

Mr. Stephen Rosenfeld, oped
The Washington Post
1150 15 St., NW
Washington, DC 20071

11/11/92

Dear Mr. Rosenfeld,

If I had not been unwell when Weinstein's piece appeared I'd have written promptly and probably better. Although still unwell, the AP piece the Post carried the 8th alleging that some professional anti-Communist "scholars" have the proof that Harry Bridges was a secret member of the CP central committee prompts me to write now to alert you. Some of those who built careers on aspects of the cold war now have every interest in hiding the flaws in their work and in continuing cold-war thinking, which is one of the last things we now need. What I think we do need is to learn if we did ~~name~~^{make} mistakes and if we did, what they are and how to avoid them in the future.

The FBI had the CP so thoroughly penetrated it was a joke of the time that it provided most of the CP's money. If Bridges had been a member, especially on the central committee, the FBI would have known and would have nailed him. It certainly wanted to and tried hard to do it.

We do not know what Klehr and Haynes quoted but it is not reasonable to presume that with a Bridges it would not have gotten the name of his union straight.

I won't be surprised if the Daily Worker^{PR} for the period identifies all those elected to the central committee.

We also do not know all that Primakov told Weinstein but if he levelled he said that the Russians want to be very careful to avoid causing the CIA serious embarrassment. They did suspect Oswald may have been an American sleeper agent and he was openly anti-Soviet in the USSR. If the KGB got copies of what records the CIA released and analyzed them their disclosure would make a laughing stock of the CIA, as would any attention to the absolute insanity of ~~the~~ what the CIA did under the persuasion of the nuts attached to Angleton. The State Department was horrified at the questions the CIA proposed being asked of the USSR, they were that offensive and calculated not to elicit responses. As one result, virtually no information on Oswald was sought.

We cannot undo the past but we'd be well advised to learn from it. This includes the press and it should now want to know how dependable sources it trusted really were.

What Weinstein says about the imminence of the CIA's disclosure of its Oswald and JFK assassination records is as ludicrous as it is ridiculous. And ignorant! If disclosures proceed as hoped for under the new statute, and there is every reason to believe they will not, then these disclosures will be delayed much, much longer than if made by the agencies of their own records. The agencies have no excuse for not proceeding forthwith. But the new scheme has those who know absolutely nothing at all about the subject-matter and what has been disclosed processing all the records from all sources.

One staff, ever so much small^{er}/than of the agencies combined, will handle all disclosures. It will be years, many years, before that staff can know whether the FBI has disclosed what the CIA withholds and unless or until it does, it will continue to withhold what the CIA phoned-up reasons to withhold.

As the CIA has done about what it did disclose, ^{ea}swearing that it had to ~~be~~ withhold in the nation's security what it had already disclosed.

The unjustified privacy claims the FBI makes to withhold can take years to get straight for a new staff.

It is an enormously complicated matter made much more complicated by those who did not really understand what they were doing when under the influence of those who knew exactly what they were doing.

Whatever flows now will drizzle through one tiny faucet.

Meanwhile, how nice a job Weinstein did for the miscreants who have been stonewalling from the time the first FOIA was ~~passed~~ passed.

Under Gates' promised expediting^{of}/processing and compliance, I still await the disclosure of information I requested two decades ago.

I hope this is clear enough. Apologies for my typing. It can't be any better.

Sincerely,



Harold Weisberg

PERPETUATING COLD WAR MYTHOLOGY?

Allen Weinstein, having built his career with partisan exploitation of the tragedy of Alger Hiss, rushes into print to belittle the report that Russian intelligence files establish Hiss' innocence and make Whittaker Chambers out to be a self-promoting liar.

It is indecent for Weinstein to misrepresent as widely as he does in his "Reopening a Cold War Mystery" ^(Point 11/4/90), simultaneously against promoting himself and his ~~own~~ alleged efforts to bring additional information to light. In this he raises substantial questions about how much the scholar he really is and whether or not, after all his work in the field, he today has any but a story-book knowledge of how intelligence agencies work.

Without disclosing his own partisan ship Weinstein ^p pretends that in two months no real ^{Russian} records search could have been made.

One of his bases for not believing the official report is that, "To date, no documents have been released by the general (who wrote Hiss that there are no such records!) to support his assertions."

In this Weinstein presumes that relevant records do exist when the official statement is that non exist.

So, in the Weinstein concept of thinking and proof, if no records are disclosed, the Russian generals are lying!

