to present [President] Roosevelt with a plan for issuing credit to the USSR in the amount of \$10 billion. When they found out about [US ambassador Averell] Harriman's telegram, they decided to push for a plan involving five billion dollars of credit. Through probationers [agents] in the Treasury Department and the Foreign Economic Administration, 'Pal' tried to create a friendly climate for the USSR. He asked 'Mer' [Akhmerov] to have us advise him about which causes he should advance: for example, 'Jurist' had asked him whether to advance the loan to the USSR under the Lend-Lease law or as independent credit. After discussing this question with each other, they decided that it should be advanced as credit."

White notebook #3, 16. A follow-up cable about the March meeting between Akhmerov and Silvermaster states, "When asked what 'Jurist' [White] knew about 'Pal's' [Silvermaster's] work, the latter replied that 'J' knows where his info[rmation] goes, which is precisely why he transmits it in the first place. Besides 'J' and 'Pal's' wife, only

‘Polo’ knows that ‘Pal’ works for us. The other members of the group think that he works for the CP.”

Venona 590, KGB New York to Moscow, April 1944. White reported that Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Vice President Henry Wallace discussed a \$5 billion loan to the USSR and Wallace supported the idea.

White notebook #2, 36. In May 1944, Moscow Center instructed the KGB liaison officer to Earl Browder, chief of the CPUSA, to get Browder’s assessment of White. The message also told the American stations that “‘Jurist’ [White] was a probationer [agent] for the mil[itary] competitors [GRU] from 1935 until 1940, and was in direct contact with their operative. In 1940 ‘Jurist’ was turned over to our contacts through ‘H’ [Browder].”

White notebook #2, 37. In response to the above, a June memo from Zarubin to Moscow reported: “According to information that ‘So.’ [Golos] once passed along, ‘Jurist’ [White] was not an agent for the neighbors. The situation was different: ‘J.’ has a relative—a doctor by the name of either Volman or Volper, who used to be in contact with the neighbors. This doctor would supposedly receive information from ‘J.’ and turn it over to the neighbors. ‘J.’ knew that the doctor was a fellowcountryman and believed that the information received from him was going specifically to the fellowcountrymen. The doctor once mentioned in passing that he was working for us and would like to get ‘J.’s’ help. After that incident ‘J.’ kicked out the doctor and barred him from coming to his house. Later the doctor supposedly had his cover blown, in which someone named Paul Sheffer was involved. This gave ‘J.’ a big scare. According to ‘So.’, we have all this information. Since all this came from ‘Pal’ [Silvermaster], we will carefully double-check this story and let you know the results before having a substantive discussion. In any event, prior to a substantive discussion with ‘Pal’ of ‘J.’s’ contact with our man, ‘Helmsman’ [Browder] must be informed about this. This must be done because otherwise ‘Pal’ himself will tell ‘Helmsman’ about this and we may ruin our relationship with the latter. I’m confident that if we speak candidly with ‘H.’, he will agree and will personally direct ‘Pal’ to act as we want it and he will thereby strengthen ‘Mer’s’ [Iskhak Akhmerov’s] authority, since ‘H.’ will tell ‘Pal’ that ‘Clever Girl’ [Bentley] must not know about this.”

At this time the KGB was dismantling the Silvermaster network, and one of its chief priorities was direct liaison with White. But Silvermaster was resisting the effort because he would lose his importance as head of a large espionage apparatus. He offered a series of excuses why none of his agents should be removed from his supervision. Silvermaster also, obviously, knew nothing about White’s involvement with Chambers’s GRU apparatus of the mid-1930s. Given White’s importance, the KGB moved carefully so as not to provoke Silvermaster into disrupting the change over and panicking White.

White notebook #3, 15. A report about a June 1944 meeting between Iskhak Akhmerov and Silvermaster discussed problems Silvermaster was having with American security agencies suspicious of his hidden Communist ties; White was willing to intervene on his behalf. “‘Jurist’ [White] told ‘Pal’ [Silvermaster] long ago that he could hire him (at the Treasury Department) and, if it proved necessary, to defend him. ‘Jurist’ was convinced

that if there was a confrontation, he could win the case. 'Pal' says that he would under no circumstances agree to expose 'Jurist' to danger or take any chances. 'Pal' and 'Jurist' agreed that 'J.' would mention 'Pal' to 'Nabob' [Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau], saying that 'Pal' could be of use to their department. In so doing, they will try to manipulate things in a way that would make 'Nabob' take an interest in 'Pal' of his own initiative and offer him a job. 'Pal' thinks that this would not lead to any complications and that if 'Nabob' hires him himself, 'Jurist' would not get mixed up in it."

