

Chapter 3

Unitarian Liberals Meet the Far Left, Noel and the OSS and the Communists

The first recorded contact between the Unitarians and Edward Barsky came in late July 1941 when his organization was still known as the United American Spanish Aid Committee, not yet the Joint Anti-Fascist Relief Committee (JAFRC). Charles Joy had a face-to-face meeting with Barsky in New York City, in the building that housed Dolivet's Free World Association and where Joy would soon have his own Unitarian Service Committee's (USC) office. The relationship with Dolivet would become so close Joy frequently used the Free World letterhead paper for his communications.¹

Barsky indicated to Joy that he desired to cooperate with the Unitarians and would pay the expenses of a committee employee to go North Africa to investigate conditions in the Sahara refugee work camps where so many Comrades were suffering. Joy thought sending a USC man would be acceptable, even welcomed by the French, and would be a non-political humanitarian act. He quickly found Vichy's officials willing to allow the survey because their government, carrying the cost of reparations for the German occupation of France, also had the burden of supporting hundreds of thousands of refugees who were without any foreign country willing to accept them. Vichy's resources were stretched-thin, and it had searched for ways make refugee support as inexpensive as possible. One alternative seemed promising, but it was becoming a costly failure and an international embarrassment. Vichy's planners thought the long-term internees could be employed on somewhat of a make-work project to build the long-dreamed-of Trans-Sahara railway from Algeria across the desert to Dakar, the African gateway to the sea. The project would give the internees something to do while saving the government from

employing high-cost labor. Many Communists and members of the International Brigades interned in North Africa were assigned to the project and other refugees were enticed to leave France to work on the railroad.

Barsky and Helen Bryan had been in communication with the North African camps' Communist internees and had learned of the brutal conditions on the railway project. Barsky had asked the Red Cross and the Quakers to accept monies to aid the Comrades but had been turned down. Only later would the Quakers reluctantly agree to help. After the Quaker agreement North Africa became the second largest recipient of Barsky's refugee funds, with Mexico in the lead.² Barsky and Bryan were also awaiting the opportunity to launch another large-scale program to bring thousands of Republicans (really Brigade members) interned in North Africa to Mexico. That, however, had to await the Allies' Operation Torch invasion of North Africa in late 1942 and another year's fund-raising and planning. Even then, Barsky and Bryan were unable to meet their initial goal of 30,000 resettlements.

For Joy, Relief Trumps the Communist Connection

But in summer 1941 Barsky's focus was immediate relief for refugees in the Sahara camps. The Unitarian's board considered Barsky's proposition that now included aid distribution with the refugee camps in addition to the survey. USC's board members were not averse to beginning a relationship with him even though in January they had been alerted by Sheba Strunsky of the Lovestone-International Relief Association (IRA) organization that Barsky's group was a front dominated by Communists. Strunsky's message had been preceded by notices in national newspapers that important liberals had condemned Barsky and that his organization's government licenses had been suspended.³

Difficult to explain, the Unitarian's board took little notice of all that and voted to begin a relationship, even though the committee had no representative in North Africa. Charles Joy was asked to make the final decision about the project as soon as he could return to Lisbon. If it seemed practical, he was to explore how to get a representative into the Sahara camps. The board's approval contained two caveats, however. First, if a representative was sent all camps were to be surveyed, not just ones listed by Barsky. The second was more important and revealing. If the project went ahead there was to be no publicity because any linkage to Barsky would ire the French authorities and undermine all the committee's work in France—and perhaps America. The Communist issue was not directly mentioned by the committee. It just wrote that secrecy was needed because Barsky had recently published some quite damaging articles about the Sahara railway project and the treatment of refugees.

Joy was not worried about Barsky's articles or about Communist connections, and he began a long and frustrating attempt to obtain travel documents for North Africa. Although he had already hired the American Arthur Lee as an assistant in Lisbon, Charles wanted to be the on-site committee representative for the Sahara project and for a newly proposed joint effort with the Emergency Rescue Committee (ERC) to save refugees stranded in Casablanca.⁴ Frustrating Joy, the State Department kept delaying its approval of the papers he needed to enter North Africa.

The “Earmarked” Mistake and Dexter's Discontent

Robert Dexter failed to leave a detailed record of his thoughts about Barsky's Sahara proposal but there are clear traces of his discontent over the next stages of the Joy - Barsky's relations. One of Dexter's goals when he “temporarily” replaced Charles in Lisbon during mid-1941 was to make Charles appreciate the need to put boundaries on the Unitarian's foreign relief programs.

During the few weeks when he and Charles both were in Lisbon Dexter must have discussed that with him. However, shortly before Joy returned to Lisbon in September 1941 he made another agreement with Barsky and Bryan. With that, Bryan thought she had found the “non-political” organization she needed for Barsky’s French projects.

The USC was to deliver supplies to Barsky’s favorites in the French camps. Noel Field, who was on a quick trip to the United States in July 1941,⁵ may have been involved in the negotiations. Unfortunately, Joy did not understand all the agreement’s ramifications, perhaps because he deeply believed the rhetoric about the new war-time Popular Front and Communists being cooperative anti-fascists.. He dismissed IRA’s Strunsky ‘s newest warnings about Barsky, treating her complaints as a part of a pointless squabble between leftists. Joy finalized the arrangement, not appreciating involved the Unitarians in serious political problems. He agreed to have the Unitarians take the responsibility of delivering aid packages to Bryan-specified prisoners and internees in all the camps and prisons in France--and in Spain. . Bryan needed that help because her current means of getting packages into the French camps through a mysterious Mr. Pelz was proving inadequate.⁶ Bryan was especially pleased when Joy informed her that Noel Field would begin the French deliveries. Meanwhile, the USC’s Lisbon staff searched for a way into Spain, perhaps through Quaker or IRA-ERC’s contacts.⁷ The Bryan’s delight over Noel’s involvement was probably due to previous contacts with him. Noel, Barsky, and influential camp-resident Communists already knew each other because of Noel’s earlier repatriation work on the France-Spain border.

Some Internees are More Equal than Others

Bryan guaranteed the expenditures which, Joy believed, would more than cover the USC’s costs. That was good news as the committee was, at the time, desperate for funds. Bryan

immediately drew-up lists of the favored refugees. The first contained six hundred names of those in the French camps. All the evidence indicates the names on her lists were Communists--- and only those of the correct Stalinist variety. Additional evidence indicates the lists were used to reward only those who were following Party instructions. Joy never seemed to realize that, or the dangers inherent in using the lists.⁸ Bryan then began communicating directly with Noel Field, bypassing both Dexter and Joy. That caused an uproar in Boston. Bryan was ordered to stop contacting Noel. She should send any messages through the Unitarian's headquarters, she was told. One reason for the demand was that French censors were reading most communications.

