

To Charles Kuhn from Harold Weisberg, my "Recollections" of Alger Hiss's ^{"Re"} recollections of a Life."

I do not know ^{by} whether you will want to keep this thin volumes. But I'll be sending it on the chance you might. I think it has some advantages for students whose interest or needs are limited to brief but from my reading quite dependable encapsulations of what he knew and used of this wide experiences during an exceptionally important period of our history, immediately before and after World War II.

I had read ^{by} the first few pages when I began to wish he had not been so brief, when he made only passing reference to conditions of life ^{above that} ~~over those~~ of poverty ⁱⁿ of his youth. He referred to what I think today's college students, if not also their parents, have no way of really understanding, like how a family in better than average circumstances provided its illumination and heat in winter. From my own conversations with your peers this is new and interesting to most of them, more so to younger people. So I think I'll illumination his scantiness with a short memo.

Then, as I got farther into the very well written and to me interesting book (interesting to me in part because I also was a "New Dealer" and knew some of the people he knew and worked with, with some of whom I also worked, and because my wife worked with him at an early point of his career, as his secretary[?]) I found a few omissions, some humorous, some providing a further insight into the famous people he mentions, some omissions by him that can be attributed to innocent purposes, like failed recollection or his own views about such matters, for one example, what he and others in that era considered vulgar, some possibly both intended and unintended, I was reminded of President Church's expressed desire when you and others were here, ~~with me~~, that there be oral histories - for which nobody on the faculty has had time * I decided to resume with this book what in the absences of these oral histories I have been putting on papers and that now fill two stationery boxes.

I'll be writing this over a period of time in odd free moments, like this beginning when I awakened too early. There thus may be a lack of continuity and perhaps some of my own omissions.

First, however, I should acknowledge prejudice: my wife, who knew him well, and I, consider him innocent. For a variety of reasons one of which is how people who flooded into Washington to a large extent out of faith and hope relating to FDR's declared intentions for his "New Deal" lived and helped each other, and other that I believe people act in accord with their personalities, and still another is my firm's firm conviction that he was incapable of what he was charged with.

As at that time I grew more interested in it, having earlier had experiences like his, already recorded in my reminiscences in some detail (you have one of the grand-jury transcripts relating to both my innocence and the fact that for political reasons so like those of a more moderate Gestapo or KGB, the identical native nazis tried to frame me) and I was able to beat them before they went after Hiss) and ^{having} form an unchanged be-

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lief, I realized he has exhausted his legal remedies and if as I believe I am correct there is nothing I can do about it because I am not able to prove what I believe really happened.

Briefly, from dimmed recollection after half a century, Hiss and his lawyers failed to perceive the considerable political changes that were then well begun, albeit before Joe McCarthy raised his ugly head, failed to appreciate the extent to which the Cold War had captured politicians and judges alike, initially failed to take a tack they took too late in his defense, one not ordinarily necessary or even perhaps desirable, trying to establish the guilt of the one for whom he was blamed, and then I believe seized upon the wrong person.

They also appear to have failed to seek discovery of the State Department's central records system. In my days in State it kept records of those who borrowed classified records from it. This was necessary for, among other reasons, the need to be able to retrieve them. (No Xeroxes Then.)

So, as I suspend for this morning, I believe that the wretched Whittaker Chambers, knowing full well what he was doing and for his own special reasons, identified Hiss as his source when Hiss wasn't his source of them. I believe I could name that source without any proof at all, and that if Hiss had not been both entirely without any reason to suspect that person and so deeply and personally involved, he could have figured this out for himself.

Lacking proof it would be grossly unfair for me to include either the name or the function of that person.

I doubt that in his advanced and declining years (he was born ^{mm} seven years before me and has virtually lost his sight) he will think of this if in fact he thinks back much on his great tragedy, also the nation's great tragedy from what flowed from his and the misuses of it. It thus will remain the kind of case it is, the system of justice having ~~worked or~~ malfunctioned, as it is viewed by people who for the most part begin with their own prejudices, with Hiss guilty or innocent and framed by Chambers, Bixen et al.