White notebook #3, 17. If poor health forced Silvermaster to leave government service, a July 1944 report noted the need for KGB assistance in setting him up in a position that would justify continued contact with peoples such as White. The report noted that Silvermaster had an inflated view of his own abilities and importance and believed that White regarded him as an equal.

Venona 1119-1121 KGB New York to Moscow, 4-5 August 1944. The cable reported on a meeting between a KGB officer and White. Sections of this message were only partially deciphered. White answered a series of questions put to him on US credits to the USSR; the occupation of Germany; lend-lease arrangements with Britain; US trade and raw materials policies; the Polish government-in-exile; annexation of the Baltic states, Finland's borders; and Secretary of State Hull. Regarding one item, White told the KGB officer that "obtaining the document [was] extremely risky." The message concluded "As regards the technique of further work with us 'Jurist' [White] said that his wife was ready for any self-sacrifice; he himself did not think about his personal security, but a compromise would lead to a political scandal and the discredit of all supporters of the new course, therefore he would have to be very cautious. He asked whether he should [unrecovered code groups] his work with us. I replied that he should refrain. 'Jurist' has no suitable apartment for a permanent meeting place; all his friends are family people. Meetings could be held at their houses in such a way that one meeting devolved on each every 4-5 months. He proposes infrequent conversations lasting up to half an hour while driving in his automobile."

White notebook #1, 55. In an August 1944 cable, KGB Moscow Center, concerned about evidence of increased FBI wiretapping and bugging, ordered changes in the cover names of leading American agents, White among them. White's cover name went from 'Jurist' to 'Lawyer.'

Black notebook, 5. A September 1944 report to the chief of the KGB from Vasily Zarubin, recently returned to Moscow, summarized his work as chief of the New York KGB station from January 1942 to August 1944. Zarubin said that White was "one of the leading officials at the Treasury Dept., member of no party, a man of leftist views, close friend of 'Pal,' [Silvermaster] 'Polo' [Ludwig Ullmann] and 'Aileron' [George Silverman]. The friendship dates back to 1937-1938 — the 'Jurist' [White] shares information with them, knowing that they have an interest in it, but he doesn't provide documents. The 'Jurist' is rough around the edges and a lot of work has to be done on him before he will make a valuable informant. To date he has reported only what he deemed necessary himself. If 'Pal' receives proper and sufficient guidance from us, he

will be able to put the 'Jurist' to much more specific and broader uses." Later in the report (Black notebook, 14), Zarubin stated that one of the tasks facing Iskhak Akhmerov, chief of the KGB's illegal station, was to "make 'Jurist' [White] more active through 'Pal' [Silvermaster]."

White notebook #3, 17. During a September 1944 meeting with Iskhak Akhmerov, Silvermaster warned that if the Republicans won the fall elections, KGB agents White and Lauchlin Currie would likely lose their government posts.

Venona 1388-1389 KGB New York to Moscow, 1 October 1944. The message reported that Silvermaster was angry about the July meeting between a KGB officer and White (cited above in Venona 1119-1121). Silvermaster feared it would diminish his position as supervisor of his network.

Venona 1634 KGB New York to Moscow, 20 November 1944. Iskhak Akhmerov urged Moscow Center to approve funds for the college expenses of White's daughter in order to reduce the possibility that he might government service for more financially-rewarding private work.

White notebook #3, 46. In December 1944 KGB station chief Gorsky reported that he was told that White had been involved with Harold Glasser and the Soviet military intelligence (GRU) prior to 1940. This was a reference to White's and Glasser's roles in Whittaker Chambers's network during the mid-1930s

White notebook #3, 51. In December 1944 Gorsky, in another report on Harold Glasser, noted Glasser's connection to White through the CPUSA. "'R.' [Glasser was admitted to 'Nabob's' [Henry Morgenthau's] department owing to the influence of 'Richard' [White], who knew at the time that 'R.' was a fellowcountryman [Communist]. 'Richard', apparently, thinks that 'R.' remains one to this day. On several occasions, he let 'R.' familiarize himself with certain documents that had no direct bearing on 'R's' work and told him certain things."

