

SETTING

TIME AND PLACE

AFTER THE REVOLUTION

TIME:

May–June, 1999

Place:

Vera Joseph's apartment and various other locations around Greenwich Village, NY.



The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Chief Justice of the United States.

Under the last night's session, the Chief Justice of the United States, Mr. LOTT, Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice.

ORDER OF PROCEEDURE

Mr. LOTT. For the information of all Senators, later on today, the Secretary of the Senate will be putting at each session



From Mugshot to Movement: A Brief Chronology of the Mumia Abu-Jamal Case



1981: Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner shot to death. Award-winning local reporter, activist, former Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal arrested at the scene.

1982: Abu-Jamal convicted of killing officer Faulkner and sentenced to death, beginning decades of appeals, hearings, and legal tussles.

1995: Following a post-conviction hearing to consider evidence of racial bias and lack of due process during the initial trial, Abu-Jamal loses bid for a new trial. His book, *Live From Death Row*, helps attract supporters around the world. Pennsylvania governor signs Abu-Jamal's death warrant.

April 1999: Global movement begins planning for worldwide Mumia Day in the fall: a day of action in 100 cities.

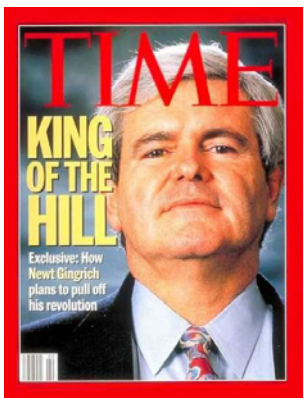
April 22, 1999: Abu-Jamal's legal team, led by Leonard Weinglass, file for writ of *certiorari*.

May 12, 1999: Weinglass and team announce that they have filed for *certiorari*.

May 19, 1999: Mumia's brother gives a sworn declaration stating he and a friend, not Mumia, were hired to kill Faulkner.

June 9, 1999: Mumia delivers taped commencement speech for Evergreen College.

September 19-25, 1999: International Mumia Awareness Week.



4000 MILES

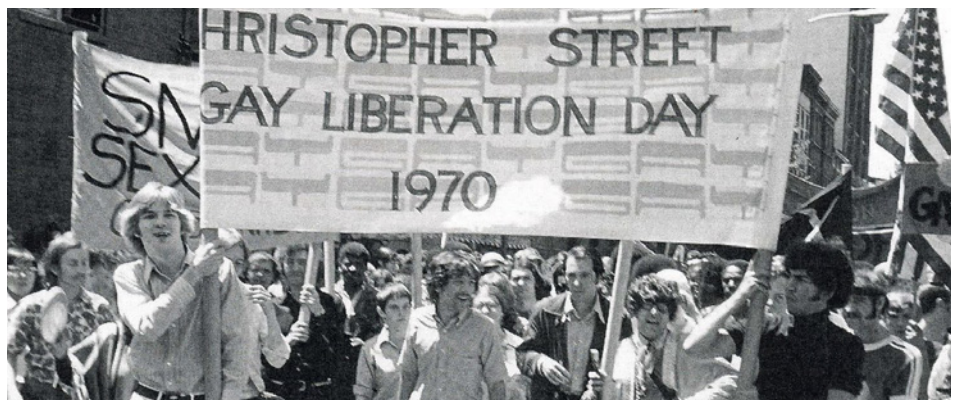
TIME:

Late summer, early fall
Late 2000s

Place:

Vera Joseph's apartment in
Greenwich Village, NY.

A neighborhood on the west side of Lower Manhattan, Greenwich Village is a landmark of American bohemian culture. During the 19th Century, small presses, art galleries, and experimental theater thrived there. By the turn of the 20th Century, the Village was ethnically diverse and known for its tolerance of radicalism and nonconformity. In the 1950s, it became the center of the Beat movement and in the 1960s a center for Hippie counterculture. Due in part to the progressive attitudes of many residents, the Village has been a focal point of new movements and ideas. Attracted to the neighborhood's liberal leanings, gay people began gathering in the area, and riots at the Stonewall bar helped spark the beginning of the LGBT rights movement in 1969. Greenwich Village has remained a progressive center, a rallying place for anti-war protestors in the 1970s and a center of mobilization efforts for the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s, even as gentrification has driven up the cost of living and ushered in a whole new demographic.





