

Part 1 The Cannon and Noel Field Connections

Walter Cannon, the respected Harvard University physiologist, became entangled in pre- World War II battles between American socialist-liberals and Communists over refugee policies in the United States, Spain, France, and Switzerland, and over Communist influence in the United States. Those conflicts spilled-over into a wrenching conflict within the Unitarian church, and into illegal activities and espionage in France and Switzerland by Americans such as Varian Fry, Cannon's Cambridge neighbors the Fields, and Unitarian officials. Victory in 1945 did not end the struggles, They intensified as Noel Field was accused of being a Communist agent who had used the American's OSS and the Unitarians to secretly further Communism in Europe. While never becoming as famous Noel, who was kidnapped by the Soviets in 1949 then decided to live behind the Iron Curtain, Walter Cannon played a significant role in America's political life and an important one in the lives of the other three of the four Cambridge families, The Fields, Clarks, and Hintons.

Chapter 1

Walter Cannon, Liberals vs Communists in Boston and the Nation, the Refugee Battles, the Unitarians, the More Radical Fields, Clarks and Hintons

Creating an Influential Liberal, Not Really a Communist

Walter Bradford Cannon was an unlikely candidate for membership in the East Coast's intellectual and cultural elite. There were few indications he would become a powerful figure in American and international science and relief organizations. There were only a few hints he would become more than a moderate political liberal and nothing in his early life suggested his actions would help entangle the Fields, Hinton's and Clarks and his fellow Unitarians in intrigue and destructive battles between America's socialist-anti Communist alliance and its Communists before and after World War II. No one could have predicted he would become a significant link in the chain of events that led to the sufferings of the Field children after they were kidnapped in 1949 and tortured by the Soviets who they had aided since the 1930s. .¹

Unlike Noel Field's father (Herbert Haviland Field, the Harvard University-trained zoologist and science information innovator) Cannon was not born to wealth nor was he raised in a culturally advantaged or politically active family. Walter grew-up in the 1870's frontier West, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, then St, Paul, Minnesota. His family was middle-class, certainly not rich. Colbert, Walter's father, was a railroad employee who worked his way up to a management position in the Great Northern system, all-the-while aspiring to become a physician. Although he was an avid reader, Colbert Cannon (originally Carnahan) was not a modern political or social liberal, nor was he a man of advanced science. He never, for example, criticized what others condemned as the monopolistic behavior of his employer, the aggressive railroad empire builder James J. Hill. After retiring from his railroad job, Colbert became a homeopathic physician.

That was not a step into the upper middle class or the ranks of modern science. Homeopathy was looked down-on by the members of the new American Medical Association as, at best, unscientific. Some considered it was hokum. In addition to his belief in unscientific homeopathy Colbert never abandoned his deep faith in Calvinist bible-based religion.

However, Colbert encouraged his four children, one boy and three girls, to pursue education but he enrolled Walter and his sisters in local public grammar schools rather than elite private institutions. As well, Walter's St. Paul's high school had only a few teachers and very limited resources. The school was no match for the marvelous East Coast preparatory institutions that were the usual origins of Ivy League students.

Walter did not have an emotionally smooth childhood or young adulthood. His mother died after a lingering illness when he was ten years old. Relations with his father and stepmother became so tense Walter was removed from school and put to work for two critical years when he was just twelve. After returning to school Walter met two people who changed his life. One was the local Unitarian minister who guided Walter away from conservative Congregationalism, the other was a high school teacher who gave Walter a belief in himself and science and provided career advice. In his early teens Walter made two major decisions. He rejected Calvinism, predestination, and bible literalism and adopted Unitarianism with its puzzling combination of humanism, transcendental romanticism, pragmatism, and yet idealism. He explained to his father that only the Unitarian view fit modern science. Walter also decided he would complete high school, go to college and, following his father's wishes, become a doctor, but a "scientific" one.

Keeping on his planned career-path was difficult, especially because Walter desired more than a degree from a local medical school. He had great and expensive educational ambitions, but money and family support were not always provided. Walter had to delay his higher

education. He began college in 1892 at the then late age of twenty-one. Although Minnesota's state university was rapidly developing into a modern research institution, Walter was convinced another school was the best of the newly emerging American universities and the one that best fit his Unitarian beliefs. So, he travelled from St. Paul to far-off Cambridge, Massachusetts. He arrived at Harvard University with only a small scholarship for tuition, gained with help from his Unitarian minister and his high school teacher, and a few hard-won dollars. Walter also arrived with an expectation that he would have to work while pursuing his studies. He was correct. He worked through all his college years.²

Walter was admitted to Harvard's undergraduate college where he did well, but it took him four full years to gain a Bachelor of Science (not the revered Bachelor of Arts) degree when he was rather old, twenty-five. Then, Walter made another costly commitment to science. He enrolled in one of the longest and most demanding medical programs in the nation, costing him another five years of work and study. His M.D. degree was awarded by Harvard's medical school in 1900 when he was almost thirty years old. His long tenure at the school was due to his decision to become something new to the world, a medical researcher rather than a practitioner. Becoming a researcher called for years of sacrifice (not the typical two or three years of training for a small-town practitioner) as he studied under Henry Pickering Bowditch, one of the creators of another new scientific specialty, physiology. Bowditch was also one of the men attempting to create what Noel's father Herbert Field and his Belgian ally Paul Otlet had sought: an international science bibliographic system. In addition, Walter studied with and made friends with Harvard professors who joined Cambridge's liberal political circles. The biologists Charles Davenport and Howard Parker, Edwards Laurens Mark the zoologist, and William James, Harvard's champion of pragmatic philosophy, did much to shape Walter's career

and personal life. Walter's college years were demanding. During his four years as an undergraduate he tutored and lectured in zoology to cover his expenses. He continued to need extra money after entering medical school and as he worked in his initial research specialty, the use of the newly invented x-ray machine to study digestion and other bodily functions. He also continued to study physiology and zoology while a lecturer in medical school.

Walter had little trouble in finding a position after his 1900 graduation. Because he had done so well as a student, and because of the contacts he made during his undergraduate and graduate years, Harvard overlooked his not having a Ph D and offered him a regular faculty slot in its zoology department. Walter then made two life-changing decisions. He turned down the zoology offer and stayed in the medical school's physiology department. Those proved wise choices. He soon became an internationally recognized figure in physiology especially the human body's reaction to physical and emotional trauma. He rose to a full professorship at Harvard while developing into one of the first new academic grantsmen. As well, he eventually earned one of the nation's highest academic salaries. He became world famous because of his homeostasis theory and he was elected a member of the world's most important medical societies where he made important contacts. His friends included famous scientists like Russia's Ivan Pavlov and France's Charles Richet. Students from around the world came to Cambridge to study under him and all the important American scientists knew of him because of his roles in the National Academy of Sciences, the National Research Council, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. European nations, even China, granted him visiting professorships. The American government frequently called on him for advice and it asked him to serve as the nation's scientific liaison with North and South America and the Soviet Union during World War II.

A Liberal Unitarian in an Immigrant and Catholic City

Walter also became a major figure in Cambridge's close-knit liberal community. He knew the Fields, Clarks and Hintons because they were neighbors and socially and politically active. Walter had become devoted to world peace before he met them, however. The horrors he saw when directing field hospitals in Europe during World War I turned him into a "peacenik." Besides becoming a peace advocate Walter joined the ranks of the progressive city reformers trying to overthrow corrupt boss political machines, trying to bring order to dirty industrial cities like Cambridge, and trying to find ways integrate the thousands of new and poor immigrants who lived in Cambridge's and Boston's versions of ghettos.³

Boston and Cambridge did have immigrant issues. They were no longer Yankee or even Irish domains. Seventy percent of Massachusetts's population were first- or second-generation immigrants by 1900 and the Italian, Latvian, Portuguese, Lithuanian, and Russian ethnic neighborhoods often held radicals, especially after the early Twentieth Century political upheavals in Russia and the Baltic nations. Many of the immigrants came to America because their revolutionary activities put them in danger in their home countries. The ethnic neighborhoods became centers of support for America's left-wing parties and for groups awaiting new revolutions in Europe. Some neighborhoods had Russian Communists, some had violent anarchists. Immigration impacted more than politics. By 1900 Massachusetts' religious make-up was worrisome to many. It was no longer a Protestant state. They were just twenty-five percent of church goers. The socially and financially important Unitarians accounted for only one percent although Boston-Cambridge was their organization's home and Harvard their college. The Unitarian church had fewer members than Mary Baker Eddy's unusual Christian Science organization. Yet, almost all of Harvard's faculty and Walter's social set were Yankee,

Unitarian, and political moderates who supported progressive reforms such as anti-trust regulation, monopoly busting, and professional city managers to replace “boss” politicians. However, a few Harvard faculty and students were becoming radical. John Reed, a Communist, and Walter Lipmann, a Socialist, are examples.