The committee soon had more to worry about. Robert Dexter's reaction to the Joy-Bryan French agreement was unambiguously and angrily negative. He appreciated the Unitarian's need for money to continue its work, but he regretted the connections Joy had made to what he now labeled "Communist front organizations." Dexter went further and openly criticized Joy's constantly increasing deviations from the committee's original mandates. There was more behind Dexter's objections. Dexter later wrote his earlier support of Cannon's Medical Bureau had taught him that one could never trust Communist groups. Dexter was so upset he sent a memorandum to the USC's board warning them about Joy taking funding "shortcuts" and about his links to "two communist organizations."⁹

Although he was the executive director of the Unitarian Service Committee, Dexter lost this battle against Joy and could not stop the shift of focus of the committee's work from emigration to relief. Although he had to accept Joy's decisions, Dexter waited for the time when he could at least reduce the influence of leftists in the USC, specifically Joy and Noel Field. Quite soon, the USC made another decision that would back-fire. As the Bryan-Barsky relationship deepened,

the Unitarian's fund-raising literature featured its work helping Spanish Republicans and members of the International Brigades. At the time, it was thought that such advertising would vastly increase donations to the committee. The advertising worked, at least among the American left. As well, the Barsky-Bryan group began supporting the committee's efforts in more countries, even Switzerland. Barsky's JAFRC became the USC's largest non-governmental donor but most of Barsky's contributions remained, like those from the Evangelicals and a Congregational group, "earmarked." The Barsky funds were dangerous because they were obviously "political," always devoted to helping only what he called Republicans and Brigaders. That worried some observers, including American government investigators, who were beginning to think the Unitarian's had stopped being a non-political humanitarian relief provider and were aiding Communists.¹⁰

Although Joy knew of the government's growing concerns, the Unitarians did more for Barsky than deliver relief. Dr. Frederick May Eliot, the president of the Unitarian Association, agreed to be on the board of the Barsky organization. Stephen Fritchman, the left-leaning minister and editor of the Unitarian's *Christian Register*, soon became a very public supporter as he became Barsky's friend. In 1943, Fritchman also led an internal Unitarian committee's defense against new accusations by Sheba Strunsky that Barsky was misleading the association. In addition, Charles Joy had become a visible Barsky-Bryan supporter. For example, he appeared on-stage with Barsky during huge New York City fund-raising rallies. Noel Field was so attached to Bryan and Barsky that after he reached safety in Switzerland in late 1942 he asked his brother Hermann, who was in New York City, to contact Bryan and ask for more aid for the Brigade members in Switzerland.¹¹

Noel's Medical Mission, Ida Cannon's Training, the OSS

Before then, as Noel Field began helping the Barsky-Bryan effort in Vichy, he was planning the next phases of his Unitarian work. They all would plunge the committee in conflicts.

Noel never envisioned working alone and he immediately cooperated with the community of relief workers in France. At the end of 1940, just after Dexter returned to the United States, and as Charles Joy was again settling into Lisbon, Donald Lowrie of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) formed the Nimes Committee.¹² Its goal was to have the some thirty different relief agencies working in Vichy France meet to coordinate their activities. Although Varian Fry had become a pariah and was not allowed membership, Noel immediately became a central figure in Lowrie's group. After surveying the needs of the refugees and the capabilities of the relief agencies, Noel decided the Unitarians should focus on providing medical care and the creation and support of kindergartens---not emigration. Noel was confident about managing medical and children's services because of his training at Ida Cannon's medical social-work school and because his wife Herta had a long-time interest in education. As a first step, in early 1941 Noel convinced Charles Joy to hire Rene Zimmer, the well-regarded refugee physician from Strasburg. Joy appealed to the Unitarian committee's board to search for monies to support Zimmer's work. Robert Dexter soon, but reluctantly, provided financial help and the Children's Aid Society (OSE), a Jewish agency in France, made additional contributions.¹³

Then, after agreeing to cooperate with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and returning to Europe in mid-1941, Robert Dexter channeled extra monies to Zimmer in exchange for his doing "intelligence" work. That would later include passing-on OSS funds Noel Field sent from Switzerland to resistance forces in France, such as the Communist connected Free Germany group.¹⁴ With the help of his wife, Zimmer quickly established a large medical clinic and dental office for refugees in Marseille. He recruited a large staff of exiled doctors and nurses and,

alongside Noel, visited the camps to gauge medical needs. When allowed, Zimmer provided care to the inmates inside the camps. At the same time, Herta Field recruited teachers and supplies for the schools. Noel used his connections in Switzerland to obtain impressive amounts of medical supplies for Zimmer and other camp doctors, as well as supplies for the schools, and food for the internees.

Noel's Packages, Special Schools, and the Liberated Nations—Too Much, Even for Charles Joy

In the early 1940s Zimmer's medical services did not involve the committee in controversy, but Noel's package deliveries for Barsky and his continuing emigration and "illegal" escape work did. Distributing Barsky's packages to favored Communists fit with Noel's ideology but not with the Unitarian's need to be viewed as above politics---although some deviations from the neutrality policy had been approved by the Unitarian's board when it accepted Dexter's declarations the services were for anti-Nazis and Howard Brooks' open statement that he wanted to aid only "resistors."¹⁵ Most of that was within the boundaries of the Popular Front ideals, but for many, including Dexter, Noel's helping only one type of Communist (Stalinists) went beyond acceptable limits. Concerns intensified when protests from the refugee camps about the Barsky packages reached America. It was feared the issue might become public, threatening fund raising and the USC's license.¹⁶ There were more reactions to Noel's supposed favoritism. There were complaints he was distributing other types of aid in a biased way and that he gave emigration and underground-escape help only to Party members, not socialists, Trotsky's supporters, or other anti-Nazis.

