

rather more humdrum. I have never been able to understand why Hiss, if he were a spy, should have chosen the clumsy and time-consuming espionage technique of taking documents home and retyping them at nights. There must have been easier ways, even in the 1930s.

But all this is idle speculation. What makes Hiss guilty is the verdict of a court, not the verdict of Weinstein's book nor your support for it. Hiss has now petitioned the Court in New York to have his conviction set aside, using much of the same new material as Weinstein. Let us leave it to the court to decide which of them has made the most persuasive use of that material.

*Eric Jacobs*

## Claims & Counter-Claims

PROFESSOR SIDNEY HOOK CLAIMS that Allen Weinstein has established beyond any question that Hiss belonged to the little coterie of Communist intellectuals known as the Ware group because it was led by one Harold Ware, killed in a car crash in 1935. When Chambers published *Witness* in 1954, it contained a long story of his having introduced Hiss to Harold Ware at lunch in a Washington restaurant and it also spoke of his meetings with Ware, Hiss and the Communist agent, J. Peters. There is, however, one important piece of information which Weinstein either withholds or does not know—namely, that on 3 August 1948 Chambers was testifying under oath before the House Un-American Activities Committee and a Committee member asked him what Harold Ware's real name was. "As far as I know, 'Harold Ware'", Chambers replied. "I never knew him."

Hook speaks of the scope and immensity of Weinstein's labours, but in actual fact, those labours were not as Herculean as they have been made out to be. Weinstein began working on his book in 1969. In 1975 he had a sabbatical and he took off the last half of 1977, but for the rest of the time that he was working on the book he was also carrying a full teaching load. He did not begin receiving the 40,000 pages of FBI material until after his sabbatical was over, in 1976. He had eight young Smith College graduates to help him, but the book, massive though it undoubtedly is, was put together in a hurry. It was known that Hiss was going to court with a *coram nobis* petition to have his indictment set aside, and were he to win his suit,

there would have been no market for Weinstein's book. No doubt the necessity for headlong speed accounts for the omissions, inaccuracies and distortions with which the book is literally brimming.

BASING HIMSELF ON Weinstein's text, Professor Hook says that Hiss was publicly identified as a secret member of the Communist Party by the House Un-American Activities Committee. As John Chabot Smith has pointed out in the June issue of *Harper's*, Hiss, when working for a Senatorial investigating committee early in his career, earned the undying enmity of millionaire Bernard Baruch by blowing him out of the water for profiteering in World War I.

"That young man is a Communist!" said the enraged financier to his life-long friend, James F. Byrnes, who later became Truman's Secretary of State and who passed Baruch's remark along to J. Edgar Hoover—who in turn passed it along to HUAC. The FBI Papers indicating that Hiss's alleged Communism was nothing more than Baruch's long-held grudge were among those released to Weinstein and others, but Weinstein either chose to ignore them or in his haste, never looked at them.

WHEN WEINSTEIN'S book came out, Victor Navasky, editor of *The Nation*, wrote to six people whom Weinstein had interviewed and whom he had described as "key figures", asking them whether Weinstein had reported accurately in his book what they had said when he interviewed them. All six replied in great anger that he had twisted and distorted their remarks—sometimes to the extent of making them appear to say exactly the opposite of what they had really said. Hook says triumphantly that Weinstein is vindicated because he has them all on tape, but Professor Hook appears not to know that Weinstein—in a fashion reminiscent of Nixon at Watergate—will not let anyone hear the tapes.

The appointment was set up for Navasky and two witnesses to hear them. It was agreed that the session was not to last more than three hours and Navasky was to bring a list of not more than 20 questions to be answered from Weinstein's files. When Navasky and his witnesses showed up, however, Mrs Weinstein met them at the door and said that Navasky had broken the agreement—in what way, was not specified—and that Weinstein would not let him hear the tapes. The inference is inescapable that the tapes do not back Weinstein up.