I believe that without this frameup much of our history, if not the history of the world, might have been different, perhaps radically different, in particular because without it Nixon would not have achieved the gruesome fame that made him ^m so attractive a candidate for the cold warriors of that era. Without that he'd have remained a curse to the nation at some lower political level, perhaps his political life ended had he failed with this dishonesty, this frameup so carefully staged, even with public-relations twists like the hiding of the film inside a pumpkin on Chambers farm only a few miles from here, near Westminster. (Obviously they did not grow inside that pumpkin and obviously, had there been any needs to hide them as there is no reason to believe, there were a readily available variety of hiding places on any farm less inconvenient than a growing pumpkin but also less likely to make an apt headline phrase, like "The Pumpkin Papers.")

...Having read farthure a few comments so that later I do not forget them when I resume writing this. Hiss, for all his sophistication, education and wide experience, was a fool, incredibly naive and in some instances just plain ignorant. In the current ^{phrase,} ~~phrase,~~ he lacked street smarts. One consequence is that he helped get the cold war he worked so hard to avpid off to a strong start. Another is that in not understanding how to fight he helped convict himself.

These come in separate and unrealed later chapters I read after beginning this and to which I'll come.

If I had been the only intended ^{victim} ~~victim~~ of the House UnAmericans before him, and I wasn't, my case alone should have been all he needed for his education about it and its support inside the executive agencies, the courts and prosecutions, the Congressial and media cold warriors. He should have known and understood before his second trial that American justice then was not as taught in law school or as intended in theory and law.

...Earlier, in referring to his and his counsels' lack of preparation, I think not putting it this way, they should all have known that the records used against him had in all likelihood been made available to others, as on a veriety of Congrèssional committees with the proper need for access to them. They also had to have been available to others inside the State Department if not also other agencies. State did keep records on who had classified records and who had not returned them. Otherwise they could all have disappeared. Within my experience when they appeared to have been retained for too long, their return was requested. This could have been done only from records made and kept.

On what will come later, his failure and that of others not to be able to anticipate what was an astounding cold-war beginning by the U.S., is incomprehensible to me because there could not have been ignorance of it and I know this because I was involved in it.

Hiss has been described as cold, aloof, distant and detached. Although much of what he writes in this book is warm and understanding, I get the impression that some of these descriptions may in varying degrees be justified. But there is no reason to believe that this extended to his personal life and relationships.

The impression I'm forming is that ^{early} in his personal life he was relatively sheltered and did not have what are real problems of most of us to contend with. He thus lacked that kind of experience. It is not compensated for by either education or the kind of ~~prasef~~ professional life and experiences he had. ...

At the outset he says his family, of above the middle of middle class, got heat from the undescribed kitchen stove I presume was gas and from two individual stoves, one each in the living (parlor) and dining rooms. They used coal and he and his brother brought buckets of coal up from the basement. I think many if not most readers would, had they know^d, have appreciated a bit of explanation about this and ^{about} that their illumination ^{which} was by gas. His

aunt read to him with light from a shaded Welsbach "burner."

These refer to new advances of that greatly different world into which I was born a few years after him. We also got heat from coal and illumination from gas.

Coal was delivered in wagons pulled by teams of horses. They were backed against the curb, usually at close to a perfect ^a 90 degree angle. Sometimes the coal was shovelled into a chute that let it slide into the cellar, sometimes the delivery men shovelled it into stout canvas ~~bags~~, each with two handles, and the bags of coal were dumped into the ^{chute} ~~quite~~.

When the coal was burned the ashes were left in containers and the city collected the ashes with the trash.

I can remember when our house was wired for electricity. Until then we had gas burners. The house was pl^mumbed for gas then as houses are today plumbed for water. There were, of course, variations, but each room had a gas pipe come out of a wall into a swivel joint on the end of a short length of pipe with a quarter of an inch inside diameter. At the end there was an elbow and a short length of the same pipe, perhaps two inches long, projecting upward. In its open end was a piece of metal that fit in snugly. It had a slot in its middle. I forgot, where the pipe ^{came} comes from the wall there was a petcock that could move 90 degrees. In one position it was off and at the opposite position it was open the maximum. One turned the petcock on and put a lighted match at the slot and from the slot a fan-shaped flame emerged. I doubt it was more than two inches wide and high and that was the room's illumination.