Noel's help to two refugees especially angered many non-Communists in France. Erich Mielke was one, the other was Willi Kreikemeier. Both were old-time and hardline German

Communists who led the Stalinist factions in the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War. Mielke had participated in the earlier purges in the Soviet Union and became infamous, as did Bela Kun, the leader of the bloody post-World War I Hungarian revolution, as brutal Stalinist enforcers in Spain. Mielke was rewarded for such work. After World War II, he achieved great power as the director of the feared Stasi secret police in East Germany.¹⁷ Unlike Mielke, who escaped from the internment camps and left France, or Siegfried Rädcl who was taken by the Gestapo and executed, Wille Kreikemeyer remained undercover in France and became the head of the German contingent of the veterans of the Brigade, an administrative leader in the resistance movement, and, important for Noel, a leader of the apparently independent Free Germany (Comité Allemagne Libre pour L'Ouest, CALPO) underground coalition. CALPO had a large branch based in Marseille, later Paris, and had links to the French maquis and other paramilitary groups. CALPO advertised itself as a solely anti-fascist organization devoted to fighting the Nazi's within France and, if possible, Germany itself--but it was known to be Communist dominated.¹⁸

Noel, the USC, and the OSS in Switzerland

After Germany's occupation of Vichy in November 1942 Noel had to move his operations to Switzerland. As soon as he arrived he also became an Office of Strategic Service asset. His actions there led to additional complaints, including ones that he was demanding oaths of loyalty to the Party before helping anyone. By the end of the war, there were even protests that his medical, dental, and social organizations in France and Switzerland were serving only his favorites. Added to that were complaints about similar biases in aid distribution among the Spanish refugees in Mexico by Barsky's group.¹⁹

Especially troublesome was Noel's Swiss-based program to train social workers for newly liberated nations and his hopes to put them in place before non-Communists could return to their home countries. Noel had again relied on Ida Cannon's training when he created a school in Switzerland, but he added his own type of recruitment policy. It appeared to many that he was selecting only Stalinist Communists; that he was using his Unitarian-financed school as a means of persuading the Swiss government to grant special releases from the internment camps for his favorites, and that he was leveraging his connections to America's (OSS) to obtain special permits for his students' travel into liberated nations while exerting his influence to prevent such permissions for non-Communists. Noel's training-school deeply worried the Swiss government, so much so that Noel felt it necessary to prove that it was not filled with "satanic reds." Noel also seems to have ignored the needs of socialists causing complaints by many in the French resistance, including those in contact with Allen Dulles (the lead OSS man in Switzerland).²⁰ Noel's school and his statements about his postwar ambitions for postwar Europe even worried the usually adoring Charles Joy.²¹

Noel vs. Joy's Postwar Plans, the Plot Thickens, Dexter and Joy Concerned

When the Allies began their thrust into Europe even Charles Joy began questioning Noel's actions. Joy suspected Noel was undermining many of his own plans for the Unitarian's role in liberated Europe. At the end of 1944, when an Allied victory seemed inevitable, Joy convinced the Unitarians, despite Robert Dexter's objections, to consider expanding its aid efforts into Eastern and Central Europe. Joy wired Noel asking him to explore the possibilities. Noel quickly replied that he foresaw a Unitarian presence in at least Prague, Warsaw, Budapest, Munich, Belgrade, and Vienna. Joy may have been as ambitious, but he was more cautious than Noel and wanted additional information before launching any programs.²²

Despite still recovering from a serious eye infection that sidelined him for two months Noel worked on plans for an expanded Unitarian presence.²³ He soon did more than plan. He began to act before gaining Joy's approval for operations in the liberated areas. Joy was startled and upset. His cables and letters warned Noel that all efforts and staff appointments had to await the USC's formal approval, would have to be strictly non-political, and were to only be for qualified refugees, not residents of the liberated countries. Critical to future relations with Noel, Charles emphasized that all managers of future programs would have to be Americans, explaining that the United States government and the association's regulations were unequivocal about that. In an additional message to Noel Joy restated the USC board's policy that no Communists were to be in any important position in any of the new offices.²⁴

There were good reasons for Joy's demands. Ignoring the rules of America's War Relief Control Board and the National War Fund would threaten the USC's status and funding. The Control Board had the power to rescind the right to do any overseas work while The War Fund was a Community Chest-like fund raising organization that did not tolerate deviations from its strict guidelines for efficiency and accountability.²⁵ Charles also informed Noel the USC had eight women in training at America's Haverford College and that Henry Copley Green, an experienced relief worker, was waiting in Lisbon to take charge of the Unitarian's Paris office when it could be officially reopened.²⁶ Noel was to use them, not Europeans, Joy stipulated. The increasing friction between Joy and Noel came as a surprise to the Unitarians because Joy had repeatedly told them how much he admired Noel's planning for postwar activities, but when he discovered that Noel had started programs in the Eastern bloc with his own social workers in charge Joy left-fly one of the few public criticisms of Noel he ever made.

Noel responded to Joy's protests, stating that he never disobeyed Charles. He claimed there were only misunderstandings because there had been poor communications. Noel said he believed Joy had told him to go-ahead and establish programs in the liberated countries. Then, Noel wrote that poor communications also meant he did not understand the requirement that all office directors be Americans. Noel added that unless he had acted quickly the association would have been blocked from entering the liberated countries. Noel emphasized the leaders of the new nations would have been insulted by having any "patronizing and domineering" Americans in charge of the Unitarian's efforts.²⁷

Noel soon became aggressive about the situation in Yugoslavia, partly because he had emotional ties to the nation's Communist movement. He was frustrated because he was blocked from establishing a USC branch there. His first relations with its Communists came during his Spanish Civil War repatriation work when he helped the large Yugoslavian contingent. He continued aiding them while they were in France and Switzerland's refugee camps. Noel claimed the lack of Unitarian success in Yugoslavia in 1945 was due to the association's decision to provide services rather than material relief. He complained that while he had smuggled-in two top Yugoslavian leaders during the war, thus earning the nation's gratitude, the association's service policy and its demand to have control over any activities had alienated the new Yugoslavian government. A chance to help 350,000 orphans was lost, Noel protested.²⁸

The Ukrainian Issue, Noel's Anger, More Conflicts Within the USC

Noel did more than send excuses and complaints to Charles Joy. In early 1945, a Ukrainian group in the United States wanted to aid war prisoners and refugees in Europe and asked the USC to manage another earmarked relief program.. Joy accepted, but cautiously.²⁹ He soon had a similar agreement for Lithuanians who were outside their homeland. Noel exploded! He declared both

groups had sided with the Nazis, had done terrible things during the war, and were “dark forces of reaction.” He had some justification for using that term. Some Ukrainians sided with the Nazis after the invasion of Russia and participated in pogroms. Noel was so enraged that in an emotional moment he composed a resignation letter, but rescinded it. He then bypassed Joy and the USC. He wrote his brother Hermann in New York City, asking him to again visit Edward Barsky and urge that he and other large donors pressure the committee to reverse its Ukrainian decision and return to aiding only “progressives.” Noel, now worried about his reputation among the Unitarian leadership, urged Hermann to make sure that no one knew he was involved with any anti-Ukraine work.³⁰

