

Some, like Nathaniel Weyl, an AAA economist, came to Washington as Communists; others, like Pressman (according to his own claim, in any case) were recruited into the party after coming to Washington. All were men, in their way, of conscience and zeal, persuaded that capitalism had reached the end of its tether, and eager to enlist in a crusade of social transformation. "The future looked black for my generation," Pressman said later. ". . . In my desire to see the destruction of Hitlerism and an improvement in economic conditions here at home, I joined a Communist group."

The two best-placed recruits, Pressman and (according to Chambers and Weyl) Hiss, had been classmates at the Harvard Law School. Though coming from contrasting backgrounds and possessing contrasting personalities, the penetrating and sardonic Jew and the handsome, cool, and reserved Anglo-Saxon were intimate friends. As Jerome Frank wrote Charles Brand in the summer of 1933 about Pressman, "I was reluctant to urge him to come to Washington but finally did so at the insistence of Mr. Hiss who has the highest regard for Mr. Pressman's ability and character." Pressman brought in Witt, and Frank hired Abt, whom he had known in Chicago.

The group met in great secrecy in a music studio on Connecticut Avenue run by Ware's sister. It was not illegal for Communists to work for the government; according to a Department of Agriculture ruling, "A man in the employ of the Government has just as much right to be a member of the Communist Party as he has to be a member of the Democratic or Republican Party." But concealment of party membership was necessary for anyone who wanted to get ahead. "If it had been known," said Weyl, looking back, "it would have wrecked their careers." Too many of their superiors disliked Communists. Jerome Frank was both philosophically and practically opposed to Communism. Tugwell had just been through a trying experience with a Communist instructor in the economics department at Columbia. Donald Henderson had been a student and protégé of Tugwell's; and, as a result of the episode with him, Tugwell "reached the conclusion that I would never again work with any Communist if I could avoid it. . . . If I had had any reason to think that our young lawyers were