Flexible hoses fit over the ends of the pipe arrangement to take the gas to a clothes iron or to a two-burner hot plate or a lamp like Hiss mentions. One had to be careful not to trip over the hoses and turn gas loose in the house.

The lamps I remember had what was called a "mantle" into which the gas escaped and was ignited. This did give more and more regular illumination than the open flame.

Each night until I could read my mother sat under the open flame in my bedroom and read me ~~the~~ the children's story, I think called "bedtime stories", in the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin. They were by Thornton W. Burgess and they were good for kids!

Where there was ~~stark~~ street illumination it was by gas also. There were what I believe were castiron posts with a large glass sort of cylinder at the top. Just below it was a crossarm. There was a lamplighter who carried a short ladder and lit the mantles of those lamps at dusk and returned at dawn to turn them off. And while it may have happened, I do not remember a child of anyone else every throwing a rock at one and breaking it.

We had no gas bill in Philadelphia. When the gas ran out we went to the cellar and dropped a quarter into a slot. A man collected the quarters monthly.

In his chapter on Oliver Wendell Holmes, whose clerk, then referred to as "secretary" he was at the Supreme Court, Hiss censures a bit in saying that (45) Holmes could "enjoy the pleasures of the vulgar, he spoke more than once of having gone alone to burlesque ~~sh~~

shows..." There were two burlesque houses on NW Ninth Street in Washington in those days just above Penna. ave., NW. I remember one was called "The Gayety," None of the female performers in those shows ever wore as little as today is common at the beach and sometimes elsewhere. There was a story going around when I first got to Washington that Holmes and a friend were walking up Ninth Street one summer's day when some good-looking young women went past and, on observing them, Holmes exclaimed to his friend, "Gad! to be a young man of 70 again!"

His treatment of the New Deal and how young people flocked to Washington to be part is quite faithful. He refers to being recruited by Justice Frankfurter. I knew of others Frankfurter got such jobs. He refers to Frankfurter as a liberal, beginning with the Sacco-Vanzetti case but on the court he was not liberal. (I was introduced to him by a friend who had been the information officer of the Sacco-Vanzetti committee and to Frankfurter's friend Dean Acheson, who got into Frankfurter's car, a few minutes earlier. Acheson was not really a liberal.)

Of the six lawyers in the Agricultural Adjustment Administration with him he refers to on 57, I knew four and they were from centrist liberal to far left. And excellent lawyers. One was ^{later} counsel to the Senate committee for which I worked, John Abt. Lee Pressman later was general counsel for the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Nathan Witt was general counsel later of the National Labor Relations Board. Telford Taylor was a war-crimes prosecutor in Nurenberg. I do not know why he merely mentioned their names. (I also knew some of the others he later mentions slightly and one of them, Thomas, to FDR "Tommy the Cork" Corcoran, was indispensable to FDR's liberal programs but he got rich as a lawyer for the other side when he left government.

Hiss was counsel for a then famous and quite valuable Senate committee known by the name of its chairman, Gerald Nye, as the Nye committee. It was, as his chapter says, to take the profits out of war. My wife worked for it and knew and respected Hiss and believed and believes he was incapable of the crime. There are a few interesting stories he could have told and didn't. These relate to two of the many famous witnesses, J. P. Morgan and Pierre Dupont, for whose Morning paper I worked during those hearings. Morgan financed some of the munitions deals and Dupont sold the stuff, each for considerable profit.

Morgan had the then famous Ivy(?) Lee as his public relations man. To take up newspaper space reporting the hearings from the disclosures, Lee got a midget lady and had her sit on Morgan's lap. It made news and pictures were in every paper. *Humanizing?*

There were only two daily papers in Delaware then and Dupont owned them both, sister papers. The ticker carried that day's hearing for the time of the morning paper. Our managing editor, Charlie Grey, pondered how to get away with downplaying those sensations. He cooked up a scheme that he made work.