Amy Herzog

hardly meant to write a family saga, let alone a pair of dramas that might play as bookends. *After the Revolution* and *4000 Miles* were conceived and written independently, though both draw to a greater or lesser extent on events, attitudes, and characters that Herzog based on her own family. Vera, the character they share in common, closely mirrors Herzog's own grandmother, LEEPee. LEEPee's husband, Julius Joseph, was indeed called to testify in 1953; his history parallels that of the fictional Grandpa Joe, whose choices loom over both stories. Amy has recounted these links in innumerable interviews about each of these plays, for their many individual productions around the country. This time Center Stage asked the playwright to look back and reflect on the plays and their pairing, rather than on their common source material.

Q: Over the past several years, you've spoken and written at great length about both of these plays and their origins, individually. Since then, they've become somewhat established staples of the regional repertory. With a little distance from them, can you reflect on what they mean to you now, looking back?

A: Since I wrote these plays based on my extended family and especially my grandmother, I've had two major life changes. My grandmother died in 2013 at age 96, and I had two children. My grandmother's death changed my feeling about the plays very much; now they seem to have the quality of a eulogy or remembrance, which they didn't when I wrote them. I haven't seen a fully staged production of *After the Revolution* since she died, and I wonder what it will be like sitting with her disappointment and quiet anger in the final scene. I've always said I wanted to give her the last word in the play, but that means something different now.

Both plays are concerned with the relationships between parents and children. I wrote primarily from the perspective of the grown child, having observed my own and other parents closely. Now that I am a mother, I'm more aware not just

of how difficult being a parent is (that I'd sort of guessed), but how haphazard it can be. There's so much that happens accidentally, as a result of constantly shifting circumstances and without much forethought. I wonder, if I were writing these plays now, if they would in some way reflect that.

Q: Given how personally you mined your family history for these pieces, it would be great to hear if there have been any lingering effects—how has your family continued to respond? Would you say the plays have prompted any more discussion or revelations, or any new relationship to the past?

A: I am careful not to overestimate the impact of these plays on my family. My uncle Andrei and his partner Pam, who the characters Ben and Mel are based on, have traveled around the country to see regional productions of *ATR* and offered their services to do talkbacks after the show*. So they've surely been affected the most, and I've seen a deepening in their engagement in and understanding of theater as a result. I don't think the plays have prompted further revelations...they've doubtless prompted all kinds of mixed feelings, only some of which I am aware of.

Q: This is the first time these two plays—conceived and written independently despite being interconnected in content—are getting produced together. What do you make of this union?