How can non-existing records be "released" to satisfy those who like Weinstein have built careers on the presumption of their existence?

Any search to determine whether ^{or} not Hiss had been a Soviet agent is, from, for example, FBI practise, relatively simple and fast. And all intelligence agencies have similar needs for carefulness. They do not permit their intelligence officers to make agents of others on whom or without control and approval. These procedures are proper and necessary and they do generate records that can be retrieved almost instantly- if they exist.

If an FBI agent wants to make an informer of someone he [^] first must have the approval of the field office in which he works. If he gets that approval, the entire matter is referred to headquarters. If headquarters like the idea it grants probationary [^] approval,

to be evaluated after six ~~not~~ months of probation. Meanwhile, the intended agent is identified by a unique ^{N/} and arbitrary symbol. The intelligence officer reports all contacts and whether or not they were productive ~~of~~ a prescribed form on which both this arbitrary symbol and the also unique file number are posted. The nature of the information provided is indicated in the ^{m/} symbol and in the file number. ~~of~~ "security" Political information is represented with the letter "S", criminal with the letter "C", etc., following the symbol identification.

The files in which all ^{contact} records are filed are 134 for "Security Informants," 137 for "Criminal Informants", etc. at the field office and at headquarters the indices reflect immediately whether or ~~Not~~ there are such files.

Either way, the answer is definitive.

So, if Weinstein ^{w/} wants to allege that the general who heads the Russian Foreign Intelligence Agency is a liar or made an inadequate search, or if he believes that the general who is both a historian and the head of the Russian parliamentary archives commission lied about the records he was given or about their content, he should say so and be prepared to offer some reasons in support of his allegations.

But to rest a case on the alleged failure to produce documents when they do not ~~exist~~ exist raised questions of competence, honesty or both.

That Weinstein's purposes center on exploitation and self-promotion is ~~disclosed~~ disclosed in his reporting of his demand for the disclosures of the "Files on Lee Harvey ^(and the paper request was made earlier by others, including me.) Oswald as a defector in the Soviet Union." Actually, Oswald did not defect. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Weinstein presumes the existence of files in accord with his political ^{pre}conceptions, not quite the same as ~~scholar~~ scholarship, rather than what the available official information ~~indicates~~ indicates they are.

~~and it~~ It is to wonder how much Weinstein really learned about files, withholdings and disclosures from his own uses of the Freedom of Information Act (other than perhaps as a favored person) by the agencies ~~of~~ of which he made requests ^{say} when he can actually that the CIA's "release" of all "its records on Oswald and the Kennedy assassination... now ~~is~~ approaches completion after passage of the recent congressional statute" when in fact that process has not yet ^{4/} begun, is much more complicated and subject ~~to~~ to delay

because of the provisions of that statute and ~~then~~ the additional limitations imposed by President Bush.

Not having Hiss to kick around any more Weinstein is preparing to ^{the dead} kick Oswald around. Weinstein has kept himself ignorant of the available official information although knowledge of it is essential in authentic scholarship.

He may think he ~~is~~ ^{will} with this Oswald exploitation, be "Reopening a Cold War Mystery" but it is no mystery at all that Oswald was virulently anti-USSR and anti-American ~~CSP~~ CP and that does not qualify for being another "Cold War Mystery."

Not having Hiss to kick around any more did not keep Weinstein from doing that again but the various bases he contrived are phony, like "no documents have been released" proving ~~that~~ that there are documents to be released.

Weinstein promoted ~~his~~ himself and his coming projects but he did not inform the Post's readers. He misled and misinformed them.

But as long as the Weinstains of the world regard ^{hiding} not ~~acknowledging~~ even the possibility of their career-building errors ^{as} more important than truth there will be neither truth nor justice for the victims of the political paranoia of the past and the efforts to perpetuate the misinformation of the past will not end.

It is not good for the country.

And it certainly is not scholarship.

Howard Weinstein

Data on Union Leader Found in Soviet File

Longshoremen's Bridges Was Communist Party Member, Authors Say

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO, Nov. 7—Two researchers say they found documents in Soviet archives that show the late waterfront union leader Harry Bridges was a member of the U.S. Communist Party.

Bridges, who acknowledged communist sympathies but denied party membership, was on a list of people elected to the Central Committee of the Communist Party USA at its 1936 convention, the two said.