Noel was unaware he had many sympathetic allies in the USC. He had gained new supporters because of a spill-over from the growing rift between Charles Joy and Robert Dexter. One of Noel’s allies, Edward Cahill, the committee’s new associate director, laid the blame for the Ukrainian decision on Dexter and declared supporting the Ukrainians was as Noel thought “anti-progressive.” Charles Joy went further and inexplicably claimed Dexter always had a “mindless policy of aiding anyone.” Cahill and, Joy and their allies’ protests were unsuccessful. The Ukrainian program was not cancelled.³¹

Noel, while awaiting word from Herman about Barsky’s response to the plea to stop the Ukrainian aid, had sent another Ukrainian related letter to the committee. It was ten pages long and blunt, perhaps rude. It clearly followed the Party line. Noel declared that aiding any groups that were from a country now occupied by the Soviets would alienate the Russians. Wasn’t the committee aware the Soviet Union was demanding all citizens of the countries they now occupied be returned to their homes? Unitarian programs such as those for the Ukrainian refugees would interfere with that, he wrote. Noel went further and emphasized that helping the

Ukrainians would turn every European nation against the USC. Noel did not mention the probability the Ukrainians would be forced to returned to their homeland to be executed.

The committee took notice of Noel's letter and began a re-investigation of the Ukrainian program. As it was conducting its survey Helen Bryan of the JAFRC sent an emotionally-charged and scathing accusatory letter to Joy concerning Ukrainian aid after Hermann Field succeeded in reaching Barsky. Bryan's letter echoed Noel's arguments. Bryan did not get the response she desired, however. The usually mid-mannered Charles Joy, who now accepted the aid policy, responded with this own heated letter, one with a surprising conclusion given his earlier position on the Ukrainian question. He wrote Bryan there was no foundation for her complaints because the people the USC was planning to aid were slave laborers taken from their homes by the Nazis.³²

At the same time, Noel and Cahill seem to have finally accepted Joy's decision to provide only services, not aid, in the liberated nations.³³ In turn, most of the Unitarians eventually forgave Noel for his aggressive leftish policies in what became the Soviet's Eastern Bloc. In an official 1957 history the committee stated it was able to establish its "eastern" offices so quickly only because of Noel's contacts with underground exiles and resistance fighters. The history did not reveal that Robert Dexter had always opposed those programs, believing they were Communist oriented and a waste of the Unitarians' scarce funds.³⁴

Guilty With Very, Very Extenuating Circumstances Says Joy – Oh? Says Robert Dexter

By 1945, despite what Robert Dexter was coming to believe about Noel's Communism, the Unitarians publicly denied engaging in any ideological favoritism. They insisted their association had never discriminated on the basis of political belief.³⁵ But, during some later confrontations Noel, Charles Joy, Stephen Fritchman, and other Noel supporters admitted to the

Unitarian's new leaders that Noel had been less than even-handed in his aid programs—but justifiably.³⁶ Far beyond what had been stated earlier about his aiding just “friends of democracy”, they acknowledged he had served a disproportionate number of Communists, but had done so for humanitarian reasons, not because of ideological bias.

There were several variations of that argument. Most were based on Noel's statements. Noel explained-away his supposed favoritism by the need to save those most likely to help mankind in the future.³⁷ Later, he turned to demographics. The French camps and the resistance groups had hugely disproportionate numbers of Communists and disproportionate numbers of potential leaders, ones likely to be sent to German concentration camps, Noel wrote. Fritchman, Joy, and Howard Brooks added another variation. They defended the old Barsky-Bryan package program and Noel's special emigration efforts for those in the Communist cadres by appealing to equality. They asserted the earmarked packages and other programs were a counterbalance to the supposedly neutral, but anti-Communist bent of the other relief organizations. Joy and the others asserted that Noel's special attention to Communists in the camps, and in the French resistance forces, was compensating for the socialistic prejudice of organizations such as the ERC and IRA.³⁸

Charles Joy went further while defending Noel. At times, he overlooked some important facts. Joy claimed that it was Strunsky's socialist group that had, despite the Unitarian's wishes, prevented Barsky's organization from joining the National War Fund, the centralized funding organization led by the United States government, and that it was Strunsky's socialistic successor to the IRA, the International Rescue Committee, which blocked the formation of a new broad coalition to oversee relief in liberated France. Joy laid too much blame on Strunsky. Although she voted against the Barsky organization's admission to the War Fund from early

1943 to the end of the war, the Fund's executives refused Barsky's applications because they judged his organization as "propagandistic". As well, the battles over who would control a postwar coordinating committee for French aid involved more players than Strunsky.³⁹

Noel used arguments like those of the Unitarian leaders to defend his other postwar policies. At the end of 1944, when he wrote supporting the USC's new Jo Tempi-directed office in Paris he admitted that Jo had turned away many Jews and Spanish refugees, but only because she focused on helping resistance fighters from Eastern Europe and Germany. But Noel did not admit to any political bias. The reason for Jo's selectivity, he said, was that other agencies, such as the Strunsky-Henson-Lovestone IRC, already aided Spanish and Jewish refugees. Noel emphasized that German refugees had no diplomatic consular to help them, so they needed special attention. In addition, he argued that because the American military's occupation authorities did not allow Germans or Austrians to have jobs, they needed more aid than others. Typically, Noel did not mention any Communist connections.⁴⁰

While Charles Joy and the other Unitarian leaders accepted Noel's explanations, Robert Dexter again became enraged by what Noel had been doing and by what had been going on in Massachusetts. Although Dexter was now in Europe, he remained the executive director of the Unitarian Service Committee and was central to the OSS-Unitarian activities. With Joy as an "acting director" in Boston, and with communications between Europe and America difficult, there were bound to be some misunderstandings and frictions. Unfortunately, much more than friction developed in late 1945 and early 1946.