A Liberal Couple and the Cannon Sisters , Two Perfectly Modern Ladies,

Not being a full member of the Yankee-Unitarian social world didn't bother the young Walter. partly because he wasn't politically sensitive . Then in 1901, he made another life-course decision that ensured he would attend to more than medicine and become an active Progressive. Only a year after his graduation Walter took a bride who changed Walter into an important part of America's liberal culture and politics. Cornelia James was originally from St. Paul, but she had been in Cambridge with relatives and attended Cambridge's Seven Sister elite Radcliffe College for women.⁴ Radcliffe's education of reformers, and its culture of science-based liberalism, made Cornelia and Walter a near perfect match.⁵

Cornelia was a devoted Unitarian and social progressive who would be able to balance raising five children (without many servants) writing best-selling (and financially rewarding) novels and being an activist in the struggles to create a modern social infrastructure for Cambridge. She helped reform the public schools and its social services to aid Cambridge and Boston's slum dwellers. She also was as a leader in one of the grandest social reform movements of the period, Eugenics. At times, Cornelia's commitment to eugenics led her to advocate rather strong methods for saving “the race” from physical and mental decline. However, she never became as radical a eugenicist as did other close family friends such as Robert Means Yerkes and Charles Davenport, or Margaret Sanger who approved forced sterilization and legal limitations on the number of children in families on welfare. ⁶ Yet, Cornelia founded related

organizations that evolved into Boston's Planned Parenthood chapter. That, and her many other 'reform' efforts, led to her befriending many national progressive reformers such as Jane Addams, as well as Sanger.

Creating Progressive, Not Radical, Social Work

There were more reformers in the Cannon family. Soon after marriage Cornelia's household contained more than her husband, children, and a part-time servant after she convinced Ida and Bernice May, Walter's sisters, to move from St. Paul to Cambridge. A larger house was rented from the university and the Cannon home was filled with nine family members. Both of Walter's sisters became models of progressivism and applied Unitarian values. After deciding to remain in Cambridge, Bernice May Cannon joined the Taylorism "efficiency" movement to apply science to workplace reform--but she added compassion to efficiency when she worked as a supervisor in an organization that cared for young women in the new retail trades. Bernice built a career heading the training division of the innovative department store founded by the reform-minded Filene family. The Filenes were attempting to temper the excesses of capitalism and urban life through policies that some interpreted as "socialistic." While employed at the Boston store Bernice met Edwin S. Smith, a young Harvard graduate who would make a trek from Progressivism to Communism. That connection created more links between the Cannons, Noel Field, and Noel's close friends such as the Clarks.⁷

Walter's other sister, Ida May, became famous in Progressive circles.⁸ In 1910, Ida had planned only a year's stay in Cambridge, then a return to her charitable nursing work in St. Paul. After taking a course in an emerging profession, social service, at The Boston School for Social Work, perhaps the nation's first school to teach the subject, she changed her mind and became a Bostonite, and one of the school's faculty. The school's founders desired to regularize applied

philanthropy by giving “scientific” foundations to the kind of work that charity-ladies and Seven Sister college graduates, who spent a few years at Settlement houses, had been doing for a decade.

The Boston school’s administrators thought Ida May could help create a new social-work profession and offered her a position partly because while in Minnesota Ida had gone beyond her bare-bones nurses training and began arranging financial as well as general health advice to patients and their families. She had broadened her role after experiencing years of heart-wrenching effort as a visiting nurse in St. Paul’s poverty-stricken immigrant neighborhoods. Then, after moving to Cambridge she attended an intellectual discussion with the idealist philosopher Josiah Royce and other Unitarians (such as Robert Yerkes) and encountered a physician with a broad and grand vision of how to combine social work and medical care, especially for the poor.

Dr. Richard Cabot was a Harvard University graduate from an old-line, rich, and intellectually oriented Massachusetts Unitarian family.⁹ Since his first years in medical practice, when he encountered the many poor out-patients at Harvard’s teaching hospital (Massachusetts General) he had wanted to expand hospital care to include treating all a patient’s needs: medical, financial, and mental. His commitment was so deep he used his own money to pay the hospital’s social workers and devoted his time to designing and founding the Boston social work school Ida would attend.

Cabot was a true idealist, so much so that he eventually left medical practice to create a graduate program in social ethics at Harvard’s (Unitarian) Divinity School. Cabot sought to make it a base for philosophizing about social and medical issues. He had the background for

that. He had studied philosophy during his undergraduate years and had seriously considered becoming a Unitarian minister.

In 1906, Ida was inspired by Dr. Cabot's visions for expanded medical care. In turn, he thought he had found an ideal candidate to be one of the in-house social-service professionals at Massachusetts General Hospital. Ida accepted Cabot's offer and worked at General while she developed what became a nationally recognized program to train medical-social professionals. Like the earlier social-service program at the Boston School for Social Work, Ida's soon attracted world attention. Her publications led to recognition by a new rich philanthropic foundation. In 1912, she was chosen to conduct a nation-wide survey of her field by the recently founded and prestigious Russell Sage Foundation. The foundation desired to improve conditions for the poor, including their medical care and, importantly, to regularize and professionalize all types of charitable and philanthropic work.

Ida Cannon's Cambridge Friends, Some Who Were Becoming More Than Liberals

Despite her travels for the foundation Ida made her home with Walter and Cornelia Cannon for the rest of her life, and she became central to the social life of the Cambridge community. She was important to the civic reform, and especially the peace programs of her new religious fellows, the Unitarians. She also became a valued member of Cambridge's intellectual circle that met with and discussed the philosophical ideas of professors such as Alfred North Whitehead. Ida socialized with more than Harvard's professors. She knew the Fields and their friends such as Susan Clark, Carmelita Hinton, and Roger Baldwin.

. While the Cannons and their closest friends ran a new-fangled, back-porch innovative kindergarten their relative conservatism was evidenced by sending their children to public schools. In contrast, the Field and Clark and Hinton children attended Cambridge's ultra-

progressive “open-air Shady Hill School. The Cannons thought the Shady Hill students seemed a bit strange, at least during the years when it was conducted without heated classrooms. In winter Shady’s youngsters wore knee-length heavy sweaters, parkas, and lumberjacks’ socks, pants, and boots for warmth and sat in the school’s version of sleeping bags. As well, Shady’s students seemed to prefer to be with their classmates when outside of school. However, despite attending different grammar schools, the Field and Cannon children attended Cambridge’s elite traditional Latin high school, then Harvard University or Radcliffe, its female college.

The Cannons and Fields had some significant political-ideological differences, however. After Herbert Field’s death his family found Marxist doctrines more attractive than did the Cannons. The Fields, and the Clarks and Hintons, also became more entwined in communist-related activities than the Cannons. And, they moved farther from religion, even Unitarianism. But there always were connections between the families. One was an important early-on link between Noel Field and Ida Cannon. In 1924, after Noel completed his undergraduate course at Harvard and was anxiously waiting for Department of State employment, he enrolled in Ida’s one-year medical social-service program at the Boston School for Social Work, a program that gained a reputation as being a bit more than politically Progressive. It soon received handsome donations from Roger Baldwin’s Garland Fund that supported many radical causes. Although ideologically compatible, the school was an unusual choice for a young man. The program was then under the institutional wing of Simmons College for women. Its appended special programs although co-educational, usually attracted a strictly female enrollment. Noel was not bothered by that and happily completed the course. After obtaining his credential, he found a job as a mental health worker for Massachusetts’ prison system. The job lasted only a year, but it gave Noel the background he later needed to convince the Unitarian Association to support programs in

Switzerland during and after World War II, ones that would unknowingly involve the association in Noel's attempts to help establish Communist-controlled governments in East and Central Europe.

Walter Cannon the Public Intellectual, the Unitarian Crises, the Schlesinger Factor

Walter Cannon's role as a public intellectual led him to become entangled in the national struggles between liberals and Communists before most others, and to be involved with the Unitarian's political battles. There was a more direct family link than Walter's actions to the liberal-Communist confrontations. Walter's daughter married Arthur Schlesinger Jr., the son of a famous liberal historian, a Harvard graduate, and a future member of World War II's Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Arthur was one of the first to protest Noel Field's Communist activities in Europe. He went on to become a famous historian, Unitarian, and confidant of another "Harvard man," John F. Kennedy, the American president. Arthur also became a force in the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), the liberal-left organization that fought America's Communists after World War II.

A Unitarian Moving Towards a Fragile Coalition

Well before then, Walter Cannon was becoming involved in more than specialized scientific research. He was an international voice for scientific researchers in the battles against anti-vivisection laws. He had to withstand much criticism, even from liberals, because of that. But Walter's career and his broader involvements were aided by the new American philanthropic foundations. The Carnegie and Rockefeller organizations did more than provide him with grants. They called on Walter to aid the Flexner's' efforts to reform medical, as well as higher education in general, to fit an elitist scientific model.

Walter's involvements went beyond that. He was becoming a political progressive and an example of how such intellectuals were caught between admiration and fear of Marxism's goals of a continuing revolution and dictatorship. Walter had been alienated by the Bolsheviks' excesses after the 1917 revolution and he was repulsed by the Soviets' treatment of scientists, by their failures during the great famine of the early 1920s, the religious suppression and property confiscations, and by the dictatorial form of government. Walter tried to save his colleague Ivan Pavlov, the famous Russian physiologist-psychologist, from the persecution he was enduring after the revolution. Cannon also became active in raising money to provide medical aid to all Russians during its great famine, despite being wary of the Bolsheviks. He warned 1918's relief organizations of the Bolsheviks' reputation of using foreign aid for their selfish purposes.

Liberal Not Radical

The Cannons also had little sympathy for the early Communist movements in Massachusetts, perhaps because they thought they were associated with the waves of violence and strikes before and after World War I. As in the nation, Massachusetts had been hit by bombings of factory and government buildings, threats against officials, and major labor strikes, all associated with immigrants, anarchists, and home-grown radical organizations such as the violence-prone International Workers of the World (IWW) that favored syndicalism rather than communism.

