



# **Advocate and Activist: MEMOIRS OF AN AMERICAN COMMUNIST LAWYER**

*John Abt, Michael Myerson*

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Best known as the longtime chief counsel to the Communist Party of the United States, John Abt also was one of Angela Davis's first attorneys and the man Lee Harvey Oswald wanted to defend him after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. In *Advocate and Activist*, John Abt and Michael Myerson provide a detailed account of a life that touched and was touched by the labor and left-wing political movements in the United States for nearly sixty years. Abt went to Washington, D.C., in the early 1930s to join the New Deal. He worked in a succession of government posts and for the LaFollette Civil Liberties Committee. He was Sidney Hillman's counsel in the labor movement and a top aide to Henry Wallace's 1948 presidential campaign. At the height of McCarthyism he became the Communist party's chief counsel. Defending the party in the Smith Act and McCarran Act prosecutions, he succeeded at dismantling the acts piece by piece, establishing precedents and making sure that being a Communist was not illegal.

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