## 1945

White notebook #3, 53. A January 1945 report noted that John [sic] Glasser [actually, Harold Glasser] had been a secret Communist and linked to the GRU in the late 1930s in association with White and Josef Peters, head of the CPUSA underground.

White notebook #3, 53. Another January 1945 report stated that Silvermaster was willing to try to influence White to get KGB agent Harold Glasser a new job in the Treasury Department but wanted Glasser transferred from the espionage apparatus run by Victor Perlo to his own network.

Venona 79 KGB New York to Moscow, 18 January 1945. The cable reported that Silvermaster was willing to try to influence White to get KGB agent Harold Glasser a new job in the Treasury Department but wanted Glasser transferred to his espionage apparatus.

Venona 83 KGB New York to Moscow, 18 January 1945. Via Silvermaster, White discussed prospects and terms of a US loan to the USSR.

White notebook #3, 54. In a February 1945 memo White reported that despite his efforts, Morgenthau had decided to give the position of chief of the Division of Monetary Research to Frank Coe rather than Harold Glasser.

White notebook #3, 56. A March 1945 report by Iskhak Akhmerov discussed whether the KGB should encourage Silvermaster to have White place Harold Glasser on the Treasury delegation going to Moscow for economic negotiations.

White notebook #3, 77. A March 1945 report on the lack of security among the CPUSA-linked networks then coming under direct KGB supervision noted that members of Victor Perlo's network were well aware of White's cooperation with the KGB via Silvermaster's network.

Venona 248 KGB Moscow to New York, 19 March 1945. The cable conveyed Silvermaster's continuing concern over the July 1944 meeting of White with a KGB officer.

Venona 328 KGB Moscow to New York, 6 April 1945. The cable instructed Akhmerov to make arrangements, via Silvermaster, for White to be contacted during the UN's founding conference in San Francisco.

White notebook #3, 21. In April 1945 Silvermaster reported that Treasury Secretary Morgenthau had offered him a government post that he will discuss with White, then away from Washington.

White notebook #3, 22. In June 1945 Iskhak Akhmerov reported on feuding inside the Silvermaster apparatus, including Silvermaster's threat to send White back to a purely political party unit unless he [Silvermaster] got his way.

White notebook #1, 69. Reports from the American station in July and August of 1945 described several meetings between KGB officer Vladimir Pravdin, then chief of the New York KGB station, and White. Pravdin's cover was that he was a reporter for TASS, the Soviet news agency. White told Pravdin that Ludwig Ullmann, another member of the Silvermaster apparatus, was leaving his staff position at the Pentagon and returning to the Treasury Department because he "wasn't receiving interesting materials for us and that because 'Zhenya' [Sonia Gold, another Silvermaster agent working at Treasury] went on maternity leave [and that] he had to get a job in that institution in order to replace her in our work." White also reported that the new Treasury Secretary, Fred Vinson, unlike his predecessor, Henry Morgenthau, "wasn't sharing important information so far" with White. Pravdin also reported that "Following your instructions, 'Reed' [White] was told that we have an interest in his keeping his current position, in which he can work most fruitfully in the interests of our cause. When he asked whether this instruction was in line with the wishes of the Home's [the USSR's] leadership, he was answered in the

affirmative, and 'Reed' was evidently flattered by the clarification that on such important matters as his work we always consult the center and ask for special instructions."

White notebook #3, 95. A report described a meeting in June 1945 of a KGB officer with Charles Kramer, a KGB agent in Washington. Kramer noted that in the 1930s he had been the link between the head of the CPUSA underground, Josef Peters, and White's wife.

White notebook #3, 98. A June 1945 cable from the Washington KGB station to Moscow noted that Charles Kramer with Joseph Peters and White's wife in the 1930s CPUSA underground.