Incidentally, Professor Weinstein is now the defendant in a \$3,000,000 libel suit brought by one of the "key figures", Sam Krieger, whom Weinstein mistakenly described as an escaped murderer.

SPACE DOES NOT PERMIT detailed refutation of further Weinstein errors, trustingly passed on by Hook. Weinstein's defenders reply to criticisms from Navasky and others by saying that their strictures are peripheral; but these defenders do not go on to state what the core of the matter is, as distinguished from the periphery, and to affirm that Weinstein is sound as a bell about the core.

The core of the matter certainly consists of two issues: First, the date of Chambers's leaving the Communist Party and second, the provenance of the typewriter.

Chambers stated on 16 separate occasions that he left the Party at the end of 1937. Then, when he came into court with State Department papers he claimed to have got from Hiss—and the papers were dated from January to April 1938—he changed his story and said he did not leave until 15 April 1938. The switch was a shattering sensation at the time and remains one of the permanent puzzles of the Hiss case, but Weinstein omits to mention Chambers's oft-reiterated 1937 date and accepts without question or comment 15 April. In his notes at the back of the book, he "corroborates" this latter date by reference to two *undated* letters to which he himself arbitrarily assigns dates.

As to the other core matter, the typewriter, Weinstein had among the papers he got from the FBI an inter-office FBI communication which ran as follows:

"WASHINGTON 7, NY2, AND CHICAGO 1  
FROM PHILA. 5-17-49 DIRECTOR AND

SAOS. URGENT

... CONCERNING WOODSTOCK  
TYPEWRITER SERIAL FIVE N TWO  
THREE NAUGHT NAUGHT NINE NINE,  
ALLEGEDLY THE TYPEWRITER FOR-  
MERLY OWNED BY THE HISS FAMILY, IT  
IS DESIRED TO POINT OUT... THAT THE  
DEFINITE POSSIBILITY EXISTS THIS  
TYPEWRITER IS NOT THE ONE  
RECEIVED BY PRISCILLA HISS FROM  
HER FATHER THOMAS FANSLER..."

ONE OF THE POINTS made in Hiss's *coram nobis* petition which is currently before the courts is that the prosecution put forward a Woodstock machine as evidence, knowing full well that it was not the Hiss machine. Weinstein, in *Perjury*, spins out an elaborate construction of which the burden is that Hiss tried to keep the typewriter from being found; but as Julian Symons points out in *The Sunday Times* (2 July 1978), if Hiss did not want the typewriter found, all he had to do was toss it into the Potomac.

To conclude: *Perjury*, for all its mass of detail, is in essence a veins-standing-out-on-the-forehead effort to detoxify Whittaker Chambers. Professor Weinstein must at least be given credit for attempting the impossible.

Margaret Stern

London

## Allen Weinstein Clarifies

**T**HANK YOU for bringing to my attention the letters sent to your magazine by Margaret Stern and Eric Jacobs responding to Professor Sidney Hook's review of my book. Although I have no doubt that Professor Hook can correct the numerous errors of omission and commission in the two letters, most of which assume the existence of readers unfamiliar with the book, I thought that those interested in this controversy might wish some further information on a point raised by Margaret Stern, namely my refusal to allow Victor Navasky into my home on 30 April 1978 to examine my voluminous archive on the Hiss case. The episode has taken on near-mythic proportions among the friends of Alger Hiss, and a brief account of the background might prove interesting to readers of ENCOUNTER.

Mr Navasky published his initial critique of *Perjury* in the 8 April issue of *The Nation*, the magazine whose editorship he recently assumed. Navasky billed his review of my book as "an investigation", though he chose not to interview the person being "investigated", namely myself and my research, to check out my evidence at first hand before attacking *Perjury* in his article for purportedly conscious distortions of interview testimony and other material.

After publishing his "review", Navasky ridiculed my statement that he might have requested a response from the author—and also examined my evidence—*prior* to publishing his distorted and erroneous "investigation." He conceded that his chief sources for "facts" on the Hiss case included some of Alger Hiss's closest associates.