The Gentle Unitarians in Ungentle Situations, Spies in Switzerland

Robert Dexter had been voicing his discontent with Charles Joy and his policies since early 1942 when Robert sent the Unitarian's board a warning about Joy aligning with Barsky and

with another unnamed Communist. Dexter was also criticizing Charles for alienating American and French officials, and for his habit of failing to inform Dexter of his plans. An underlying irritant was that although Robert (stuck in Portugal) was the official head of the Unitarian Service Committee, Charles, in the United States, was taking-over that role. Within a few months, Robert's discontents grew into outrage. In November 1942, the mild-mannered Dexter became angry after he learned that although he prepared an office for Noel Field in Switzerland in the event Vichy was occupied by the Germans, Joy asked Noel to travel to Lisbon to discuss a new job in Portugal rather than Switzerland. Joy's communications about that had not reached Dexter immediately and Joy's messages may have been an emergency attempt to give Noel an excuse to leave France without appearing to be fleeing based on secret information about the expected Allied invasion of North Africa.⁴¹ Whatever the motivation behind Joy's cable to Noel, there was chaos when the German's take-over of Vichy seemed imminent.

Noel and Herta suddenly left France without informing the Unitarian Service Committee (USC) of their destination. No one knew where Noel was, where he was headed, or if he and Herta were alive. Joy wired emotional appeals to the State Department to locate them. After a few hectic days, the department informed the Unitarians that Noel, his wife and Erica, the German teenager they were caring-for, had arrived on at the Swiss border on November 11 without luggage or funds. They had narrowly escaped capture by the Gestapo, the department reported.⁴²

Joy complicated the situation by sending a puzzling telegram to Noel on November 15, again asking him to come to Portugal, although traveling back through France was impossible. Then, finally accepting the wisdom of Robert Dexter's decision to have a Unitarian office in Switzerland, Charles began telling his Office of Strategic Services (OSS) controllers the

Unitarians did not have the money to support Noel in Switzerland, even if the Unitarians defined a job for him. Joy unsuccessfully asked the OSS to pay for Noel's upkeep.⁴³ An attempt to convince the State Department to take Noel into its Berne offices also failed.

After concluding the Unitarians could not escape paying for Noel, Joy began complaining to Boston about Dexter's lack of sound planning of the Swiss office. He also wrote that Noel was a great burden as his Swiss expenses were at least five times his French budget. Joy then re-emphasized Dexter's failure to provide Noel with a job plan. That embarrassed Robert and Elisabeth, his wife, as did the Swiss government indicating it was unwilling to host another foreign relief agency--despite what Robert thought it had agreed-to months before.⁴⁴

Were the Dexters Being Fired?

Then, a late November communication from Joy shocked Dexter. Joy, now acting as if he were fully in charge of the USC, stated that while the committee appreciated the Dexters' work, their Lisbon office might have to be closed because of a budget crisis and the decline of refugees needing help. That was and remains a puzzling recommendation. By that time Joy had been made a full OSS asset and knew of the Dexters' intelligence role in neutral Lisbon and must have known there was no substitute location for a USC office to serve the OSS because Spain was too friendly with Germany. As well, there were still hundreds of stranded refugees in Portugal dependent on the Dexters. Robert quickly responded to the closure threat with an angry communication to Boston, again criticizing Charles Joy. The message was too emotional. It led one committee executive, Seth Gano, to complain about Dexter's attitude and to the beginnings of a prolonged and at times very ungentlemanly struggle.⁴⁵

Dexter vs. Joy, Part I

The Dexters finally convinced the committee to continue funding them in Lisbon, but Robert and Elisabeth were unhappy, anxious, and deeply resentful. They were unable to remain silent. They soon criticized Joy's spy-craft, as well as his continuing to act before coordinating with them. Dexter was upset about Joy mentioning people by name in his cables and letters, endangering them because of the possibility the Germans were intercepting the USC's communications. Robert was most disturbed by Joy's apparent attempt to become "the" USC liaison with the OSS. Charles Joy, now frequently in his New York office located near Louis Dolivet's, was becoming more active with the OSS and demanded that he act as the relay between the OSS and the Unitarian offices in Portugal and Switzerland, although promises had been made in late 1942 that the Unitarians would avoid any communications with Noel that bypassed Dexter.⁴⁶ By mid-1943, Dexter could not contain his frustration and demanded that Joy stop sending any messages directly to Switzerland. Everything, Dexter declared, was to go through his Lisbon office so he could read and, if necessary, censor communications. Dexter was also upset because he learned Joy and Noel had created enemies within the State Department in Lisbon, including the important OSS asset George F. Kennan.

Charles Joy also was angry and unwisely did something that gentlemen do not do. He told his OSS handlers they had to stop using Dexter and put him, Joy, in charge of all European operations. Ironically, one of Joy's arguments was Robert's being very poor at spy-craft. There were Unitarian security breaches, but they were not just Dexter's. In several instances, both Joy and the Dexters' actions caused the OSS to issue reprimands.⁴⁷

Dexter may not have known of Charles' startling recommendation to oust him from the OSS, but he and Elisabeth became irate when they learned of a trip Joy made to London earlier, in July 1942. They believed Joy had undermined relations with the British immigration officials

by bringing a Communist member of the International Brigades with him and spending time with the Brigade's London representative. Communists and the Brigade's members were not liked by the British authorities, especially because they had broken the British neutrality rules during the Spanish Civil War.

When the Dexters put that trip together with Joy's 1941 alliance with Barsky, they became intensely upset about undue Communist influences in the Unitarian Association and had suspicions about Charles and Noel's allegiances. The intercept of a secret Soviet message suggests Joy did have Communist connections. A 1942 message described a "Dr. Joe", a Unitarian employee, delivering a letter from Earl Browder, the head of the American Communist Party, to the leader of England's Party in London.⁴⁸

Conflict Within a Peaceable Kingdom—Is This the End of the Dexters?

Additional worries and suspicions piled on. By early 1944, the Dexters believed Joy was deliberately working against them. In March, their repeated, and increasingly grave complaints against Charles, especially those by Elisabeth, led to a formal investigation by an independent group appointed by Frederick May Eliot, the Unitarian Association's president.⁴⁹ The investigators immediately began a detailed reading of all relevant communications.