White notebook #3, 26. A circa July 1945 summary report on Silvermaster said that in 1940 or 1941, Earl Browder gave permission for Golos to put Silvermaster's underground Communist political network in Washington, including White, in the service of the KGB.

Yellow notebook #4, 123. A July 1945 KGB intelligence report was sent to Soviet leaders Stalin, Molotov, and Beria based on information from White and another KGB agent, Johannes Steel. The KGB "reports the following agent information, obtained by the KGB station chief in NY from a source close to US Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau. M[orgenthau] stated in a conversation with the source that [President] Truman is pinning very high hopes on the forthcoming [Potsdam] meeting with St[alin], wishing to establish good relations between the US and the USSR and also to secure Stalin's personal friendship. M[orgenthau] made clear that T[ruman] doesn't particularly like Ch. and noted that this fact will apparently help T[ruman] and St[alin] to find a common language. According to M[orgenthau], it is unlikely that Ch[urchill] will be able to act in a 'united front' with T[ruman] if the USSR manages to utilize T[ruman's] polit[ical] ambitions—to be re-elected president of the US in 1948. T[ruman] wants to show, after he returns to the US from the conference in Berlin, that he has succeeded in creating an atmosphere of trust between the US and the USSR and to achieve an agreement with the USSR on all major issues. The source points out that these polit[ical] ambitions are highly characteristic of T[ruman]. Bearing this in mind, the source expresses the view that 'it would be advisable to give special attention to Tr[uman], in the form of one or two meetings between St[alin] and T[ruman].'"

White notebook #3, 25. During an August 1945 meeting with Iskhak Akhmerov, Helen Silvermaster complained that White did not cooperate as well as she thought he should.

White notebook #3, 26-27. A KGB report from August 1945 noted that Ludwig Ullmann, during a meeting with Iskhak Akhmerov, complained that White was reluctant to deliver on his promise to give Ullmann as Treasury Department job. At the same meeting, Silvermaster "implied several times that as a result of our contact with 'Richard' [White], the latter had started treating him very badly, that he neither listens to him nor obeys him. Some time ago, I wrote to you about how 'Robert' [Silvermaster] had threatened to send 'Richard' back to the Communist group to which 'Richard' had previously belonged, and whose members included several scoundrels. Naturally, how can one expect to be sincerely

respected after such a threat, but 'Robert' is definitely inclined to attribute 'Richard's' behavior to our influence. 'Dora' [Helen Silvermaster] and 'Robert' have told me on several occasions that after our person met with him at the last conference, he had started putting on airs and acting independently of them. The most likely explanation is that it only seems this way to them. Having damaged their relationship with 'Richard' through their tactless behavior, they are inclined to blame us." The report also referred to White meeting with a KGB officer at the UN founding conference at San Francisco, April-June 1945. "[M]aybe our worker, who had met 'Richard' [White] at the conference, had told him we were interested in these problems."

White notebook #1, 71. An August 1945 report from the American station stated that White had been displeased by the "ménage à trois" sexual arrangement between Gregory Silvermaster, his wife Helen, and Ludwig Ullmann, who shared a residence with the Silvermasters.

Yellow notebook #4, 128. An August 1945 KGB report sent to Stalin, Molotov, and Beria was based on "data from 'Richard' [White]." "In the view of one responsible official at the US Dept. of the Treasury [White], the USSR shouldn't count on receiving a lump-sum loan of six billion dollars. At best the USSR will be able to get a loan of one billion dollars from the Export-Import Bank. The US govt. would like the USSR to agree to the offer formulated at the press conf[erence] on 21 August 1945 by [Leo] Crowley, the head of the Foreign Economic Administration, to grant the S[oviet] U[nion] a loan to buy the supplies it has already ordered under Lend Lease, which will not be delivered to the USSR as a result of the latest decision by the Amer[ican] govt. A substantial portion of these orders consist of food. The Amer[ican] govt., of course, will attempt to make the USSR buy this food if the S[oviet] U[nion] agrees to Crowley's offer. If the USSR refuses the food and demands capital equipment instead, the Amer[ican] govt. apparently will give in. After the International Bank is established, the USSR may get another one billion dollar loan in roughly a year or two. The dominant opinion in the US govt. at present is [US ambassador Averell] Harriman's view that the USSR should not be given a large lump-sum loan, but shipments of goods to the USSR should be stretched out over many years and loans used as a means of pressure in order to obtain polit[ical] concessions from the USSR. Even if the USSR managed to obtain a large lump-sum loan, there is no possibility of using it in the US in a short time because it doesn't have the amount of goods that the USSR needs."