1912 was an especially frightening year. IWW professionals like Joseph Ettor, the son of Italian immigrants, joined radical leaders of the foreign-language sections of the Socialist Party, and American radicals Bill Haywood and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, to organize workers from forty different language groups in a massive strike against Lawrence, Massachusetts' textile mills. The strike lasted for months, was so violent it led to the National Guard occupying the

town. 1912 also saw a Boston streetcar strike that included bombings. There were hints that Boston's group of Italian Galleani anarchists were involved in that, in assaults on policemen, and in planting bombs in police stations and factories throughout the next few years.

There also were worries about radical political parties during the early 1900s. By 1912, the Socialist Party of America already had a Marxist-like rhetoric and an agenda that went beyond public ownership of large utilities and industries and establishing an income tax. Although the Socialists sought change through political action, not violence, the Socialist Party was too radical for most and never had a strong following in Massachusetts--although many immigrant groups supported it. That support was becoming conditional, however. Leaders of the more recent immigrant groups, especially Boston's Lithuanians, wanted the party to stop relying on political and become revolutionary. They created one of the first overtly American communist magazines and their Socialist Propaganda League was a precursor of the American Communist Party. Many Americans in the radical International Workers of the World (IWW) shared the foreign-group's discontent and after being thrown-out of the Socialist Party because of the IWW's sabotage policies, began courting the foreign-born radical organizations. .

Radicalism and violence increased with the outbreak of World War I and escalated after the peace. In 1917, Boston's immigrant-filled Roxbury district had anti-war and draft riots. After the war, labor strife seemed the norm, with Massachusetts having close to four hundred strikes in 1919, including a frightening police strike that led to looting and fears of anarchy. There were many huge left-wing marches saluting the Bolshevik's victory in Russia that led to counter-attacks by other Bostonians, including some of Harvard University's students. Bombings spread across the country, including dozens of packages of explosives sent to national and local

officials' offices and homes. In reaction., anti-anarchist laws were passed, including a stringent one in Massachusetts.

The reaction included more than new laws. There was a sweeping round-up of radicals (the Palmer raids), that included many IWW members, and the deportation of hundreds of foreign-born agitators such as the Lithuanian Emma Goldman and members of the aggressive Union of Russian Workers. That did not end the violence. In 1920, one of the worst acts of terrorism in American history took place. Anarchists exploded a bomb near the stock exchange on New York's Wall Street killing thirty and wounding hundreds. In Massachusetts, it was believed two Italian anarchists, Nicola Sacco, and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, murdered a guard and payroll master in Braintree. Their near decade-long legal battle was turned into an international cause by the Communists, one that attracted many idealists while reinforcing fears of radicals among others Boston had its own wave of bombings, then round-ups, including the deportation of the English radicals the Colyers and several Italian anarchists.

At the same time, the city's foreign-language groups were playing a significant role in the birth of the nation's Communist Party. With the help of the strange Italian immigrant and ultra-radical socialist Louis J. Fraina, the IWW's John J. Ballum, and funds supplied by Ludwig Martens the Bolshevik representative in the United States, Boston leftists energized their drive to re-do America---and the world. Soviet funds (over a million dollars in 2020 dollars) were used to support a 1919 Boston police strike, propaganda, and a drive to capture the Socialist Party of America.¹⁰

That attempt to control the Socialist Party by Boston's foreign-language groups, and many other immigrants from across the nation (including a smattering of IWW members), failed, leaving a heritage of hatreds among various leftists, as had earlier confrontations in Europe. The

1919's failure to take-over the Socialist Party during its Chicago convention was immediately followed by the formation of what became known as the Communist Party of America. The party's birth was tortured, almost still-born. It began with two distinct and antagonistic factions. The largest, by far, was led by the foreign-language groups that wanted the party to remain a secret underground "vanguard" organization, one waiting to take-over an imminent populist American revolution. Like Soviet leaders, the American foreign-language leaders believed they were in what Leninists came to call a "First Period" when revolutions were about to break-out around the world, each needing a vanguard to steer them to Communism. The other small faction was led by young American radicals and IWW members who wanted to operate aboveground to bring the Marxist gospel to workers and to radicalize America's unions from within, seeing that as the road to communism.

Soon, there were two, then three, warring American communist parties. The conflict was taken to Moscow's Soviet-controlled Comintern. It ordered a compromise, one that fit with a major shift in policies within the Soviet Union. After the failure of revolutionary outbursts in Europe the Soviets concluded the world was in a "Second Period" that called for patience and compromise, even some cooperation with socialists and liberals. In Russia, there were compromises with doctrine. A New Economic Policy allowed some private ownership of businesses and farms. At the same time, foreign parties were ordered to abandon revolutionary isolationism and form "United Fronts" with sympathetic organizations and, when possible, quietly, and patiently turn them into party adjuncts.

When the Soviets decided to solve the party discord in the United States they applied a Second Period approach. In 1922, to achieve unity in the United States, the Comintern ordered the creation of The Workers Party and its Trade Union Educational League to operate in the

open while its parent organization, the old underground-oriented Communist Party of America, continued much as before. Despite the new policy, a conspiratorial mind-set continued within the Party. Many of its members used pseudonyms, still thinking in vanguard terms while searching for polices that fit with the Second Period's mandates. Jay Lovestone (Jacob Liebstein) became John Langley, John Ballam became John Moore and safehouses were prepared for use if there were more Palmer Raids or ones like the sweep at a 1922 Party meeting at a summer camp outside rural Bridgman, Michigan.

Despite the orders and funds from the Comintern, the newly united party was unsettled during the early 1920s—and it remained small, some 16,000 members, in the mid-1920s. It lacked central control, was unable to overcome the independence of the foreign language groups, was constantly battling factionalism, and was unsure of its policies and how to craft its public image.

But to the American public it was clear the party was dominated by foreign born. Some 95% of its original 10,000 members were in the troublesome foreign language groups, the same as within Massachusetts' 2,000 membership. Those percentages continued throughout most of the 1920s, even after the Comintern ordered the expulsion of the foreign language groups, causing a loss of half of the party's members, a loss that was not compensated by a shift in emphasis to recruiting within labor unions, or trying to form those "United Front" alliances with socialist and liberal groups.

Soon, there was another Moscow dictated major policy shift-- and another cleansing of the party ranks. In 1928-9 a "Third Period" was declared. Within Russia the New Economic policy was replaced by a fully communist and centrally directed economy guided by the costly and draconian Five-Year Plan for industrialization, a brutal redoing of the nation's agricultural-

sector, and a deepening of the political-cultural dictatorship. The Americans were ordered to return to revolutionary, isolated vanguard-like, and socialist-hating policies. They were told to pull away from work within the established unions and form their own to compete with the hated American Federation of Labor. Those who disagreed were expelled, who formed two more versions of an American communist party. Jay Lovestone and his allies believed the new policies were too radical and began forming an alliance with like-minded European Communists. James Cannon led the other major splinter group. He thought the Soviet policies and the focus on Russian development rather than world revolution were not radical enough. He formed a party aligned with Leon Trotsky's supporters.

Six years after that came another policy reversal: The Comintern's new Popular Front' emphasized cooperation to defeat Fascism rather than to champion revolution. There was to be cooperation, even with hated Socialists, and the American party was to start looking and acting American, not foreign. Those changes made the party more acceptable to Americans, even to liberals like the Cannons.

Cannon Shifts Further to the Left and Into Political Involvements

Walter had already begun to warm to the Soviets when they started giving scientists like Pavlov generous support during the 1920s. Cannon even agreed to accept a generously -funded free trip to China and Russia in 1935 after Pavlov had asked him to give the keynote address at a world physiological congress in Moscow. After the trip, Cannon returned to America with a positive view of Red achievements, especially of central economic planning. He soon wrote articles suggesting that the entire world should find similar ways to ensure economic stability. He projected his science theories onto the social world and recommended a social-economic version of his 'homeostasis,' implicitly suggesting the United States adopt Keynesian-like, if not

Soviet, economic planning. Walter was also becoming somewhat 'left' concerning international relations. He was one of the first notable scientists to join America's Association of Scientific Workers. While not as strident as the British version that was guided by J. D. Bernal, the science information reformer and public Marxist, America's association aimed at linking science too liberal if not leftist world policies.

Walter and his family also began supporting left-wing influenced peace movements and leftist civil liberty organizations in the United States such as those that evolved into the American Committee to Protect the Foreign Born and his friend Roger Baldwin's American Civil Liberties Union. With the onset of the Great Depression and the rise of Fascism in Europe Walter moved further left. At the same time, his fame and influence made him sought-after by other than scientific organizations. He contributed funds to the Party-dominated Friends of the Soviet Union and established the American-Soviet Medical Society. He supported some aggressive movements dealing with American problems lent his name to organizations aiding American sharecroppers. He published several articles on science and world peace. Unfortunately for his later reputation, his reasoning changed in parallel with the Soviet's Comintern policies. During the era of Soviet-German friendship he railed against militarism--- when Hitler invaded Russia he equated peace and justice with America's arming to battle fascism.¹¹

However, Walter never became a communist as did many members of the Field, Clark, and Hinton families.

Different Refugees for Different Ideological Groups, the IRA-IRC vs. JAFRC

Walter Cannon's frustrating, conflicting experience began in the early 1930s when several relief organizations were formed to aid refugees who had or were about to suffer persecution by

European fascists. Unlike the older and more general organizations, such as the Red Cross or the American Friends Service Committee, each of the new groups had its own supporters and its special list of those to be aided. For example, Jews around the world formed groups to rescue their religious fellows and in the United States liberal intellectuals banded together to save endangered academics. One of them was formed Noel Field's friend Stephen Duggan of the Institute for International Education who wanted to bring the most illustrious endangered professors and artists to the United States and find them university positions. As well, labor, ethnic, and political groups mobilized to aid their own to escape from Germany and Italy. Those who focused on the fate of Europe's Communist intellectuals created organizations such as the Hollywood-based Exiled Writer' Committee.

