

a “humanistic outlook, but you don’t think it’s going to be the answer.” Hiss thought this was “too skeptical—defeatist, cynical.”<sup>14</sup> Hiss may have been very fond of Holmes, as he said, but based on these comments Holmes was not likely to have had a major influence on Hiss’s activist political thinking. In this regard, Hiss may have been influenced more by Justice Louis Brandeis, a powerful patron of the New Deal, a liberal, and a supporter of labor unions.

After a year of clerking for Holmes, Alger and Priscilla moved in October 1930 to Boston, where Alger entered private law practice at Choate, Hall, & Stewart. Little information is available on his eighteen months at Choate, Hall; it may have been a quiet time. Hiss had little to say on the subject in his memoir and in his letters to Pros, who had moved to New York during that time. While at Choate, Hall, Hiss spent much time working on cases involving the Gillette Safety Razor Company and the Raytheon Company.

Hiss went to work for the New York law firm of Cotton, Franklin, Wright, & Gordon in the spring of 1932. This position also was an uneventful time, except for his second job, pro bono work, along with Lee Pressman and Nathan Witt, for the IJA. In his memoir Hiss indicated this was the start of his political commitment. His acceptance to work for Roosevelt and the New Deal he saw as the final step in the progression of his political attitudes.<sup>15</sup> Hiss was becoming radicalized. His political development was more than youthful idealism.

The IJA published a bulletin that dealt with the legal problems of “the union organizer, the striking worker, the unemployed, the hunger marcher, the disposed farmer, and the rioters who turned back the sheriff when he came to foreclose the mortgage.” The labor union stories went to Lee Pressman and farm cases to Hiss.<sup>16</sup> The IJA, according to Murray Kempton, had since been described as under Communist control.<sup>17</sup> G. Edward White (whose father-in-law, John F. Davis, provided legal assistance to Hiss from 1948 to 1950) said in his book on Hiss that the IJA followed the Communist Party line; it was “an example of a 1930s ‘Popular Front’