

10 Alger Hiss Still Seeking Vindication

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By PETER DUMN
LONDON — Lawyers repre-
sented Alger Hiss, the former
State Dept. aide convicted of
perjury in 1950, are following
new leads which they hope will
establish that Hiss was an in-
nocent victim of the McCarthy
era of American politics.

Hiss, who recently made a
rare visit to London, is 63 and
still haunted by a case which
ruined his political career.
Stripped him (as a lawyer) of
his livelihood and eventually
broke up his marriage.

"My trial," he said, "concerns
me vitally and continually. My
lawyers and I are still follow-
ing leads and evidence and I re-
main as convinced as ever of
my ultimate vindication. We are
at work on a number of areas
of inquiry, not easy for a pri-

vate citizen to pursue, which
are very hopeful.

"I think I must not say any-
thing else about these leads at
present. Since I've waited so
long already I wouldn't want
to say any more other than
that I've learned patience. I'm
very hopeful about this new
evidence; things were in process
just before I left the States."

Hiss was released from
Lewisburg, Pa., Federal Prison
in 1954 after serving 44 months
of a five-year sentence. The
trial caused a sensation at the
time and was known as "The
Pumpkin Papers Case" because
evidence—a cache of microfilms
—was found hidden in a pump-
kin.

Hiss, a cultivated young law-
yer devoted to President Frank-
lin D. Roosevelt's New Deal,

was accused of passing State
Department secrets to a Com-
munist spy ring. His denial of
this charge led to his trial
(twice) and eventual conviction
for perjury. His principal ac-
cuser, Whittaker Chambers—a
prewar Communist who became
an editor on Time—died six
years ago.

Hiss was the Prosecutor
M. Nixon, is now a candidate
for the Republican Presidential
nomination. Nixon's political
career was founded on the Hiss
case. He pursued it fanatically;
when the jury failed to agree in
the first trial he was reported
to have demanded the removal
of the judge for "discriminat-
ing in favor" of the defendant.
'Bitterness isn't a very whole-
some way of life," Hiss said

in an interview here. "I obviously
haven't got a deep affection
for Richard Nixon but I'm not
bitter about him. It's the nature
of rough-and-tumble politics. I
think in the long run, he's hurt
himself more than he's hurt
me."

Hiss has lived in virtual ob-
scure since his release from
prison—a condition that has
been largely self-imposed. He
is a tall, lean figure with sharp,
deep-set eyes, a courteous, in-
terested man who considers it
improper to talk about his
country's politics while he is
abroad. One of his sons is a
surgeon on the West Coast;
another writes for the New
Yorker.

Hiss agreed with the 1939-45
war because it was demo-
cratically popular in Roosevelt's

America; he has opposed the
Vietnam war from the start
and has applauded the new
sense of independence and lack
of fear evident now in a young-
er generation of Americans.

'They Have No Fear'

"The young people who are
protesting now have no sense
of fear," he has said. "It's hard
to appreciate what the Mc-
Carthy period was like, people
looking over their shoulders,
their phones tapped. The young
people today have a totally dif-
ferent attitude. It's like children
listening to ghost stories; after
a certain age they don't accept
them."

Hiss has moved cautiously
back into public life, delivering
four lectures on the New Deal
at the New School for Social
Research in New York, testing
the climate of public opinion
before committing himself to
anything. President Johnson's
declaration on March 31 which
resulted in the present Paris
peace talks on Vietnam has en-
couraged him to edge a little
further forward.

He is by no means a wealthy
man. He works for a printing
firm in Greenwich Village in
New York, and his trip to Eu-
rope has been possible largely
because he has been sent as
representative of the head of
Spiral Press, Joseph Blumen-
thal, at a Spiral exhibition in
Brussels.

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