Especially important to the history of Cannon's and the Unitarian's problems was 1933's International Relief Association (IRA, later IRC). Begun in Europe, it was supported by independent labor unions and socialists who were opposed to Communists as well as to Hitler. The famous scientist Albert Einstein was in the United States when Hitler took power but lent his prestige to the European-based IRA in its efforts to rescue liberal intellectuals, labor leaders, and socialists. At his urging, an American branch was soon established. Significant for America's liberals was the support and policy direction given by leaders of America's independent unions, especially New York City's Jewish-Russian immigrant David Dubinsky's (David Isaac Dobnievski) International Ladies Garment Workers Union and its ally, Jay Lovestone (Jacob Liebstein).¹²

Dubinsky had been a radical in Europe but changed his allegiances and guided his powerful union's anti-communist movement. Lovestone had also changed ideological direction. He was one of the first leaders of America's Communist Party but was purged by its Stalinists in 1929.

He remained faithful to communist ideals through much of the 1930s, but while working with Dubinski and other union leaders Lovestone's position moderated. He became much more of a temperate socialist than a communist, although he and the IRA's men did not yield their independence to America's Socialist party. The Socialists, led by Norman Thomas (the Presbyterian minister) also had a history of conflicts with America's Communist Party.¹³

In the 1930s, Lovestone joined the International Communist Opposition (ICO) movement that butted-heads with the Communist Party and its policies. He and the ICO were central to the Depression-era confrontations that included bitter contests over control of America's auto-workers' union and to attempts to weaken the Communists' influence over the "one great union," the Congress of Industrial Workers. The Dubinski-Lovestone groups also provided secret help to foreign socialists and other communist-opposition groups, such as Germany's KPO and SAP. Dubinski and Lovestone soon cooperated with the leaders of the American Federation of Labor to support non-communist unions in Europe.

Lovestone and Dubinski never drifted back to the extreme left. Although they and the IRA became a part of the war's anti-Axis coalition, "anti-totalitarianism" continued to mean opposition to Communists and well as Fascists. In fact, by the end of World War II, the two men and the International Relief Association's (IRA) successor, the International Rescue Committee, (IRC) had become significant assets for America's intelligence agencies. They continued to provide significant help throughout the Cold War.¹⁴

The Henson-Strunsky Factors

As soon as it was formed the IRA followed its anti-totalitarianism policies. During the mid-1930s two young and somewhat emotional people who became central to Noel and the Unitarian's postwar crises shared that commitment. Sheba Strunsky and Francis Henson became

associated with the IRA during its first years of operation. They remained with it through the 1940s. As with many who played a part in the Noel-Unitarian problems, Sheba Strunsky had been a devoted communist in her youth. She was a daughter of immigrants, but her family was Americanized and prospered, allowing Sheba to grow-up in New York City's thrilling intellectual and ideological atmosphere. A graduate of New York University, rather than one of the elite Seven Sisters, she first worked as an actress in off-Broadway plays. She mixed with the Greenwich Village circle which included future luminaries such as Franchot Tone and John Howard Lawson, the writer who became the leader of Hollywood's Communist Party. Freda Kirchwey, the future editor of the famous liberal magazine, *The Nation*, was also in Sheba's social-mix. Sheba became associated with the Communist Party in the 1920s, but by the mid-1930s she had, like Lovestone and Kirchwey, become more of a socialist than a communist. That was one of the reasons why she was selected to be the operating head of the Dubinsky-Lovestone-IRA refugee organization.¹⁵

Francis Henson, in contrast, had an unusual background for radical involvements and a more varied career than Strunsky's--- and he played an even greater role in Noel and the Unitarian's confrontations than she did. Unlike Sheba and most other early American communists, Henson was not from an immigrant background, nor was he Jewish. He was not even a New Yorker, and he did not have the kind of elite liberal education that many American-born communists of the 1930s had. He was certainly not a "Red diaper baby." His politically conservative parents sent him to a Christian, Disciples of Christ college in the rural Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. Despite those traditionalist surroundings, Francis came to believe in socialism's principles. On graduating in 1927 he refused go into the thriving family business. He became a dedicated socialist, eventually joining the very left Revolutionary Socialist movement.

For a short time, he was at least a fellow traveler of the Communist Party, but he earned his living by putting his writing and organizing skills to work for the conservative Young Men's Christian Association. After that, he took a succession of short-term jobs, ones increasingly linked to the infrastructure of the non-Communist left. He became associated with Lovestone and his United Auto Workers battles, in Detroit as well as with various organizations combating fascism (even travelling to Spain and Germany). He worked closely with the Reinhold Niebuhr's socialist-religious groups at the Union Theological Seminary in New York City and he was employed by British intelligence in the United States as a publicist and lobbyist helping convince congress and the public to aid England by joining the war against Germany.¹⁶ In addition to all that, Henson worked in Lovestone's New York City IRA office and then became a publicity man and fund-raiser for a large relief organization in New York City that financed food, clothing, and medical aid for Spain and its refugees during its civil war. Henson was attracted to the organization because what became the JAFRC it claimed it was going to help all anti-fascists. That job at the North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy was the first step in Francis and Varian Fry, a young romantic socialist at North American, becoming part of the Noel Field story.¹⁷

During the late 1930s, Henson and Fry came into heated conflict with a cadre of Communists at North American and were, they believed, forced out of the organization because of their protests about the agency's pro-Communist biases. By the time Henson joined the American Army in 1943 and later became energetic anti-Communist active in the Union for Democratic Action (soon the ADA).¹⁸

Varian Fry¹⁹'s anti-Communist leanings became evident as early as 1940 when he became the agent in France for the Emergency Rescue Committee (ERA), another liberal relief

organization, one focused on rescuing labor leaders, artists, and intellectuals. After his military service during the war, Henson resumed work for the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the refugee agency that was the successor to the IRA. He represented the committee in Lisbon and Paris, always remembering the conflicts between himself and the Communists at the North American Committee and during the mid-1930s auto union struggles in Detroit.²⁰

Cannon, Roger Baldwin, Spain

Before Henson and Fry's involvements, in 1936 Walter Cannon became tangled in refugee problems and related political-ideological issues. The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and the urgings of Roger Nash Baldwin of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) led to Walter's new involvement. Baldwin came from a wealthy Boston suburb, Wellesley, and from a very well-to-do liberal Unitarian family, but by the 1930s he was more than a communist sympathizer and was one of the nation's leading liberal activists. He had not, however, begun his career as a radical, nor had he been a member of a radical social circle, as had Sheba Strunsky. Baldwin was a rather typical member of the liberal elite of the early Twentieth Century when he graduated from Harvard in 1904.²¹

Aided by the famous jurist Louis Brandies, a family friend, a reform-minded progressive lawyer, and a future Supreme Court justice, Baldwin took a faculty position at Washington University in St. Louis, the mid-west's version of Unitarian Harvard. Baldwin taught a new subject, "sociology," and engaged in social work among St. Louis' poor. As a result, he became interested in the problems of the young. He joined with Bernard Flexner, the famous lawyer for the Rockefellers and Zionism's advocate, to study the social and legal problems of youth. Bernard was one of the powerful Flexner brothers who were using their influence over the

wealthy foundations to modernize medical and higher education. Flexner and Baldwin wrote “the” text on the juvenile court system. Roger did not remain within the boundaries of such mainstream reform, however. By the 1910s, he began to move to the ideological and political left and to become involved with America most famous radicals.

While maintaining his connections to the liberal establishment, Baldwin made new types of friends. He was influenced by the anarchist Emma Goldman; he befriended the Communist labor leader Elizabeth Gurley Flynn; and he more than flirted with Big Bill Haywood and his violent Industrial Workers of the World. Baldwin almost married Anna Louise Strong, the communist-leaning admirer of the Soviet system. In the 1930s, he went further and made friends with Hede and Paul Massing, Noel Field’s Communist controllers and hosted them, and Noel and his wife, Alger Hiss, and Laurence Duggan at one of his famous picnics.²²

Well before then, Roger’s pacifism and intensifying radicalism led to a life-changing experience. He joined with the Socialist leader Norman Thomas and the influential young Greenwich Village leftists Crystal and Max Eastman of *The Masses* magazine to organize and publish anti-war protests against America’s entry into World War I. Roger was imprisoned for a year because of his resistance to the draft. That led him to aid both his liberal and radical friends in forming what became the ACLU. The ACLU conducted and financed many famous legal cases, becoming involved in such landmark battles as the Scopes trial over the teaching of evolution in schools and the Scottsboro and Sacco-Vanzetti trials. Through spin-off organizations that had stronger ties to the radical left, such as the American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born, and the Communist-dominated International Labor Defense, Baldwin aided Communists and suspected Communists such as San Francisco’s labor leader Harry Bridges.

Under Baldwin's decades-long leadership the ACLU maintained a balance between supporting liberal principles of free speech and thought and the defense of radicals and immigrants.. Baldwin's successful balancing of liberals and radicals allowed him to maintain the broad coalition that financed his work. As well, during the 1920s and most of the 1930s Baldwin saw little conflict between his liberalism and his communist leanings. He traveled to the Soviet Union, at times returning to proclaim the virtues of its centralized government--and the value of dictatorship in times of social need. He may even have joined the Party for a time. Such outbursts and actions did not alienate his important liberal friends. With the Comintern's declaration of the policy of cooperation with all anti-fascists in the mid-1930s, Baldwin applied his skills to organizing liberals and leftists to battle fascism at home and abroad.