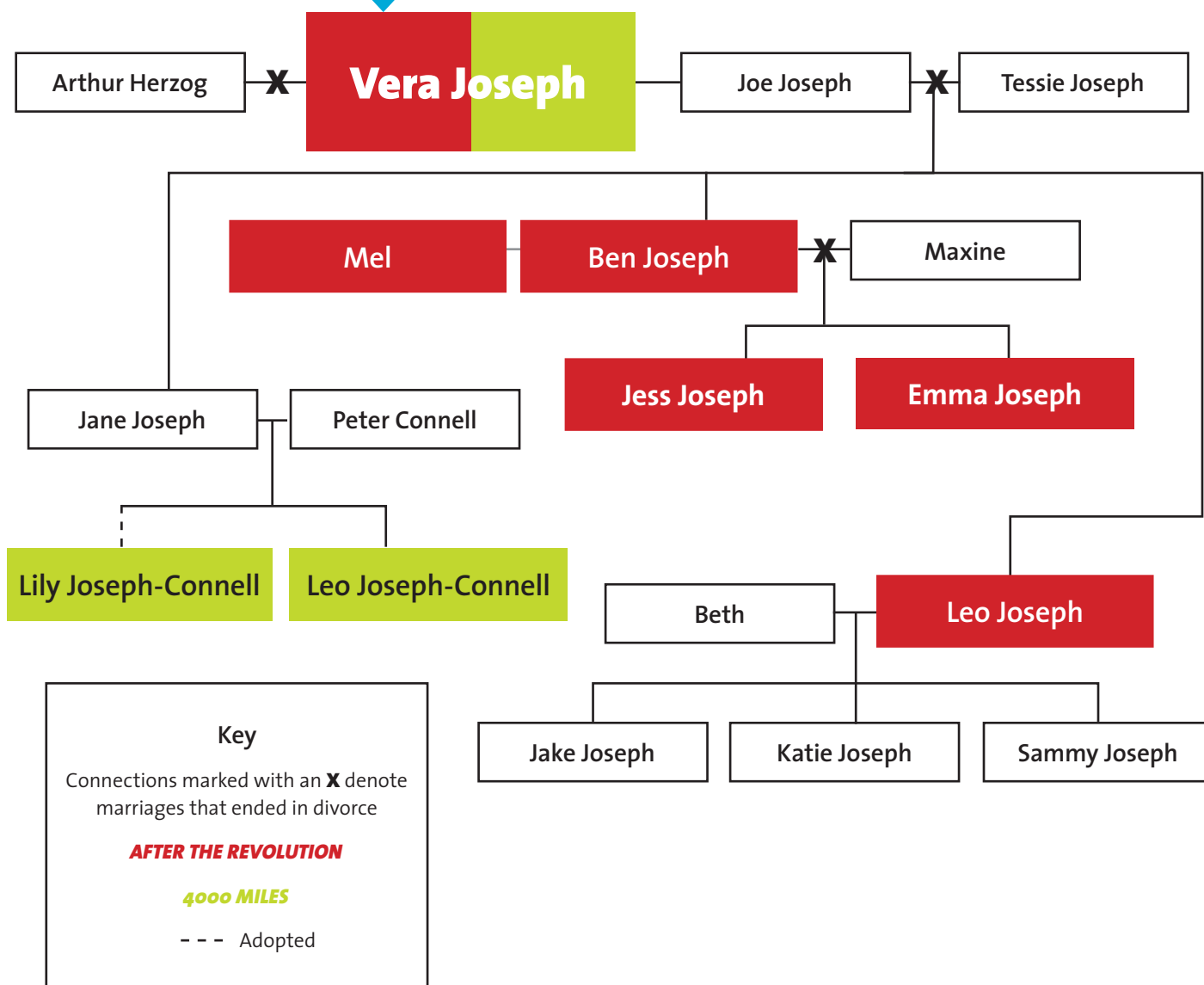
A: I am completely delighted that the plays will be seen together for the first time. There are resonances between them that are usually lost—for example, the offstage character of Jane is mentioned in both and becomes more important in *4000 Miles*. And if you go into *4000 Miles* having seen *ATR*, Vera's continuing grief for the loss of Joe will have more shape and substance. Formally they're very different, so I'm curious how that sits with audiences. Will it be tricky to settle into the gentle rhythms of *4000 Miles* after the relatively more operatic *ATR*? Also, will people be confused about the name Leo? The young protagonist Leo of *4000 Miles* is named after his Uncle Leo of *ATR*. But that's not explained in the plays, and I'm sure there are more details like that I haven't thought of. ♦

* Andrei Joseph is the special guest at Center Stage's pre-show Night Out event, Tue, Mar 24.



THE FICTIONAL JOSEPHS

The family in *After the Revolution* and *4000 Miles*, the Josephs, are based in part on Amy Herzog's own family. Vera is modeled after her grandmother, Leepie Joseph; her grandfather, like Joe Joseph, was blacklisted; Ben and Mel are based on her politically active uncle and his wife; and young Leo was inspired by a similarly off-the-grid cousin.