Yellow notebook #4, 131. A September KGB report was sent to Stalin, Molotov, and Beria based on information from White and Glasser. "[O]n 18 September there was a meeting regarding the q[uestion] of the loan to the USSR—Sec[retary] of the Treasury Vinson et al. (It is unlikely that the USSR will be able to get a loan of six bil[lion] dollars.) Even if the US govt. agrees to grant the USSR such a loan, it will grant it over time in installments, with the idea that the US govt. would be able to get some polit[ical] concessions in exchange for granting each individual installment. At the same time no guarantees will be given that, after receiving one part of the loan, the USSR will be able to get the remaining parts. The granting of such periodic installments each time will be the subject of complex negotiations. There are currently two groups in US govt. circles

with regard to the q[uestion] of granting a loan to the USSR. One group, which consists of representatives of the State Dept., Secretary of the Treasury Vinson and many other influential polit[ical] figures, believes that, while counting on good business conditions in the US and the ability of private industry to prevent a deep econom[ic] crisis, it is essential to delay the granting of a large loan to the USSR for as long as possible and to use it as a tool of polit[ical] pressure. Another, less influential group, consisting of a number of specialists on econom[ic] and financial issues, believes that there will be eight million unemployed in the US in the very near future, and the granting of a large loan to the USSR will afford an opportunity to increase production and expand US exports. At the aforementioned conference on 18 September, the q[uestion] of obtaining from the USSR, as a guarantee, information on its financial position was discussed. The US govt. intends to request information from the USSR regarding the following questions: 1. The USSR's gold reserves. 2. Data on gold production in the USSR. 3. The USSR's financial position. 4. The USSR's plans with regard to obtaining loans from other countries. 5. The USSR's plans with regard to exports and imports. 6. What resources the USSR plans to use to amortize foreign loans. It is claimed that the govt. of Great Britain has supposedly already provided such information to the US, but in doing so inquired twice whether the US govt. intends to obtain the same information from the USSR."

White notebook #1, 71. In September 1945, Pravdin met with Gregory Silvermaster to discuss the ongoing breakup of the Silvermaster network and parceling out of its agents to direct KGB liaison. Silvermaster complained of the difficulties he had had with some of his agents, saying of White "the situation with 'Reed' [White], according to 'Robert' [Silvermaster], is different. The reason that 'Reed' doesn't pass along information or documents is not that he doesn't want to help us, but partly because he is extremely absent-minded and forgets his promises, but mainly because he considers such work secondary. According to 'Robert', 'Reed' feels that his main calling is to provide advice on fundamental political and econom[ic] issues."

White notebook #3, 29-32. A September 1945 KGB report by Iskhak Akhmerov stated that when he and Vladimir Pravdin "met with him [Silvermaster] several weeks ago, he had tried, in telling us about his group's work, to stress that his work was divided into several phases; that is, before our worker had contacted 'Richard' [White] at Bretton Woods [a monetary conference held in July 1944] and again in San Francisco [UN's founding conference in April-June 1945]. 'Robert' [Silvermaster] did not tell me outright, but he definitely implied that 'Richard's' [White's] bad treatment of him had been elicited by our contact with 'Richard'. He thinks that 'Richard' has really been ignoring him ever since the conference in San Francisco, because the latter feels that he is independent of him [Silvermaster]. He is terribly irritated by the fact that he no longer enjoys the same prestige, respect, and authority of a Communist leader, which he had enjoyed before our worker established a connection with 'Richard'. He is absolutely convinced that we are interfering too much in his organizational system and putting him in an embarrassing position. Moreover, he is inclined to think that we really are creating difficulties in order to conduct our own work. He comes to these imagined conclusions of his on the basis of a few rather insignificant facts. You remember that after our worker contacted 'Richard' at Bretton Woods and asked him to explain a bunch of different issues for us, 'Robert'