Baldwin soon found a new cause, the Spanish Civil War, the bloody conflict between its new leftist Popular Front Republican government and the conservative Nationalists led by General Francisco Franco. The war had morphed into an international conflict between communism and fascism. Germany and Italy supported Franco; the Soviets aided the Republicans. Most western nations declared themselves neutral, but many of their citizens and left-wing parties aided the Republicans. In 1936, Baldwin and a group of clergymen and liberals in New York City created The Friends of Spanish Democracy, a fund-raising organization to aid the Republicans. Later, an expanded version of the group was called the North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy. It was directed by Sherwood Eddy, the Protestant missionary and YMCA leader, and by Herman F. Reissig, Brooklyn's activist and left-oriented Congregational minister. The 'Friends' and the North American committee began as organizations dedicated to aiding the cause of Spain's elected government, the Republicans, as well as helping all the war's refugees and victims in the Republican-held areas of Spain.

However, given the United States and the League of Nations' rules on non-intervention, and the sea blockades circling Spain, it was difficult to send aid.

One avenue was left open, however: Non-partisan medical aid and emergency food supplies could be provided—if they were distributed non-politically.²³

The Cannon Connection

With that in mind, and with the help of a broadened coalition of supporters that included the executives of the liberal Federal Council of Churches and the important social-gospel minister Francis J. McConnell, Baldwin sought additional funds and volunteers. New York City's Communists volunteered its professionals. There were so many they quickly dominated the local office. Baldwin had previously contacted his fellow Unitarian and Harvard alumnus Walter Cannon, to spearhead his organization's medical work. Walter had begun a small medical relief service but after Baldwin's new appeal he renamed his initial organization the Medical Bureau to Aid Spanish Democracy and aligned it with the North American Committee. As with the committee, the central offices of the new Medical Bureau were in New York City, but branches of the Bureau were established in Boston, San Francisco, and Los Angeles to conduct local fund-raising. Working with those branches, Walter used his national influence to raise monies for medical supplies for what he believed would be any needy Spaniard and to recruit doctors and nurses for non-political missions. There were some limitations to "any needy," however. Unlike the Quaker's relief efforts that served the deprived in all areas in Spain, rebel as well as Loyalist, the Bureau planned to aid only those the areas held by the official Republican government.²⁴

Cannon's Worries, Unitarian Links, and Later Troubles

Among those recruited to the Medical Bureau were several men who became important to the American Popular Front's precarious history, the history of the Unitarian's 1946 upheavals, and Noel Field's end-of-war troubles. Many were liberals. Robert Dexter, the Unitarian's director of international and social relations agreed to be the treasurer of the Boston branch, Baldwin and Reissig continued to support the work from New York, and socialists such as Norman Thomas and James Isaac Loeb lent their names to Cannon's campaigns. However, many others important to both the Medical Bureau and the North American Committee were far to the left of liberalism.²⁵

Walter Cannon had sensed that some around him were more than liberal and, at times pulled away from them. He refused a request to be the president of the American-Russian Institute when a friend told him that although Franz Boas, the respected academic, supported it. Cannon concluded the institute was really a tool of New York City's Communists. But Walter naively continued to accept the help of many radicals because of his belief that they were working for a common cause, not for their own ideological ends. Cannon was wrong. Among the radicals were the Unitarian's Stephen Fritchman, Dorothy Parker, and Thomas Addis, the academic and Party mentor of Jean Tatlock (Robert Oppenheimer's girlfriend and close friend of the Fields). Dorothy Hickie, an old-time fellow traveler, ran the Medical's Boston office and there were several hard-core works in the Boston and San Francisco branches.²⁶

The North American Committee's staff in New York under Herman F. Reissig also found itself relying on many national Party officials. Isidore Begun, Barbara Rand, Robert Minor, Frederika (Fredericka) Martin and Felix Kusman held important positions partly because of the willingness of the Party and its members to give their time to the great anti-fascist battle in Spain.²⁷ Without consulting the naïve Reissig, Baldwin, or Cannon they shifted the

committee's mission. Especially important to the Party's representatives was the welfare of the Comintern-directed elements of the International Brigades that fought beside Spain's Republican forces. North American's joining s with Edward Barsky a New York City Jewish surgeon was also the result of a mix of the immediate need for workers for the Bureau, and Cannon's continued innocent liberalistic belief the Communists were devoted to a pure anti-fascism.

Barsky and the Communist Connection

Another reason for Cannon continued ties to the left was his faith in the good intentions of Edward Barsky.. When Walter looked for physicians and nurses to staff medical missions to Spain he discovered few wanting to suspend their practices and travel into a war zone. But Barsky and his associates stepped forward indicating a willingness to spearhead the missions in Spain and to manage all the logistics in America. Although Cannon may have heard rumors about Barsky's politics, he focused on the need for immediate help for Spain's population, not ideological issues.

Edward Barsky was the son of a New York Jewish doctor who had assisted in founding a medical service in the 1890s for the city's newly arrived Yiddish-speaking orthodox Jewish immigrants. Within a short time, the dispensary grew into the large Beth Israel Hospital. Meanwhile, Edward progressed through the best free public schools of New York City, including the intellectually rigorous Townsend Harris High School and City College. He obtained his medical degree from Columbia University. His family had prospered, and he was able to pursue advanced studies in Europe. He returned to New York's Jewish community and became a respected surgeon at Beth Israel. He and his associates at the hospital were political involved and frequently gave free medical treatment to strikers. His success did not temper his early

radical inclinations and in 1935, at age thirty-eight, he formally joined the Communist Party. The next year, he agreed to form and lead the first of Cannon's Medical Bureau's missions to Spain.²⁸

By January 1937, a medical team with doctors, nurses, ambulances, tents, and supplies was working, many times, at or near the front lines. Barky returned to the United States to raise money and to recruit more physicians and nurses. By the end of 1938, over one hundred American physicians had answered his and Cannon's pleas. Barsky did more. He sailed back to Spain and became the head of the medical services of the International Brigade, supervising hundreds of volunteers from many nations. He did not leave Spain until the Brigades' and other foreign forces were ordered out in early 1939. By then, Barsky had become well known to those in the international relief community and to international Communist leaders such as Paul Merkle--and to Maria Weiterer and her common law husband Siegfried Rädcl, who became two of Noel Field's most important Communist contacts in Switzerland and France.²⁹ Barsky may have met Noel when Noel worked with the League of Nation's repatriation committee on the French-Spanish border.

Walter Cannon found no reason to criticize the impartiality of Barsky's work for the Medical Bureau or that of Reissig's North American Committee, although by 1938 Cannon and the Unitarian's Robert Dexter had some concerns about radicals assuming too much influence in the Boston branch of the Medical Bureau. The differences between the Cannon-Unitarian group and Boston's Communists finally led to a confrontation. The Communists were ousted-- just as they tried to steal the center's valuable mailing-list of possible donors. Despite that, Walter considered the Bureau an overall success and he supported the Committee because it been able to send shiploads of food, medicine, and clothes to Spain.

Both organizations had become important and powerful. For example, the combined income of the Bureau and the Committee was close to being one-half of all the funds contributed for Spanish relief in 1938.³⁰ The organizations also received acclaim and more contributions as they continued to send tons of supplies to Spain and the French border areas that housed an exponentially growing refugee population.

Barsky, the Liberals and the American Popular Front Under Attack

Cannon had maintained his trust in the Popular Front and its American Communist members despite his growing worries about the Bureau's Boston staff, but in 1939 his trust was confronted by more revelations about the years of brutal political purges in the Soviet Union, and within Spain's International Brigades. The announcement of the Hitler-Stalin pact was a final shock to Cannon, and many others. Soon, a stream of protests by American liberals and socialists about political bias in the Medical Bureau and the North American Committee surfaced. There were complaints that Barsky and the Committee had not been impartial, and the complaints came from important men who had been among the original supporters of both organizations. They declared that Barsky and North American's managers were favoring Communists and ignoring the aid and medical needs of others. There also were rumors the Communists were conducting a second war in Spain. Socialists, anti-Communists, and anarchists were being imprisoned, sometimes executed.³¹

Cannon reacted to the news of the purges by finally joining liberal organizations that were protesting Soviet as well as Nazi attacks on free speech and political dissent. He allowed his name to be associated with the liberal Friends of Democracy organization and John Dewey and Sidney Hook's Committee for Cultural Freedom that demanded the Soviet Union be declared a totalitarian nation. There was a risk in supporting those groups because Communists denounced

both. Cannon's new liberal associations did not mean that he was abandoning the cause of the Spanish Republicans (at least in the late 1930s and early 1940s) or that he had become convinced the American Communists were using him for their own non-liberal goals. He continued to believe the bureau and committee were vital to the welfare of Spain and its refugees in the overflowing French camps.³²

Barky Under Attack, By Liberals, Not the Right

Cannon's trust in men like Barsky was indicated by his negative responses to the barrage of letters that began arriving just as Spain's General Francisco Franco declared his final victory over the Republicans in April 1939. Early warnings about Barsky and his allies had come, surprisingly, from Roger Baldwin and Norman Thomas, both original supporters of the Medical Bureau and the North American Committee. Although the Hitler-Stalin pact later in the year led Baldwin to rid his ACLU of its Communist members, he continued to help numerous other Communist 'front'- groups. In contrast, Norman Thomas, the long-time leader of the American Socialist Party, while supporting the Spanish-aid causes, had always distrusted Communist intentions, especially after the Party had denounced him as "social-fascist" and approved 1930's raids against Socialist meetings in New York City, ones that required police intervention.