The federal government spent 16 years trying to deport Bridges, charging the founder of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union falsely denied being a Communist Party member when he applied for citizenship.

The U.S. Supreme Court twice reversed orders for his deportation and the Australian native was once jailed for 20 days as a communist conspirator.

Harvey Klehr, a political science professor at Emory University, and John Haynes, who edits the News-

letter of the Historians of American Communism, found documents last summer at the old archives of the Central Party in Moscow that shed new light on Bridges's political status, Klehr said Friday.

Klehr said he uncovered a list of members elected to the U.S. Central Committee in 1936. "Brief biographies, really just evaluations, were with the list," he said.

One of the names on the list was "Rossi," identified in the biography as the pseudonym for Bridges.

The biography described him in Russian as "President of the Dockers' and Port Warehouse Workers' Union."

The document concluded, "He is a strong leader of the union movement and a mass worker but up till now has only limited party knowledge and experience."

Klehr and Haynes published their

research in the December issue of the American Spectator, a conservative journal.

Bridges, who died in 1990 at age 88, founded the union in 1934 and was its president until 1977. In 1934, he led a three-day general strike in San Francisco that ended with an agreement on a contract establishing a union-operated rather than an employer-run hiring hall.

Kathy Wilkes, a spokeswoman for the union and a Bridges biographer, said, "The government tried and failed to prove this claim more times than are worth counting, and we consider it ridiculous for anybody to try to revive it."

Last month, a high-ranking Russian general said the archives showed that Alger Hiss, the State Department lawyer accused of espionage during the Joseph McCarthy era, never spied for the Soviets.

Allen Weinstein

Reopening a Cold War Mystery

When the report came last week that a Russian historian and chairman of that country's parliamentary archives commission, Gen. Dimitri A. Volkogonov, had responded to an inquiry from Alger Hiss with a letter exonerating Hiss of allegations that he had been a Soviet agent in the 1930s, a charge on which Hiss was convicted in 1950 for perjury, I thought of a comment made to me in Moscow in 1990 by a younger Russian scholar at a U.S.-Soviet historians' meeting. My bemused young colleague listened to a procession of older Soviet researchers recant their earlier party-line orthodoxies in the open atmosphere of that *haute glasnost* dialogue and observed that "in Russia, it seems we can predict the future confidently and see the present with perfect clarity. Unfortunately, the past keeps changing every day!" Perhaps.

In his emotional letter, Volkogonov wrote Hiss that after having reviewed materials provided by Yevgeny Primakov, the head of Russia's Foreign Intelligence Agency (successor to the former KGB's external departments), he had concluded that Hiss was innocent and that his chief accuser, the late Whittaker Chambers, also had not been a Soviet agent—as Chambers had claimed—but only a Communist Party member. With only two months from receipt of Hiss's initial letter to final judgment, Volkogonov's one-page letter has reopened this notorious Cold War mystery whose dramatic personae included—in addition to the protagonists—then-Congressman Richard Nixon, whose political career was launched by the case.

Hiss has stated that he requested Volkogonov's review of Soviet files in August by letter, with his representative visiting the general later that month. By this account, Volkogonov then requested Primakov's file search and, within 45 days, sent Hiss the exculpatory letter asserting that all relevant files had been located, reviewed and evaluated. To date, no documents have been released by the general to support his assertions. Nor do we have any information on what Volkogonov saw and from which specific archives documents came (the general's letter apparently refers to a search of KGB files—which Primakov controls—but Chambers stated that he had worked for military intelligence, GRU, a different organization). We do not even know whether the general has read a single book or article summarizing the vast and complex secondary literature on the case, despite having pronounced its closure so confidently.

During the same months in which presumably Volkogonov was deeply absorbed in research on Hiss-Chambers, he informed the Moscow Times on Sept. 18 "that he had been devoting the majority of his time to research in the presidential archives for information on the issue [of American MIAs and POWs possibly brought to the Soviet Union]." Volkogonov's focus on MIA-POW research in September related to an imminent and politically sensitive visit to Moscow later that month by U.S. delegates to the joint commission on this subject, which Volkogonov heads with Malcolm Toon, former U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union.