become so enraged that he even said he might order 'Richard' to break off his connection with our worker. At the time, he had said the following: what had he been doing for you all these years, hadn't he been trying to keep you informed about all the issues that were assigned to 'Richard'; how could your person think that 'Richard' would explain these issues when he himself ('Robert') was incapable of forcing 'Richard' to work in the sense of furnishing us with essential materials. 'Robert' proceeded to criticize our worker's every action. He said that we were not satisfied enough with his work for us, that we were trying to make it so that 'Richard' would be working independently on the same issues he was working on; that we were showing that we didn't trust him, etc, etc. At the time, 'Robert' believed that our worker would maintain contact with 'Richard' and ask the latter to give us information on questions directly pertaining to the financial conference, on questions regarding the granting of a loan to us, relations between our countries, and oth[er] problems of high politics. According to him, our worker was not interested in these questions and instead tried to make 'Richard' work on solving our specific problems that 'Robert' was constantly working on." The report went on to describe other grievances Silvermaster had about the KGB's establishment of direct contact with White.

White notebook #1, 73. At an October 1945 meeting with Pravdin, White reported that due to Vinson's lack of confidence in him he would resign rather than wait to be fired, and intended to open a private economic consulting firm in Washington. Pravdin stated, "It was pointed out to 'Reed' [White] how important it was to us for him to keep his post and so forth. 'Reed' replied, however, that we wouldn't lose anything from his departure, since 'Peak' [Frank Coe, another Silvermaster agent in Treasury] would replace him perfectly well. Besides, according to 'Reed', if he succeeded in establishing the planned office in Carthage [Washington], he would not only retain his capabilities for informing us, but would even be able to expand his connections."

White notebook #3, 34-36. In an October 1945 KGB report, George Silverman, a leading agent in the Silvermaster network and close friend of White's, stated that due to increasing personal friction, White and others limited their cooperation with Silvermaster in mid-1945, citing Silvermaster's increasing tendency to bully members of his network. Silverman also reported that White had told him that he had achieved direct contact with the KGB through Pravdin.

White notebook #1, 72. In October 1945 after a meeting between Pravdin and George Silverman, Pravdin reported, "A factor that definitely played a role in 'Robert's' [Silvermaster's] poor relationships with 'Aileron' [Silverman], 'Peak' [Coe] and 'Reed' [White], was that, although they had worked for us for a much longer time, 'Robert' was appointed their handler as soon as he was recruited for our work. 'Aileron' repeated several times that neither he nor his comrades understood the choice of 'Robert' as handler, since they had far more experience in our work."

White notebook #3 p. 37. A November 1945 report from Iskhak Akhmerov noted that he had given \$2,000 to Silvermaster to deliver to White, "I gave 'Robert' [Silvermaster] these 2,000 dollars as well and told him to give them over to 'Richard' [White] - \$500 as an

anniversary gift (in view of the anniversary of the Oct. Revolution) and \$1,500 to pay expenses associated with his daughter's education."

White notebook #2, 41. In November 1945. Moscow Center informed the American stations that it had learned that Elizabeth Bentley had defected to the FBI and ordered that contact be cut with their sources, stating "Break off contact with agents: 'Art' [Helen Koral] 'Richard' [White] 'Echo' [Bernard Schuster] and 'Berg' [Alexander Koral]." The message also instructed that Silvermaster was to reduce contact with his former network, specifically he and his partner Ullmann should "reduce meetings in public with their contacts: 'Aileron' [Silverman], 'Richard' [White], 'Zhenya' [Sonia Gold], 'Acorn' [Bela Gold], 'Sachs' [Solomon Adler], 'Peak' [Coe] and others."

White notebook #2, 33. In December 1945, Kim Philby, a KGB agent inside the British Secret Intelligence Service, informed the KGB that Elizabeth Bentley had identified forty-one KGB agents, including White.

### **1947**

White notebook #3, 41. A July 1947 KGB report noted that White had visited Silvermaster.

### **1948**

Black notebook, 77. White was listed in 1948 KGB memo by Anatoly Gorsky (then a senior official at Moscow Center but Washington KGB station chief in 1944-1945) as a Soviet agent compromised by the defection of Whittaker Chambers.