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The Baldwin-Thomas 1939 communications to Walter Cannon were supplemented by those from Herman Reissig, the liberal Congregational minister who had become the Committee's administrator, a distraught one. There also were heated communications from the once communist philosopher Sidney Hook of New York University, now a leading anti-Communist. All the letters had similar warnings about Communist influences, but Baldwin and Hook's had deeper emotional tones and included demands for a thorough and immediate

personnel | house-cleaning at the Medical Bureau and North American. A central argument was that while the needs and the chaos of the war in Spain may have justified turning a blind-eye to Communist favoritism on behalf of Stalin's policies, the end of the civil war called for a reorganization to ensure impartial aid to the hundreds of thousands of impoverished Spanish refugees and fighters stranded in France and North Africa.

The complaints increased. Norman Thomas wrote Walter Cannon the Socialist Party was considering making a public announcement it could no longer support the Bureau and Committee because both Communists dominated them and, therefore, could not be counted-on to be fair in the distribution of relief supplies or medical care. Thomas told Cannon that he wanted his colleague, James Isaac Loeb, to meet with him to find a way to reorient the organizations while avoiding any undeserved harm to them or their acceptable managers such as Herman Reissig. Thomas justified his accusations by stating that even the tolerant and Russia-friendly Stephen Duggan, the head of the International Institute of Education (the precursor of the Fulbright exchange program and the father of Noel Field's best friend) had told him he could no longer cooperate with the Committee.³⁴ Thomas went on to suggest that if Cannon and Loeb could find a means of ridding the organizations of Communist biases his damning letter would not be published and the Socialists would give at least tacit approval to the next rounds of Bureau and Medical relief work.

Thomas also warned Cannon that an immediate solution was vital to warding-off 'Red baiters' like Martin Dies who's reenergized Un-American Activities Committee was beginning to target the Bureau and North American Dies was even demanding that Herman Reissig produce all the financial records of the organizations. The Dies committee was a serious threat. It began its work in 1938 under the mandate of a new law that required those disseminating

propaganda sponsored by a foreign nation to register with the United States' authorities. Dies' group had replaced a previous committee led by Samuel Dickstein of New York who, later investigations revealed, was taking money from the Soviet government in exchange for not paying too much attention to America's Communists. In return, they did not protest Dickstein's investigations. In contrast to the Dickstein years, although Dies investigated many German-American groups as well as Communist organizations, his committee became a favorite target of the "left" partly because Dies had followed the trail of evidence as far as Hollywood's actor and writers before his committee's work was suspended when the Soviet Union became an ally during World War II.³⁵

The Unitarian's Own Cause, Involvements, and Problems

Before then, the Unitarians were being dragged into the Cannon-Barksy problems while conducting their own foreign refugee efforts. In 1938, as the Unitarian's Robert Dexter was busy reacting to Germany's threatened invasion of Czechoslovakia by creating an independent Unitarian rescue organization that became the Unitarian Service Committee, increasingly strident letters about the Bureau arrived at the Unitarian Association's Boston headquarters. They urged the Unitarians to retreat from Cannon's Bureau and the Committee. Dexter worried the accusations would harm his new organization's reputation.. Roger Baldwin's letters again claimed the New York offices of the medical and relief organizations had been corrupted by Party stalwarts who had driven-out Francis Henson because of his socialist-Love stone political orientation. Baldwin wrote that twenty-six of the staff, including the treasurer and auditor, were Communists and that the entire staff in France were Party adherents. Baldwin included in his Reds list the members of the group that had been established to ensure impartiality in the distribution of aid, Paris' International Coordinating Committee.³⁶

Sidney Hook's newest missives repeated such claims, adding more damning accusations against the Medical Bureau. He told Cannon of the assertions by Dr. John J. Posner, a respected New York jaw surgeon who was one of first leaders of the Medical Bureau's surgical teams in Spain, that the Bureau's groups were not anti-fascist but pro-Communist and, worse, they favored a particular type of Communist, Stalinists. Posner told of group meetings that were Party conclaves and of policies that directed medical help only to the Brigades controlled by the Comintern.

The pressures on Cannon and on Reissig intensified when Posner's accusations became public knowledge after Frederick Woltman, a future Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter, published them and other negative items about the Bureau and the Committee in New York City's *World Telegram* newspaper. That led to a blistering denunciation of Woltman by the leftist Unitarian minister and administrator Stephen Fritchman.³⁷ That did not stop the warnings. Sidney Hook soon mailed Walter Cannon a copy of his "Stalinist Outposts in the United States." It was a list of people and organizations he claimed were Communist or Communist-controlled "fronts." The list included the Bureau and the Committee and, to Cannon's dismay, the name of his close friend Harlow Shapley, the world-famous Harvard University astronomer. Outposts' particulars were quite like those in the lists of "front: organizations issued by the Dies Un-American Activities Committee in January 1940,³⁸ and in later lists created by the United States' Attorney General. Hook and his allies' influence in the government's anti-Communist investigations has never been appreciated. Nor has it been recognized how much of the anti-Communist battle was driven by the left rather than by conservatives.

The attacks on the Bureau and the Committee, and by implication Cannon and Reissig, multiplied. There were street demonstrations against a great fund-raising rally run by the

Committee at New York City's Madison Square Garden. Anti-Red pickets were forced away by New York's police and then arrested. There were other aggressive challenges, even from within the liberal fold. Roger Baldwin demanded that the Bureau and the Committee finally rid themselves of the New York contingents and the Red staffs in the Paris office, including those in the "politicized" International Coordinating Committee. Baldwin went further. He demanded the Bureau and the Committee just raise funds and let the Quaker's American Friends Service Committee (AFC) do all the relief work. The AFC, he stated, should make all the decisions about aid distribution. Baldwin's recommendation made sense. The Quakers had such a great reputation they were allowed to work in all parts of France, Spain, and North Africa. Using them would satisfy even Sidney Hook and allow the Bureau and Committee to continue to provide some help to Spain's needy.³⁹

An Innocent Cannon Keeps the Faith, But...

Reissig agreed with Baldwin but Walter Cannon, after some deliberations, did not. He once again returned to the defense of the Bureau. He contacted doctors who had been in Spain and found only one besides Posner had any complaints. Walter admitted there might have been some problems with the Bureau and Committee's programs in their first year of operation, but not afterwards. He stressed that a recent redoing of the international oversight committee in France assured equal treatment for all the Spanish refugees. Making Pablo Azcarate the head of the committee guaranteed, Cannon said, fair treatment in Spain and in the refugee camps in France and North Africa.⁴⁰ Azcarate was not viewed as a neutral by all, however. He had been the Republic's ambassador in London before fleeing into exile in Switzerland and he had been associated with the left-leaning Republican president of Spain, Juan Negrin. Walter Cannon was not worried about Azcarate or Negrin. Negrin was Cannon's professional colleague and close

friend, and Azcarate had a long and distinguished career as an executive with the League of Nations where he met Noel Field. Azcarate had served as the league's expert on minorities and their need for protection. He had also headed the emigration service for Republican Spaniards.⁴¹

Walter thought Azcarate's appointment guaranteed the world's recognition of the Bureau's political neutrality so there would be no need to change personal or policies. What Cannon did not know was that Azcarate's son, Manuel, who had escaped to Paris after Franco's victory, was a stalwart Party man, a member of the Soviet intelligence's Red Orchestra network, and a central figure in the Spanish Communist refugees' organization in France.⁴²

Feeling that he had done his part in saving the medical aid services, Cannon soon made a protective move. He announced he was retiring from the Bureau because of too many "other commitments." However, he continued to contact Edward Barsky and gave him permission to use his name as Barsky raised funds for his new initiatives in Mexico, Spain, and France. Walter had not gone Red, however. As well as helping Barsky, he supported liberal and anti-communist aid initiatives, such as the Emergency Rescue Committee's work to save intellectuals and artists who were stranded in France.

Although Walter's son-in-law, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., continued warnings about Communists' strategies, and while the Unitarian's Robert Dexter was denouncing all "fronts," in 1942 Walter Cannon remained an innocent Unitarian liberal. He did not condemn the Soviet Union after the Hitler Stalin Pact or the invasion of Poland. It was only near his death in October 1945 that he remarked that he and the Popular Front-era coalitions had been used by Communists.⁴³ Still, Walter remained a resource for the "left". After Cannon's death in 1945, Barsky's allies changed the name of the hospital they established in 1939 to the Cannon Memorial Hospital and raised money for it using Walter's name. The Barsky-related Boston

branch of the Bureau also continued its work after 1945. After the early battles it became a near perfect example of a postwar version of the 1930's Popular Front. Its supporters ranged from local Party members, Unitarian leaders, and famed scientists such as Norbert Weiner and Louis Ridenour.⁴⁴ But it had some unexpected enemies. Cornelia Cannon became convinced Walter had been exploited and in 1948 wrote letters to doctors around the country asking them not to donate to the Bureau or Barsky's new committee, the JAFRC, because it was misusing funds and Walter's name. Arthur Schlesinger Jr. agreed with his mother-in-law.

A Tenuous Compromise, But Barsky's Continued Influence

Although Walter Cannon made his peace with the leftists in the early 1940s, Herman Reissig had reevaluated whether the coalition was working. After learning of Sidney Hook and Roger Baldwin's accusations of bias in the distribution of aid and services by the Bureau and the Committee, in late 1938 Reissig began to respond to Baldwin's demands. Reissig considered eliminating the Communists in the Medical and North American organizations in New York and to focus on fund-raising for displaced Spanish refugees, turning all operational matters for Spanish relief over to the Quakers.