Just as the work started Robert took on a new responsibility and burden. He became the administrator in Portugal for the new United States War Refugee Board⁵⁰. One of Dexter's first acts was to inform Noel that new monies for refugees were being made available and that he should use all means, legal and illegal, to move more people to safety in Switzerland.⁵¹

The Unitarian team's two month-long inquiry into the Dexters' charges against Charles Joy was a wrenching and embarrassing experience for the association. There were recriminations on both sides. The investigators were themselves unable to avoid using rather ungentle language in

their final report. Their conclusion was clear: Joy had never done anything wrong, the Dexters were incorrect.⁵² The Dexters' communications, especially those of Elisabeth, had been unjustifiably emotional and bordered on the offensive, the committee concluded. A finger was pointed at Elisabeth as having pushed Robert into also being overly aggressive. The investigators attempted to be even-handed by stating that some of the problems were due to poor communications and to the unwise decision to have the USC's director located in Europe. However, they concluded their report with a hint that continued association with the Dexters would not be in the best interest of the association. In early May 1944, a copy of the full report was sent to Lisbon for the Dexters' review.⁵³ What Robert and Elisabeth replied is unknown, but after some five months of deliberation and negotiations with Boston Robert Dexter resigned from the USC. Charles Joy, to Robert's displeasure, was formally made its executive director and Noel Field became the head of European operations. Martha Sharp agreed to return to head the Lisbon office to replace the Dexters.

Robert Dexter did not, however, abandon his relief work, or his interest in the USC's problems, especially those related to Charles Joy, Noel Field, and Jo Tempi. He also attended to political developments in Europe. A new position as the European representative of the traditionally liberal Carnegie Foundation-supported Church Peace Union allowed him to travel throughout liberated areas. The battles with Joy did, however, shut Robert out of one source of information: The OSS ended most of its relations with him because he was "too emotional."⁵⁴ As with Dexter's unhappiness over Joy's close relations with Edward Barsky's organization, the Dexter-Joy conflict had serious future repercussions..

Fortunately, the Unitarians succeeded in keeping 1944's Dexter-Joy conflict from the national press. They would be unable to do that with the issue of the Barsky-Unitarian

connection. .The problem arose when Frederick Woltman published another anti-Communist and anti-Barsky article in the *New York Telegram* in late 1944. That was about the same time as the important CIO union, the United Auto Workers, withdrew its support from Barsky and Bryan's Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee (JAFRC).⁵⁵ However, the Unitarian's link to the newest Barsky complications, and its own 1946 traumas, began two years before, when Noel Field fled from France to Switzerland.

1942, Noel Field , Liberal or Marxist Spy ?

Through Charles Joy and Robert Dexter's recommendation, soon after Noel escaped into neutral Switzerland in November 1942, he became linked to the OSS.⁵⁶ Allen Dulles, the recently arrived American spy-chief in Switzerland, had used Herbert Field, Noel's father, as a source in World War I and Dulles had met Noel when Noel was idealistic pacifist teenager⁵⁷ Dulles later encountered Noel in the 1930s when they worked on State Department problems. Dulles had not been impressed by Noel and in 1942 he was unenthusiastic about using him as an agent.⁵⁸ However, Dulles was very short-handed and had received a prodding from Washington to bring Noel aboard, probably because of recommendations by Robert Dexter and Donald Lowrie. So, Dulles made an offer to Noel.

The OSS in Washington then had Charles Joy cable Noel that the Unitarians approved an OSS connection.⁵⁹ Noel, with little to do at the time besides handling some matters for Donald Lowrie's Young Men's Christian Association's (YMCA) relief efforts, quickly accepted Dulles' offer. With his and the OSS' commitment to the anti-fascist cause, working with a capitalist like Dulles was not a problem for Noel. In turn, Noel was not a problem for Dulles, at least in 1943. The OSS' security men may have had some concerns over the lingering subversive and

Communist accusations against Noel, but the OSS' leader, William Donovan, had established a policy of accepting all anti-fascists. Dulles had notified Washington of his acceptance of Noel, emphasizing Noel's usefulness in contacting leftist refugees in France and Switzerland.⁶⁰

Defeating the Axis powers justified overlooking anyone's Communist connections. Because of that, the OSS had many Party members and fellow travelers in its offices, even one on Donovan's personal staff. However, although the OSS assigned Noel a registry number, 394,⁶¹ it did not make him a regular agent. Perhaps that was because of some resurfacing OSS security office's worries. Or, it might have been due to Dulles simply not having the power to make full appointments or pay full salaries. Whatever Noel's official status and salary, the OSS in Switzerland got what seemed a bargain. Noel was multilingual and had many European contacts, including those on-the-left in occupied France. For Noel, the OSS work was a chance to help both the Cause and refugees. He refused a 1943 request by a Party emissary to end his relief activities and become a deep 'sleeper' agent within the OSS and State Department and he continued both his OSS and refugee work, keeping two sets of books for his USC expenditures. That pleased Dulles but the relationship with Noel later damaged the OSS' reputation.⁶²

A Field Family Version of a Popular Front?

Allen Dulles had carried millions of dollars into Switzerland, but he was desperately short of personnel. Until France was liberated and there was a way to reach Switzerland, Dulles had only one regular staff member. That man had to use a cover as the American Embassy's finance officer. There were some downed American flyers that could provide limited help and Dulles discovered that stranded anti-Nazi French intelligence men were willing to accept his money for on-going work.⁶³ Dulles was also helped by Barnwell R. Legge, the American military attaché who had his own network of informants including a Papal representative. But Dulles needed

much more. He had to turn to the small American community in Switzerland, although none of its members had experience in intelligence operations. Dulles was surprised to find within the community other Fields besides Noel and Herta. Jean Clark, Hermann Field's ex-wife, was there with her new Swiss husband Sali Lieberman. Erica Glaser, Noel's "adopted" German daughter had arrived with Noel in 1942. There also were Mary Rufenacht, Mary Briner and Mary Bancroft, a distant relative of Noel's. Dulles called-on all of them.⁶⁴

Mary Bancroft was from Boston and Cambridge's elite and was a relative of the Havilands, Noel's grandmother's family. The Fields and the Havilands had remained close, so much so that Noel's middle name was Haviland. Mary Bancroft had an unusual life before and after she arrived in Switzerland in 1934 with her second husband, a Swiss accountant and banker. The marriage soon became less than happy although the couple was part of the social-sets in Berne and Zurich. Fortunately, Mary had always kept herself occupied, including training to be a skilled German translator That was one of the things that brought her to Dulles' attention. She soon became an intelligence analyst, a trusted link to the non-Communist, anti-Nazi German community in Switzerland--and Allen Dulles' lover. Although the dalliance with Allen could have created some problems for him, unlike the other Fields, Mary never posed any threats to Allen because of Communist ties. Nor did her OSS work cause Mary any difficulties.⁶⁵

That was not the case with the other Fields. Each later embarrassed the American intelligence community. Erica Glaser had been rescued by Noel and Herta at the end of the Spanish Civil War when her German-Jewish Comintern-loyal parents needed to escape from Spain, as well as from hostile Stalinists. Wilhelm, Erica's father, was a physician who had fled Pomerania with his family in 1936 and became caught-up in Spain's conflict. While Erica worked as a nurse in the Republican hospitals with her father she contracted typhoid fever and

was too frail to withstand life in the French internment camps, or the rigors of an escape.