Copy boys in newsrooms then were called "boys". But I was more of a boy than our copy boy, later a ^{famous} tennis player. "Boy!" Grey called and the kid responded. Grey told him he'd gotten reports of high school children getting cheap highs by taking an aspirin with a coke. In those days all drug stores had soda fountains. Sokes were an nickel. He gave the boy a dollar and told him to make the rounds of the drug stores taking an aspirin with his coke. Before the kid could get back and say if he had to drink another he'd quit, without any high, Grey had phoned the governor and the mayor and he just began with them, asking what they thought of this new blight of youth, getting high on coke and ~~aspirin~~ aspirin. Of course they all were from indignant to sorrowful and worried and the major news across the entire top of the front page was this invented and non-existing plague.

Toward the bottom was a small item stating that Dupont had appeared before the Senate and given it the benefit of his vast experience.

Hiss refers to the three Dupont brothers as they were one. There was a blood feud in which Pierre prevailed against as I recall Irinee, who went to Florida and got to be even richer there. But he wanted revenge on Pierre and he decided that because most of all Pierre wanted to have some prestigious (for Delaware) public service to his credit, Irinee decided he had to frustrate that.

Pierre was a strong supporter of FDR's decision to have the prohibition ^{law?} amendment, known as "The Volstead Act," repealed. He contributed to that campaign. When it was repealed it was Pierre's ambition to become the state's liquor commissioner. With the governor either his son-in-law or nephew by marriage he didn't get the job.

Irinee's judgement on his lobbyist, a bit unusual, was correct. He got Jake Hill, a landscape gardener from the middle of the state, a town called Blackbird, because Jake, an illiterate, was just the kind of good ol' boy the Senators from downstate would like. Jake always was able to control the state senate on what made a difference to Irinee. Who knew Jake could not read! I am among those who read Irinee's ^{long,} longhand and quite lucid letters to ^{Jake} Jake. Of course, they also used the phone. ...

His Chapter 8 is "Pearl Harbor Day at the State Department." (86ff) He says that everyone was caught by surprise (87) even though Ambassador Grew had cabled that if the expansionist Japanese were blocked they would go to war. (89) Odd he never learned that it was a surprise attack only because J. Edgar Hoover refused to report what he had been told, that the attack was coming, by both the British, who got it in their Enigma deciphering of Nazi communications, and from one of our spies who pretended to be a Nazi agent, Popov. Both reports are public and uncontradicted, the British from records.

That I also predicted it in a magazine article is of course of no significance, but I did, based on my checking of the recommendations to the emperor in what was known as "The Tanaka Memorial." Everything recommended to that time had been done so there was reason to take it seriously. I'd gotten a copy from a chemist on the University of Delaware

Agriculture School faculty, a chemist who was a White Russian refugee, Artemy A. Horvath. Dr. Horvath fled east during the revolution and became the equivalent of a Chinese under-secretary of agriculture, an authentic expert on soy beans. His ^{brother} brother, a mathematician, fled to Berlin where he was a friend of Einstein's. The next day, early in the morning, I gave all my work to Kathryn C. ("Casey") Blackburn, of the Office of Government Reports, and they started using it immediately. I never got any of it back. My article appeared about September 15, less than three months before it happened. But I am surprised that Hiss seems not to be aware of the fact that his enemy is personally responsible for our being taken by surprise when he was accurately informed in advance. ^{Hiss} He had some general information (91) but he refers to anti-FDR "revisionists" only.

He refers (99) to tension between FDR and State, but without reference to what FDR had said then, now possibly forgotten, that, "I have to appoint an ambassador to the State Department."

He refers to the Yalta agreement that countries sympathetic with the axis should not be admitted, ^{to the UN} mentioning Argentina by name.