Then, in 1939, he back-tracked! After discussing the reorganization with others, discounting any connection between the Soviet Union's policies and the American left's aims and while realizing how important the Communists' connections were to the Committee's fund-raising for the needs of some 500,000 Spanish refugees in France, he decided on a compromise. He did not, as Baldwin demanded, replace his New York staff. In late 1939, he formed a committee that included Barsky and a leader of the radical New York City's teacher's union to draw-up a new constitution and shape a reorganization of both organizations. Reissig thought it guaranteed protection against any political influences in 1939's newly named Spanish Refugee Relief

Campaign and Barsky's newest version of the Bureau, the Medical Aid Committee for Spanish Refugees.⁴⁵

Reissig immediately put the new organizations to work. Funding initiatives were begun using a string of different names for efforts to send supplies to France and North Africa and to finance rescue ships to evacuate the Spanish refugees in the French camps to safe-havens in Mexico and South America. The Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Mexico had recently agreed to accept thousands of people if their transportation and basic needs were financed by others.

With the help of Barsky's connections to labor unions and "left" organizations, such as the Communist dominated International Workers Order (IWO) that provided life and other insurance to thousands of ethnics and union members, the new North American began to raise impressive funds. Through 1939 and early 1940 Reissig found the campaigns making progress and that the radicals in the organization were under control. He felt sure his new groups would placate the likes of Sidney Hook, as well as the French government that had after the signing of the Hitler-Stalin pact proscribed its Communist Party, sent its members to concentration camps, and announced it wanted nothing to do with foreign agencies having any tinges of radicalism. Certainly, no Communists or their friends could be tolerated.

Reissig Finally Makes a Stand, Barsky Tries to Appear Neutral, Sheba Strunsky Protests to Dexter, Making the Noel Field Connection

In March 1941, Reissig was forced to recognize he had been misled. Communists on his New York staff held an unauthorized and very public demonstration at the French consulate. Believing a false report from the International Coordinating Committee in Paris that the French government was about to force all the Spanish refugees to return to Spain and into the clutches of Franco's vengeful and brutal government, the protestors became very aggressive. Their actions

required police intervention. The French government was infuriated. It protested and threatened to end relations with Reissig's organizations. Reissig quickly reacted. He dismissed most of his New York employees. They did not leave silently.⁴⁶ They condemned Reissig as an appeaser and then launched their own organizations, ones centered on Edward Barsky's Communist, trade union and Internal Brigade contacts. Taking-over Reissig's New York offices, they launched campaigns for their versions of Spanish refugee relief under a range of names, eventually settling on United American Spanish Aid Committee, then, the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee (JAFRC). Although some hardline Communists such as Martha Dodd, Jesse Tomash, and Fred Bredekamp, the ex-IW -Stalinist riot-provoking union organizer, were important to the organization, its campaigns were able to avoid hints of Communist influence and attracted the support of several noted liberals, including at one point Eleanor Roosevelt, Harold Ickes,---and Walter Cannon and his friends.⁴⁷

There were problems for Barsky's new groups, however. Less than a year after the United was formed the State Department revoked its license to raise funds for work in non-neutral foreign nations, even France. One reason given was that the organization's operating overhead was too high. Another, and probably the true one, was that the United was judged to be too "political." Barsky's team did not give-in, however. While reorganizing the United in hopes of having its license restored, an associated group launched a funding campaign for its own rescue-ship mission for Spanish refugees. Although it was advertised as a Popular Front style operation without any political bias, the evidence indicates the primary goal was to bring Communists and the remaining loyal members of the International Brigade to safe-havens in Mexico.

The rescue ship attempt was a fiasco and endangered the reputation of Barsky and his United American Spanish Aid Committee. Although money had been collected, the United's

teams had not made sure they would have the necessary licenses for the ship they hoped to lease. The operation had to be cancelled. But even before that, Barsky's group had endured other major threats to its reputation. In early 1941, several liberal supporters announced they had been deceived and that they did not wish to be linked to any Communist-dominated work. Then, Herman Reissig and three major relief organization leaders, Frank Kingdon, Freda Kirchway, and Oswald Garrison Villard drafted a harsh condemnation of Barsky's organization. They sent it to major newspapers such as the *New York Times*. The letter announced they did not want the United States' rescue and relief efforts confused with theirs and that, while as good liberals they were not against communism as such, they demanded Barsky stop hiding that his organizations were Communist controlled.

As well, the Lovestone-IRA leaders were so upset they had Sheba Strunsky send a damning letter to Robert Dexter and his Unitarian associates in Boston. The Unitarians had recently formed the Unitarian Service Committee and had begun relief work in France. Strunsky's January 1941 letter warned the Unitarians against associating with any of Barsky's efforts. She thought it necessary to alert the Unitarians because she knew of Dexter and Cannon's early support of the Medical Bureau. Under all that pressure, Barsky's team finally called-off its renewed rescue-ship campaign, but without publicly admitting to its being Communist.⁴⁸ Barsky's supporters did not, however, abandon their hopes of continuing with relief work, although the United States government had withdrawn the JAFRC's certification because of "bias" and some legal-organizational weaknesses. Later, in 1944, the JAFRC's reputation suffered when its leaders grudgingly admitted to the government that their organization was confined to helping Spanish "Republican" refugees and the correct kind of members of the International Brigades.⁴⁹ That was about the same time that Barsky faced a major disappointment

and threat. In 1944, the United Auto Workers Union, itself left-wing, decided to end its official support. Although the other CIO unions remained faithful during the war years, the UAW's decision was a major blow to Barsky.

But in 1940 Barsky remained active, the Unitarians had not rejected him, and they would hire Noel Field, an American man more than friendly to Communism to lead the Unitarian relief work inside France . Noel had joined Party in 1930s, passed on confidential information to the Soviet when he was at the State Department and the League of Nations, and helped many Communists when he was sent to the Spanish border in 1939 to repatriate foreign soldiers.

Notes

Abbreviations

BU, Boston University, Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center, Field Papers
 Census, United States Census, various state censuses
 Family/ family history , data from Ancestry, MyHeritage, Heritage Quest databases
 FBI, United States Federal Bureau of Investigation
 FOIA, Freedom of Information Act request
 ICE . United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement
 NARA, United States National Archives and Records Administration
 Newspaper, data from Newspapers.com, newspaperarchive, etc.
 NYT, *New York Times*
 RG, Record Group
 USC, Unitarian Service Committee Records, Harvard University Divinity School Library, on-line.
 WP, *Washington Post*

¹ Benison, Saul, *et al.*, *Walter B. Cannon: The Life and Times of a Young Scientist* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1987).

² Cannon, Walter Bradford, M.D., *The Way of an Investigator: a Scientist's Experiences in Medical Research* (NY: Hafner Publishing Co., 1965, c1945).

³ On Massachusetts' reform movements before the Progressive Era: Abrams, Richard A., "A Paradox of Progressivism: Massachusetts on the Eve of Insurgency," *Political Science Quarterly*, 75 3 (Sept., 1960) : 379-399).

⁴ Diedrich, Maria I., *Cornelia James Cannon and the Future American Race* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010).

⁵ The relation of liberal/ecumenical Protestantism to the 'ideology' of the pragmatic reformers is touched - on in Hollinger, David A., *After Cloven Tongues of Fire* (Princeton, NJ : Princeton University Press, 2013)

⁶ Yerkes was also one the most important scholars in the emerging intelligence testing movement. He led the team of psychologists that devised the tests for America's WWI soldiers, the world's first mass intelligence testing effort. See, for example, *Army Mental Tests* (NY: H Holt, 1920).

⁷ McQuaid, Kim, "An American Owenite: Edward A. Filene and the Parameters of Industrial Reform, 1890-1937," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 35, 1 (Jan., 1976): 77-94; Saunders, Eleanor J. "Educational Activities of the Filene Organization," *Journal of Educational Sociology*, 12, #1, Training Programs in Business and Industry (Sept., 1938): 44-58; on Smith, U.S. Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, 83rd Congress, *First Session on Interlocking Subversion in Government Departments April 10 1953* (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1953); ;<http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/~sch01170>.

⁸ Bartlett, Harriett M., "Ida M. Cannon: Pioneer in Medical Social Work," *Social Service Review*, 49, 2 (Jun., 1975): 208-229; Cannon, Ida M., *Social Work in Hospitals: A Contribution to Progressive Medicine* (NY: Russell Sage Foundation 1930, c1913); Cannon, Ida M., *On the Social Frontiers of Medicine: Pioneering in Medical Social Service* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952).

⁹ O'Brien, Laurie "A Bold Plunge into the Sea of Values": The Career of Dr. Richard Cabot. *The New England Quarterly*. 58 4 (Dec. 1958):533-553.

¹⁰ Siegel, Katherine A.S. , *Loans and Legitimacy: The Evolution of Soviet-American Relations 1919-1933* (Lexington, KY: The University of Kentucky Press, 1996).

¹¹ On Canon's politics and ideology: Wolfe, Elin L., et al., *Walter B. Cannon, Science and Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); Kuznick, Peter J., *Beyond the Laboratory: Scientists as Political Activists in 1930s America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Link, Eugene Perry, *The Social Ideas of American Physicians* (London: Associated University Press, 1992). On Cannon's turn to arm for defense and fighting Nazis, Walter B. Cannon et al, "Peace Resolution of the American Association of Scientific Workers, *Science*, New Series 91 2372 (Jun. 21, 1940): 596-7."

¹² Alexander, Robert J., *The Right Opposition: The Lovestoneites and the International Communist Opposition of the 1930s* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Pres, 1981); Chester, Eric Thomas, *Covert Network: Progressives, the International Rescue Committee, and the CIA* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995).