The perennial garden of the Great American Family Drama

By Catherine María Rodríguez,
Production Dramaturg

Amy Herzog never intended to write a multiplay saga exploring her personal history. But once she'd begun to unearth her roots, she found it hard to abandon the fertile soils that surround her family tree.

After the Revolution and *4000 Miles* are prime examples of a theatrical phenomenon that is distinctly—albeit not exclusively—American. Like classic dramas from *Death of a Salesman* to *Buried Child* or *Glass Menagerie* to *A Raisin in the Sun*, they introduce us to individuals confronting their families and legacies in moments that shake their very foundations—and in so doing mirror the myths we tell about ourselves and the story of family. Indeed, these narratives have proven so pervasive that they arguably form their own genre, what you might call the Great American Family Drama. In this perennial garden, a particular strain has cropped up: multiplay series with family trees that branch out to multiple generations and roots that stretch across the eras. And it's to this strain of the Great American Family Drama that Herzog's two semi-autobiographies belong.

On its own, each of these two Herzog plays centers on individuals who, in exhuming buried truths, must then face shifting relationships to kin and self; taken together, the duet tells a larger story—of a family, and of that family across history. Although Herzog first conceived of *After the Revolution* (which takes places about a decade before its sequel, *4000 Miles*) as a standalone play, in revisiting and expanding the family tree, Herzog has added her Joseph family plays to the growing list of American dramatists and dramas that stage the family to unpack the stories that we repeat—or sacrifice—for our own mythmaking.



A Saga Sampler

This page, a triptych of *The Raisin Cycle*: (from top) *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Clybourne Park*, and *Beneatha's Place*.

Opposite: (from left) *The Piano Lesson* and *Jitney* from August Wilson's *Century Cycle*, and Lillian Hellman's *Another Part of the Forest* and *The Little Foxes* (Martin Beck Theatre).

Photo credits: This page: (from top) Tracie Thoms; Beth Hylton, Jessica Frances Dukes, Charlie Hudson, III; Dukes, Hudson. Opposite: (from left) Charles Weldon, Terry Alexander; Stephen McKinley Henderson, Keith Randolph Smith; Kevin O'Rourke, Nicolette Goulet; Elizabeth Taylor, Novella Nelson, Ann Talman.



These multigenerational stories include mammoth epics (August Wilson’s *Century Cycle* primarily spotlights 100 years of life in Pittsburgh’s Hill District), searing retrospectives (Lillian Hellman’s *Another Part of the Forest* provides context for the evil enacted by the Hubbards of *The Little Foxes*), and sprawling fantasias (Mac Wellman’s *Crowtet* quartet spans multiple generations and theatrical genres). Others repopulate old family homes (Bruce Norris’s *Clybourne Park* and Kwame Kwei-Armah’s *Beneatha’s Place* revisit Lorraine Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun*) or substitute the portrait of a community for the family portrait (Dominique Morisseau’s *Detroit Projects* trilogy centers on her Motown hometown).

But is there something distinctive to the multiplay subgenre and what it can accomplish?

Why have these and other playwrights, in tackling the Great American Family Drama, pushed beyond a singular play’s perimeter or protagonists in favor of far-reaching, entangled branches?

Be they diptychs or sizable series, in their extended framing and storytelling these multiplay sagas can track larger social trends and contextualize our place within them. By widening their historical and theatrical landscapes, these dramas likewise expand their investigations: questions of personal triumphs and sacrifices evolve into investigations of what constitutes progress (or regress) for a family, a society, a culture. They call out the myths of American identity through the fables of individual bloodlines, and plot the history of a family against the narrative of the nation.

Tropes common among this subgenre—many shared by Herzog’s entries—include curses, ghost stories, and the struggle to overcome or right past wrongs (August Wilson’s *Century Cycle*, Robert Schenkkan’s *Kentucky Cycle*, and Tarell Alvin McCraney’s *Brother/Sister Plays*); wars waged over dis/inheritance (Hellman’s *Hubbard* family plays); the empty promise of the American Dream (Horton Foote’s *Orphans’ Home Cycle*); families in distress in times of national crisis, from Civil War to September 11 (Richard Nelson’s *Apple Family Plays* and Lanford Wilson’s *Talley Trilogy*); and ethnic or racial identity located in the American Dream (Evelina Fernandez’s *A Mexican Trilogy*, Edward Sakamoto’s *Hawai’i No Ka Oi: The Kamiya Family Trilogy*, and Neil Simon’s *Eugene* trilogy). In tracing various branches of the same family tree, these multiplays show us how individual members interact with and contribute to a shared legacy. And, through these sweeping histories, we trace the long-term ripples of individual actions across time and space.