Sympathetic to her parents' pleas, Noel and Herta unofficially adopted her before her stateless parents managed to get help from then Quakers and escape to England where Kurt, their son, had been attending college before joining the British army.

Erica travelled to Switzerland with Noel and Herta and stayed for a while with Jean Clark who had married the Swiss Communist Sali Liebermann before enrolling in college and training to be a translator. Noel and Herta wanted to send Erica to her parents in England, or to Noel's family in the United States, but could not raise the money or arrange travel permits through France. So, Erica was trapped in Switzerland. Noel's ever-faithful mother Nina helped, however. She again sent Noel monies to aid financing Erica's education.⁶⁶ Erica did much more than study. The Swiss authorities soon put her on a stateless person watch-list because of her past ties to Communism and, it appears, her joining (as well as Noel) the outlawed Swiss Communist Party. Erica's suspected Communist activities led the Swiss authorities to bring-her in for questioning three times by war's end.⁶⁷ Dulles was so accepting of help from the far left that although he may have known of Erica's politics; he brought her into the OSS. She helped Noel with some of his OSS-related clandestine work and by the end of the war was wearing an official OSS uniform and acting as a secretary in the highly sensitive OSS labor division under Gerhard van Arkel who was supervising the most sensitive covert attempts to penetrate Germany. She helped van Arkel liaise with German unionists who acted as informants and saboteurs. Erica was so well-regarded that she went into Germany with the OSS after the war.

Erica also worked with the left. There are indications that she leaked sensitive information and she admitted that she helped important German Communists in Switzerland, such as Leo

Bauer. One report had her aiding the Communist members of the Free Germany movement to travel into Germany before others. Moreover, Erica did not hide the nature of her postwar life in Germany. While with the OSS there she joined the German Communist Party, edited its journal, and acted as the official liaison between the Party and the American military government. She had not returned to become a true German, however. By 1946, while studying law in Frankfurt she had begun an affair with Robert Wallach, an American army captain who was reported as “sympathetic” to progressive causes, and an American intelligence officer. That affair angered Erica’s Party controllers. In turn, their protests alienated her.⁶⁸

A Clark as a Lieberman

As or more involved with Dulles and with the Swiss Communists during the war were Jean and Sali Lieberman. Jean was a Cambridge, Massachusetts girl from the rather well-to-do, yet decidedly and increasingly leftist Clark family. She attended the progressive Shady Hill School and fell in love with the handsome Hermann Field, Noel’s younger brother. Hermann had retained much of his Quaker upbringing while Jean seemed to be moving towards atheism. but Despite those differences they married before she graduated from the Seven Sister Vassar College and while Hermann was in the advanced architectural program at Harvard University. They went to graduate school in Switzerland together and became enamored with Marxism, deeply so after a mid-1930’s trip into the Soviet Union. Before World War II, Jean acted as courier between Noel in Berne and his Communist handlers in London and carried secret messages from the Massings and other Soviet agents into Germany, sometimes in toothpaste tubes. Her mother-in-law Nina Field joined in such adventures. After a visit to the Soviet Union while on one her many trips to Europe to see Noel and Hermann, Nina also helped the Cause by acting as a courier. When she returned to the United States she did more. She sponsored and

became a close friend of the Soviet agents Hede and Paul Massing, and she housed injured Spanish Civil War comrades at Hermann's farm and in her New York City apartment.

Jean's New Life

By then, Jean was unhappy with her marriage. Despite their shared ideology, after Hermann took a job in England frictions developed. Jean continued her studies in Switzerland, fell in love, divorced Herman, married Sali Lieberman--and found herself stranded in Switzerland as the war began. While Jean was from an elite Protestant background, Sali Lieberman came from a poor Jewish family. His father had left Russia for Germany, then he fled to Switzerland, because of his fears of arrest as a Communist functionary. He continued his Party work after he settled in Zurich, maintained his contacts in Germany, and hosted comrades who visited Switzerland. Sali followed family traditions. In addition to acting in Zurich's radical theater groups with the likes of Berthold Brecht during the 1930s, Sali was arrested in police sweeps of demonstrations in Switzerland and made underground radical films, even during the war.⁶⁹ In the late 1930s, and throughout the war, Sali was important to Noel Field. When Noel was working for the League of Nations, Sali put him in contact with leading German Communists such as Bruno Goldhammer. The Noel-Sali relationship was also a personal one: Noel regarded Sali as "one of his closest personal friends."⁷⁰

Sali had only a trade school education in store decorating and while he was not handsome or dashing as was Hermann, for Jean his activism overcame his shortcomings. She made a life-long commitment to him. They had two children while in Switzerland, but Jean had to take part-time jobs as a writer and translator because Sali seems to have found it difficult to gain a high-status position. He did some work for the United States Embassy and, somewhat ironically, Sheba Strunsky's anti-Communist relief organization, then known as the International and

Relief Committee(IRRC) . Sali aided families of refugees who had found safe havens in North or South America but had to leave their loved-ones in Europe. ⁷¹

Jean's last wartime job was as a translator and editor for the important Japanese international news service in Switzerland. Because the Japanese could travel throughout Germany and France, and because the service handled news directly from Asia, Jean proved to be a major source for Allen Dulles. Her contributions to the OSS earned her commendations from several men who became postwar leaders of America's intelligence agencies. Jean had not abandoned her Marxist pledges, however. On her return to the United States, she attended her family's closed-cell Communist meetings in Boston. She and Sali did not realize that one member of the cell was Herbert Philbrick, a later famous/infamous Federal Bureau of Investigation informant. ⁷²

A Win-Win for Dulles, He Thought

Exactly how much Allen Dulles leaned about Noel's or his relatives' Communism remains unknown. Allen may not have the time or desire to do another security check on Noel. ⁷³ After gauging what Noel might contribute, Dulles had him focus on managing communications with and aid for the resistance fighters in France and acting as liaison with German Communists in all nations surrounding Switzerland. Dulles also had Noel playing a role in running underground routes for refugees and agents to and from France, Italy, and Germany. Noel proved his worth a valuable OSS resource although he also had to perform much Unitarian relief work. In 1943, after the National War Fund and then the War Refugee Board began giving millions hundreds of dollars to the Unitarians, Noel could finally provide significant aid within the Swiss refugee camps, and he could deliver aid and help to resistors in France and Italy. He had another

responsibility, one with potentials for more complaints of bias: The Barsky-Bryan group was contributing significant amounts for earmarked work in Switzerland.