¹³ Swanberg, W. A. *Norman Thomas: The Last Idealist* (New York: Scribner, 1976).

¹⁴ Hersh, Burton, *The Old Boys: The American Elite and the Origins of the CIA* (NY: Charles Scribners and Sons, 1992) on Lovestone and Cold War.

¹⁵ *NYT*, 5-14-1979.

¹⁷ Alexander, Robert J., *The Right Opposition: The Lovestoneites and the International Communist Opposition of the 1930s* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008); <https://www.marxists.org/archive/shachtma/1935/01/letters.htm>; Merkley, Paul, *Reinhold Niebuhr* (Montreal-QC: McGill-Queens University Press, 1975).

¹⁸ Ceplair, Larry, *Anti-Communism in Twentieth Century America* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2011).

¹⁹ Fry, Varian, *Assignment Rescue, an Autobiography by Varian Fry* (NY: Scholastic Inc., 1992; Marino, Andy, *A Quiet American: The Secret war of Varian Fry* (NY: St. Martins Press, 1999).

²⁰ Alexander, *Op. cit.*; Kutulas, Judy, *The Long War: The Intellectual People's Front and Anti-Stalinism, 1930-1940* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995).

²¹ Cottrell, Robert C., *Roger Nash Baldwin and the American Civil Liberties Union*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

²² Marton, Kati, *True Believer: Stalin's Last American Spy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2016), 48.

²³ Wolfe, *Op. cit.*; Kuznick, *Op. cit.*

²⁴ Wolfe, *Op. cit.* Deery, Phillip, *Red Apple: Communism and McCarthyism in Cold War New York* (New York: Empire State Editions, 2014); Link, *Op. cit.*

²⁵ Much about Cannon and such contacts is found in: Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Walter B. Cannon collection, esp./ b51 53 54; Cannon Family Papers, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University.

²⁶ Cannon Papers, <http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/~sch01170.esp>, b 47-54, folders 610-712. Smith, Eric, "The Communist Party, Cooptation, and Spanish Republican Aid," *American Communist History*, 8, 2 (Dec. 2009):137-165, treats the Medical Bureau as Communist controlled from its earliest years, then displaced, then reappearing to dominate the JAFRC.

²⁷ "Communist activities among aliens and national groups. Hearings before the Subcommittee on Immigration and Naturalization of the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, Eighty-first Congress, first session, on S. 1832, a bill to amend the Immigration act of October 16, 1918, as amended" at http://www02.us.archive.org/stream/communistactiviti02unit/communistactiviti02unit_djvu.txt

²⁸ Deery, Phillip, "A Blot Upon Liberty": McCarthyism, Dr. Barsky and the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee," *American Communist History*, Vol. 8, 2 (2009): 167-196;

http://dlib.nyu.edu/findings/html/tamwag/alba_photo_125/admininfo.html; Derry, 'Red Apple' *Op. cit.*

²⁹ <http://www.documentstalk.com/wp/field-noel-haviland-1904-1970>.

³⁰ *NYT*, 'Medical Bureau,' *passim*, 1936-1939

³¹ Kuznick, *Op. cit.*; Shapiro, Edward S., *Letters of Sidney Hook* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995); Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Walter B. Cannon collection, *Op. cit.*

³² Ceplair, Larry, *Op. cit.*; Hook, Sidney, *Out of Step: An Unquiet Life in the 20th Century* (NY: Harper and Row, 1987).

³³ Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, Harvard Medical School Walter B. Cannon collection;

³⁴ Countway, *Op. cit.*, "Thomas to Cannon," 4-6-1939.

³⁵ Ogden, August Raymond, *The Dies Committee; a study of the Special House Committee for the Investigation of Un-American Activities, 1938-1944* (Washington, D.C., Catholic University of America Press, 1945). On register, ,

³⁶ Countway, *Op. cit.*; Thomas and Baldwin to Cannon, 4-1939 USC collection.

³⁷ Reeves, Jo Ann Williams, "A Study of a Pulitzer Prize Winning Journalist: Frederick Enos Woltman: 1929-1954," MA Thesis, East Tennessee State University, August, 1967; USC 16031/2 (4) Fritchman to Joy 1-17-1943. woltman had been somewhat of a radical in his college days at the University of Pittsburgh but soon became an ant-Communist.

³⁸ *NYT*, 1-4-40.

³⁹ Countway, *Op. Cit.*, 4-1939.

⁴⁰ Wolfe, *Op. cit.*; Countway, *Op. cit.*, 4-11-1939.

⁴¹ Countway, *Op. cit.*, Thomas to Cannon, 4-12-39; Azcarate, Pablo, "Protection of Minorities and Human Rights," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, (Jan., 1946): 124-8; Pedersen, Susan, Review Essay: "Back to the League of Nations," *American Historical Review*, 112 4 (Oct. 2007), 1091-1117.;

⁴² Barth, Bernd-Rainer, & Werner Schweizer, *Der Fall Noel Field: Schlüsselfigur der Schauprozesse in Osteuropa The Case of Noel Field: Key Figure in the Show Trials in Eastern Europe*. Assisted by Thomas Grimm, (Berlin, Germany: Basis Druck, 2005), I, p 431,476, 519 (Barth was supported by the Soros foundations); Payne, Stanley G., *The Spanish Civil War: the Soviet Union and Communism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

⁴³ Wolfe, *Op. cit.*

⁴⁴ USC, 16114/5, 1946.

⁴⁵ Wolf and Link, *Op. cit.*

⁴⁶ *NYT*, 2-4-1941, *passim*.

⁴⁷ Dilling, Elizabeth, *The Red Network: A "Who's Who" and Handbook of Radicalism for Patriots* (Kenilworth, IL: Pub. by the Author, 1934-5) Link, *Op. cit.*; *NYT*, 1939-41, *passim*; Countway, *Op. cit.*

⁴⁸ USC, 16114, Strunsky letter. 1 20-1941,

⁴⁹ NARA, RG220, b121; USC 16031/2 (3), 16032/2(2).

Deleted: Chapter 2¶

¶ More Unitarian Problems in Boston and France, Connections to Cambridge's and New York's Radicals, Noel Field ¶

¶ While the Dubinsky-Lovestone-Strunsky-Hook group was challenging Barsky's organizations, including the Cannon-sponsored Medical Bureau, other men and another conflict important to the Unitarians began to play a role in the association's postwar crises and, eventually, Noel Field's ordeals. The men were Stephen Hole Fritchman, a Unitarian leftist, and Lawrence Davidow, an angry ex-radical and ally of Jay Lovestone ⁴⁹. The 1940 conflict was about Communist influences within the Unitarian's youth group.¶

¶ Stephen Fritchman vs Davidow¶

¶ Early in his life Stephen Fritchman identified with America's poor, declared himself a pacifist, and began seeking a deeper meaning to life than provided by his stressed Mid-western Quaker upbringing. In his early twenties, after a brief exploration of a business career, he turned to religion. He began as a Methodist, eventually attending the Union Theological Seminary in New York City just a few years before he then leftist but future anti-Communist Reinhold Niebuhr guided the institution. Fritchman soon felt constrained by the formalities of mainstream denominations and in the early 1930s became a Unitarian minister, marrying into a wealthy Boston Unitarian family. A usually controversial pastor, he settled in Bangor Maine. While there, his sermons and writings became increasingly secular and left-wing as he and his wife Frances were concluding that even the Unitarians were too rigid and insensitive to the nation's social problems. Stephen soon gained notoriety as a member of and spokesman for many Communist groups. He also became an early supporter and life-long friend of Edward Barsky and his organizations. ¶

¶ Lawrence (Lazarus) Davidow had a very different life. Born in 1895 to a Russian Yiddish-speaking Jewish merchant in Detroit, Michigan "Larry" earned a law degree while becoming an important figure in the state and the national Socialist Party--at a time when it had a quite radical platform. He soon began changing his beliefs. When extremists attempted to take-over the state's Socialist Party after the Russian Revolution Larry led Michigan Socialist's old-guard's counter offensive. He did not abandon socialism, however. He aided strikers in the 1920s and early 1930s but was beginning a political journey from the Socialist to the Democratic Party, then, during the Cold War, to the Republican's ultra-conservative right-wing. ¶

¶ Davidow made another profound and surprising change, a religious one, in the 1930s. The Jewish boy became a leading Michigan Unitarian. He also became the legal advisor to Jay Lovestone and Francis Henson as they guided the United Autoworkers Union's (UAW's) leader Homer Martin in his 1937-9 fight to ouster the union's Communists. ¶

¶ Fritchman as a Radical¶

¶ In Massachusetts, as Lovestone and Martin were fighting the UAW's battles, a new phase of Stephen Fritchman's life began. In 1938, the liberal Unitarian minister Charles Joy's tenure as head of the Unitarian's youth efforts ended and Fritchman was asked to replace him. Stephen left his Bangor, Maine ministry and settled in Boston. Immediately, he was plunged into a major controversy. One of Stephen's responsibilities was the supervision of the Unitarian's major youth group, the Young Peoples Religious Union. Stephen aligned it with the socialistic American Youth Congress (AYC), a large nation-wide umbrella organization formed in 1935 that campaigned for peace, economic, and social justice programs beyond those of the New Deal, and for the abolition of such "militaristic" requirements such as mandatory ROTC training for college students. The AYC also combated fascism with many of its members fighting on the Republican side during the Spanish Civil War.⁴⁹ ¶

¶ With over five hundred supporting organizations and thousands of members, and the help of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, the AYC...