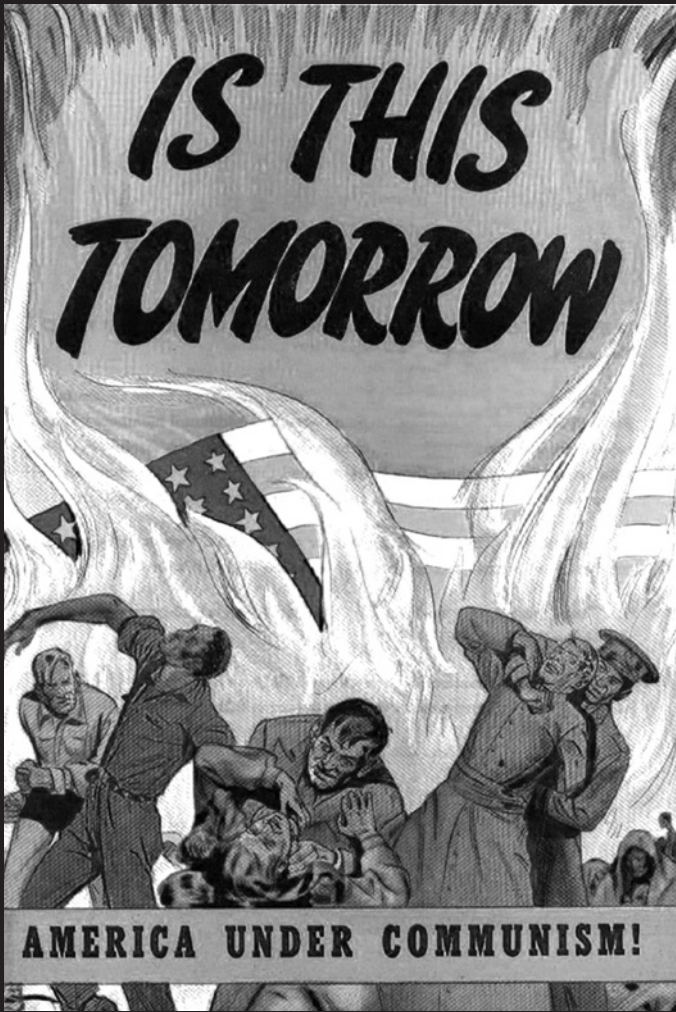
Take, for example, Schenkkan’s *Kentucky Cycle*. As *The New York Times* wrote, its 200-year span “erect[s] an epic of the failure of the American dream” by following a family and a plot of land. Here, the singular sins of individuals rack up to spell ultimate disaster for the town at large: “The beautiful, unsullied piece of land where an indentured Irishman, Michael Rowen, settles in the play’s opening scene is steadily soiled by blood feuds and racial conflict, then pillaged by capitalist greed until finally it is nothing more than a polluted wasteland, a ghost town.”

Other cycles take on the properties of their Herculean ambitions. Eugene O’Neill’s ill-fated 11-play cycle titled “A Tale of

Possessors Self-Dispossessed” was, in the playwright’s words, to follow “a far from model American family” over the course of 175 years and showcase the playwright’s theory that “the United States, instead of being the most successful country in the world, is its greatest failure [b]ecause it has always been in a state of rapid movement [and] has never acquired real roots.” Conceived but never penned, O’Neill’s infamously failed cycle is itself the stuff of mythology.