Volkogonov's letter to Hiss may represent his personal judgment alone since, to date, Yevgeny Primakov has made no comment on the matter. When I met with Primakov in mid-September at the Foreign Intelligence Agency's headquarters—our second such meeting during the past several months—neither the subject of Volkogonov's request nor of Primakov's response arose in a long conversation despite our extensive discussion of possible subjects for joint Russian-U.S. scholarly re-



search, including my request for release of KGB files of historical interest related to Soviet espionage in the United States during the 1930s and 1940s. In recent months, several widely publicized book and movie "deals" by Primakov's staff and by former KGB agents have generated more headlines than documents. When I am next in Moscow this month, I hope to raise with both Volkogonov and Primakov the concern for scholars, at the least, for early and complete release of the records reviewed by the general and of any other related materials from KGB or military archives on actual Soviet intelligence work in the United States during the pre-Cold War era.

The amazing speed with which *some* records were reviewed in this instance by Volkogonov should be contrasted with the comments that he and his colleague, President Yeltsin's chief government archivist, historian Rudolf Pikhoya, made while in Washington with Yeltsin last June. At that time, in trying to explain to impatient American questioners the long time-lag in releasing all materials on the POW-MIA-in-Russia issue—a process that remains incomplete today as the search for documents continues—the pair noted that it would take *decades* to screen and properly declassify the hundreds of millions of files that exist in intelligence, party, military and government archives.

Now that Volkogonov has unilaterally moved alongside the POW-MIA search records at least a portion of Moscow's Hiss-Chambers file to a priority place in their process of archival review (if not yet release), I suggest three other Cold War mysteries that probably rank higher on the scale of American and world public interest than that case as prime candidates for comparably accelerated handling:

- Files on Lee Harvey Oswald as a defector in the Soviet Union, and files both on that country's internal government review of the Kennedy assassination and of related Soviet KGB defectors whose claims and counter-claims were outlined in David Wise's "Molehunt." Primakov told me at our September meeting that he had reviewed the Oswald file personally and was prepared to release it once the CIA

released all of its records on Oswald and the Kennedy assassination. That now approaches completion after passage of the recent congressional statute. One recent Moscow report had the Oswald file be given by the Belarus KGB (Oswald had lived in Minsk) to a well-known American writer exclusive. If true, Moscow's duplicate file should be released immediately to all researchers.

- Files on the fate of Raoul Wallenberg in Soviet prisons, which would provide the full story of his tragic odyssey in captivity and which—despite assurances by Vadim Bakatin, Primakov's predecessor, to the Wallenberg family, myself and others—has not yet been completely researched and opened.
- Files, if they exist, on the 1981 attempt to assassinate Pope John Paul II, also promised to me by Bakatin, if only to clear up the question of whether the KGB either knew of the plot or played a role in it.

Finally, before rendering judgment on whether Chambers was a Soviet espionage agent or merely an "open" party member, there are two Russians (both now dead) whose files in military intelligence Volkogonov might wish to request for review. The first was one of Chambers's GRU handlers in the United States during the 1930s, Alexander Petroich Ulanovski, whose career ran from Siberian exile under the czar to Siberian imprisonment in the 1940s under Stalin. His wife shared underground duties as a GRU agent in America during the 1930s. Nadezhda Ulanovskaya, a close friend of many leading Soviet dissidents after her post-World War II years in a gulag jail, confirmed Chambers's underground role to me and described his work in detail during a 1977 interview in Israel. Other confirmation also is on the record.

"The real value of historical research is truth." That statement by Volkogonov earlier this year affords hope that he and Primakov are even now preparing to release the files he examined on Hiss-Chambers in the near future.

More generally, the months ahead constitute a moment of truth in efforts by President Yeltsin and other Russian democrats to consolidate their fragile post-communist open society. Western supporters must maximize efforts to provide our friends with immediate and maximal government aid, private investment, technical help and political support on issues such as the rights of Russian minorities in other republics, their ultra-nationalist adversaries regain power and not merely prominence. If that happens, we can expect an abrupt end to efforts such as Volkogonov's POW-MIA Commission, a closing down of the Constitutional Court hearings now underway at which extensive documentary material related to Communist Party abuses from 1917-1991 has already been revealed and termination of Pikhoya's valiant efforts at archival rescue and release.

One unique aspect of Boris Yeltsin's leadership has been his commitment to ensuring that the Russian future includes a complete and honest record of the Soviet past. No longer, among my intensely skeptical Russian friends, are historians considered tyranny's apologists nor, as Leo Tolstoy referred to them during the days of czarist autocracy, as deaf men answering questions no one put to them.

The writer, a historian whose books include "Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case," is president of the Center for Democracy.