Neither here nor elsewhere does he recall that pursuant to this agreement the American states met at Chapultepec, Mexico, to agree on what they'd agree to. Nelson Rockefeller was in charge of the U.S. delegation, He was an Undersecretary or an Assistant Secretary of State then, Peron's Argentina was closely tied with Nazi and Fascist interests. In the study prepared to be used at Chapultepec to oppose Argentina's admission I was in charge of the economic section. I'll return to this. (135)

His says his people making the arrangement for the organizational meeting of the UN recommended John Foster Dulles. He says FDR "balked" but Dulles ^{included} was ~~it~~. Hiss does not say what made FDR balk at Dulles and he does not say about Dulles what was known and could be part of the reason for FDR's opposition to including him. His firm and he and his brother Allen represented Nazi interests, including banks. Only a very short time before Hitler attacked Poland John Foster, interviewed as the ship neared New York, told reporters that Hitler was misunderstood, that he was a man of peace.

Hiss says (120) what can be attributed to his losing his sight and not being able to read, that Churchill was insistent about "preserving Great Power unity" after the war. In fact, according to the biography of the chief of British intelligence, "C," the first thing Churchill did when France was invaded was to focus his intelligence against the USSR.

Hiss was in D.C. prior to the S.F. meeting and was phoned 4/12 by John Peurifoy from S.F. and then told that FDR had died. He identifies Peurifoy here as "one of our group." He was not a diplomat. He was in security. When Hiss checked around in State the fact was not known there. Hiss, as will be clearer later, never did understand Peurifoy.

He says that from the Secretary of State down there was complete surprise (135) when

Argentina was voted UN membership "^{with} ~~with~~ the active assistance of Nelson Rockefeller," identified only as a member of the US delegation.

While it is always possible that even the clearest mind can forget ~~I~~ ^I am inclined, after completing the book, to believe it is possible that Hiss and others were kept in the dark about the policy of opposing Argentina's UN admission at Chapultepec. (Before the S.F. meeting that work was updated and published as our Blue Book on Argentina. Originally I ^{was} in charge of the military section but on reflections considered it very bad policy after doing nothing at Chapultepec and asked to be and was relieved. That I turned out to be correct ~~may~~ may have made it even worse for me.)

Although it was clear that Rockefeller had made US policy in opposition to what was official US policy, Hiss gives no indication that he was ever reprimanded. His career certainly did not suffer for it.

Hiss reflects his ^{ing} ~~misunderstand~~ Further on 136 in referring to Molotov's belief that this was what indeed it was, U.S. trickery. Almost wrecked the to-be ~~UN~~ UN.

Throughout he does not really identify people. In referring to the nice things that happened to him when he was finally out of jail he includes (186), "Barney Josephson, the proprietor of a nearby restaurant, brought a bottle of champagne." Barney Josephson was the owner of Cafe Society and when it became a big success largely by giving unknown artists, mostly black, an opportunity, of Cafe Society ^{Uptown}. He was red-baited out of those successful businesses that had been, among many other things, of considerable cultural value, presenting entertainers like Lena Horne, three of the best boogie-woogie pianists and other vocalists and blacklisted Zero Mostel and Jack Guilford who later were again successes. (guilford's wife gave ^{Hiss} him a fine ^{from} welcome ^{at} but Guilford's name is in a footnote and not indexed.) In short, there are many in his book who endured the same kind of political suffering and persecution he did but he omits that. I do not suggest he has any ulterior purpose and I do not believe he does. In part he is wrapped up in his own story and in part he appears to be himself.

At no point does he even indicate the suspicion that what happened to him began because of politics he represented, that he was part of the cold war then getting heated up. He attributes it all to Chambers and his sickness and personality, not even wondering whether Chambers was being manipulated, say by J. Edgar ^H Hoover, who has his own policies not in agreement with ^{FBI's} Hiss' and his own reaction to forward, as he did by feeding the UnAmerican committee what he wanted them to make propaganda with.

Hiss was and is a decent, principled man. In areas like the New Deal, Justices Frankfurter and Holmes and the political climate in Washington his short accounts are good.

But perhaps he was too close to his travail to understand why what happened to him did. He was a victim of the far right in its cold warring and he was used by it effectively in promoting the hate without which there could have been no cold war.