Seeded within these serial sagas are constant iterations of the act of storytelling itself; as characters retell or withhold certain stories, they weave a tapestry of tales that, when repeated, become truths for the tellers—until a curious descendent or the wheel of fortune fatefully uncovers the old skeleton buried deep in the family closet. Certainly, from Sophocles and Shakespeare onward, dramatists have penned tales of lineage and legacy. But Great American Family Dramas particularly marry the struggle of personal and familial storytelling with our ongoing compulsion to national mythmaking. In recounting and mounting their myths, these multiplay sagas call into question the so-called self-evident truths that we tell to, and about, ourselves as kin and countrymen.

Ultimately, in exploring to what extent we are defined or haunted by family, these Great American Family Dramas interrogate, but leave unanswered, a central question: At what cost—to ourselves, our ancestors or descendants, our communities, our country—do we repeat, omit, or distance ourselves from our legacies and our supposed truths? ♦



“A SPECTRE IS HAUNTING EUROPE—THE SPECTRE OF COMMUNISM.”

By Gavin Witt, Production Dramaturg

So began the now-iconic Manifesto of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, published in 1848. A century later, that same shade—given weight, form, and volume by the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and the subsequent founding of the Soviet Union—continued to haunt Europe, and had added America to its habitat. It was a fear that rose to the level of mass hysteria by the mid-'50s; a fear pitting the government against its people, and neighbor against neighbor; a fear perhaps best expressed in the breathless warning of one avowed former Communist that “the masters of the Kremlin were about to unleash a creeping blitzkrieg across Europe and Asia, directed at the United States.” It was a fear of external threats to be sure, but even more of insidious internal subversion—of a secret fifth column of infiltrators, best rooted out by any means necessary.

1919-1920 First Red Scare:

fear of worldwide Bolshevism, labor agitation, and an anarchist bombing campaign prompt a government crackdown led by the **Palmer Raids**, which feature illegal searches and seizures, warrantless arrests, and the eventual deportation of hundreds suspected of radical sympathies.

1938-1944 Dies Committee,

a precursor to the standing **House Committee on Un-American Activities (aka HUAC)**, investigates potential disloyalty or subversion by Fascists, Communists, and others deemed a menace.

1940 The Smith Act

outlaws any **activities, organizations, memberships, publications, associations, affiliations, or assemblies** that could be deemed subversive—effectively overturning several core elements of the Bill of Rights in the process.

1941 Operation Barbarossa:

breaking a non-aggression pact, Germany invades the Soviet Union, opening a second front and leading to the USSR joining the Allies.

1943-1945 Julius J. Joseph joins the US Army and is assigned to the Office of Strategic Services

1945
World War Two ends, and with it the wartime alliance between the US and USSR.

1947
President Truman issues **Executive Order 9835**, requiring loyalty oaths from federal employees; it is followed by similar requirements at the state level and in private industry, accompanied by secret tribunals.



FIFTH AMENDMENT:

One of the initial 10 Amendments to the US Constitution, collectively known as the Bill of Rights, it famously protects against self-incrimination or forced testimony. It was one of several Amendments invoked by those called to testify during the Second Red Scare, though it did not always provide a shield against either rulings of contempt of Congress or the appearance of guilt. Those invoking its protection were often dubbed “**Fifth Amendment Communists**” and summarily judged in the court of public opinion.

From: NEW YORK
 To: MOSCOW
 No: L340

21 September 1944

To VIKTOR[i].

Lately the development of new people [D] has been in progress. LIBERAL[ii] recommended the wife of his wife's brother, Ruth GREENGLASS, with a safe flat in view. She is 21 years old, a TOWNSWOMAN [GOROZHANKA][iii], a GYMNAST [FIZKUL'TURNITSIA][iv] since 1942. She lives on STANTON [STANTAUN] Street. LIBERAL and his wife recommend her as an intelligent and clever girl.

[15 groups unrecoverable]

[C] Ruth learned that her husband[v] was called up by the army but he was not sent to the front. He is a mechanical engineer and is now working at the ENORMOUS [ENORMOZ][vi] plant in SANTA FE, New Mexico.

[45 groups unrecoverable]

detain VOLOK[vii] who is working in a plant on ENORMOUS. He is a FELLOWCOUNTRYMAN [ZEMLYAK][viii]. Yesterday he learned that they had dismissed him from his work. His active work in progressive organizations in the past was the cause of his dismissal.

In the FELLOWCOUNTRYMAN line LIBERAL is in touch with CHESTER[ix]. They meet once a month for the payment of dues. CHESTER is interested in whether we are satisfied with the collaboration and whether there are not any misunderstandings. He does not inquire about specific items of work [KONKRETNAYA RABOTA]. In as much as CHESTER knows about the role of LIBERAL's group we beg consent to ask C. through LIBERAL about leads from among people who are working on ENORMOUS and in other technical fields.

Your no. 4256[a]. On making further enquiries and checking on LARIN[x] we received from the FELLOWCOUNTRYMEN through Ekho[xi] a character sketch which says that they do not entirely vouch for him. They base this statement on the fact that in the Federation LARIN does not carry out all the orders received from the leadership. He is stubborn and self-willed. On the strength of this we have decided to refrain from approaching LARIN and intend to find another candidate in FAECT [FAKHIT][xii].

MAJ[xiii]

No 751
 20 September



In 1943, careless tradecraft by Soviet agents allowed US counter-intelligence to crack their code, and thereafter to read secret diplomatic and intelligence cables. Keeping this coup under wraps for decades, they continued until 1980 to read and record traffic from the mundane (recruiting, code names, requests for petty cash) to the sensational (trade in national security information)—unable to use it directly as evidence in any hearings or trials, however, without giving away the access. This became known as the **Venona Project**, and only fully came to light in the mid to late 1990s, finally revealing documents like the secret cable at left which mentions Julius Rosenberg by his code name, "Liberal."

ROSENBERGS DIE

Pair Executed for Atom Spying



Supreme Court and Eisenhower Reject Couple's Last Pleas

CHICAGO, N.Y., June 30 — Adam and Ethel Rosenberg were sentenced to death today for passing atomic secrets to Russia. The Supreme Court set aside a stay of execution granted Wednesday by Justice William O. Douglas and President Eisenhower's pardon board for great state secrecy.

ROSENBERG PRISON, N.Y., June 30 (AP) — Adam and Ethel Rosenberg were sentenced to death today for passing atomic secrets to Russia. The Supreme Court set aside a stay of execution granted Wednesday by Justice William O. Douglas and President Eisenhower's pardon board for great state secrecy.

Under their plea, Adam and Ethel were sentenced to death today for passing atomic secrets to Russia. The Supreme Court set aside a stay of execution granted Wednesday by Justice William O. Douglas and President Eisenhower's pardon board for great state secrecy.

1947
 HUAC investigates the film industry, ultimately citing and jailing the "**Hollywood Ten**" for contempt and giving rise to a blacklist that would number in the hundreds.

1948
 Whitaker Chambers, a former small-fry in the Communist Party, testifies against fellow Party members, describing a conspiracy of infiltrators and spies; among them **Chambers names his fellow-Baltimorean Alger Hiss**. Hiss denies the charges and sues for libel.

1949
 USSR explodes its first atomic bomb. **Chinese Communists defeat Nationalists**.

1950
Alger Hiss is found guilty of perjury (in effect damning him as a "Red" as well) and sent to jail.

1950
The Korean War pits Communist North Korea—backed by China and Russia—against a United Nations alliance, and further fuels fears of a global Red Menace.

1951
Julius and Ethel Rosenberg are tried for espionage, convicted of passing atomic secrets to the Soviet Union, and sentenced to death.

1953
 Real-life **Julius J. Joseph**, like his fictional counterpart **Grandpa Joe**, testifies before a congressional subcommittee, where he repeatedly invokes the Fifth Amendment to decline answering questions.

The Rosenbergs die in the electric chair. ♦

"To remain silent when your neighbor is unjustly persecuted is cowardice; to speak out boldly against injustice, when you are one against many, is the highest patriotism."
 —Abraham Lincoln