Noel was committed to the Cause and the Unitarians, but he was not selfless. Perhaps it was Barsky's and the War Fund's generosity that led Noel to begin insisting the Unitarians raise his salary. In December 1944, an angry letter to Boston complained of he and Herta having to live in a "lousy" two room pension while his employees lived in better quarters. The complaints were answered. By the end of the war, he had achieved a ten-fold increase in his salary and expense allotment. His income returned to what it had been when he worked at the League of Nations.⁷⁴ Noel was not a laggard, however. He bought an ambulance with Red Cross markings for his relief and OSS work and, many times with Erica, smuggled money and messages wrapped in bandages across borders. One claim had him entering Germany on a mission and he asserted he helped supply guns and ammunition to French and Italian resistance forces using funds from various unknowing (USC?) relief agencies. Noel also transported at-risk Jews out of France, claiming on one trip his cars was fired-on by the Germans.⁷⁵ There is no question that Noel cooperated with Russia's and Switzerland's Party leadership, that he met resistance and Communist leaders at the French border, and that he ran an underground courier service into France, even to occupied Paris and Marseille. How much of the money Noel delivered was from the OSS is unknown.⁷⁶

Some of the funds for the French underground as well as intelligence messages were sent through Dr. Zimmer the physician the Unitarians had hired to establish a health-clinic for refugees in Marseille. Then, in early 1944, after Zimmer had to go into hiding because of a Gestapo raid on his apartment and after one of his aides disappeared,⁷⁷ Jo Tempi, who Noel would appoint to lead the USC's work in Paris, became the main conduit to the German

Communists in France. Jo, who held French citizenship, had already been in Paris in 1944 doing relief work for other agencies while living with a Communist resistance fighter. Shortly after Noel put her in charge of the underground Unitarian center she was almost captured by the Gestapo, barely escaping with funds Noel had sent.⁷⁸ Noel's contacts in France were not the only ones facing danger. His couriers' missions were perilous. At least one of his messengers was killed and others captured.

Who “Won” on this Trip? Noel's Misadventures, the Unitarians' Future Problems

Only one of Noel's OSS adventures has any significant documentation—but it was an important one for the history of the Unitarians, as well as for America's postwar political history. Its history also reveals the Noel-Dulles alliance was not always a case of win-win for the OSS. In late August 1944, a month after Paris and Grenoble were liberated, but while parts of the French Alps' Haute Savoie region saw sporadic fighting between the retreating Germans and the maquis guerilla fighters, Noel traveled over the border with resistance leaders. Who ordered the trip remains unclear. Dulles may have informally approved it, although it was so late in the war that coordinating with the French resistance for action against the Germans had lost its priority.⁷⁹ The OSS' headquarters in Washington, D. C. seemed unaware of the trip. It is certain that America's Department of State had not approved it, although a passport and travel documents were required because a new French government had been established. Noel had also failed to gain permission from the American military's occupation authorities. As well, there are strong indications that Noel failed to alert the Unitarians.

The motivation for the adventure is unclear. There are more than suggestions, however, that it was for emergency aid to the maquis, especially the German Communists who had joined the resistance in France's forests. The maquis' units contained many foreign and French

Communists who were interned, then escaped from the camps. There also were Italians who fled to France to avoid military duty or had served in the International Brigades of the Spanish Civil War, and there were Poles who ran from forced labor battalions or internment camps. Of great importance were the German Communists who had been in the Spanish Brigades. There was a disproportionate number of them in the maquis because they had no other place of safety. Vital for Noel, unlike others in the maquis, the German Communists lacked a national organizations to work in their behalf, only a revised version of the International Brigades.

The leader of the German Communist's organization was Willi Kreikemeier, the one-time colleague of Willi Munzenberg who remained faithful to Stalin after the 1930's purges and the Hitler-Stalin pact. Through his previous contacts with German Communists in Switzerland, Noel had met with Willi in France soon after he was hired by Unitarians.. Willi trusted Noel, partly because of recommendations by Edward Barsky. Kriekemeier's underground organization was first centered in Toulouse, then Paris, but he began meeting Noel at the Swiss border shortly after Noel escaped from Vichy in late 1942. The relationship between the two continued throughout the war and may have led to Noel's 1944 journey into France's still occupied region.

On September 1, 1944, guided by the maquis, Noel reached the foot of the Alps , some 189 miles from Berne. His location would have remained unknown, but inexplicably he gave an interview to a Jewish news service as soon as he arrived in Grenoble. He told the reporter his trip had been uneventful, but later described a near-death experience when his automobile was strafed by German aircraft. Puzzling, he later reported he had been thrown through the windshield when his car accidentally overturned. ⁸⁰ The Jewish news report was picked-up by the American's Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and within a week the Unitarians knew that Noel was in France. Both organizations thought he was headed for Paris, and then Marseille

for an OSS, not Unitarian, purpose. They were incorrect. The OSS had no task for Noel. As well, the Unitarians had not yet decided what their organization should do, if anything, in liberated France.

Noel then surprised everyone, again. He did not continue-on from the mountains. After a week in the surrounding villages, he returned to Switzerland leaving a curious trail of stories and actions. On his arrival in Berne, he immediately began lobbying the OSS and the Unitarians to give him the means to launch a new and major relief effort in France. There was a stream of cables to and from Switzerland, Boston, and Washington—even to Edward Barsky in New York City. Yet, it was not until mid-October when Boston finally gave a go-ahead for Noel to begin exploring the possibility of any type of new Unitarian work in France — but for not starting any. The questions of the legality of his new centers and how a revived relief office in Marseille, and a newer one in Paris, were to be financed were not resolved.

The OSS was more positive than the Unitarians. It decided that Noel could work within France, but it took Dulles' men more than two months to arrange for the State Department and the military to grant permissions to allow Noel to enter the country. Even then, Dulles and the OSS in Washington were not sure what his next contributions should be.

Noel Mince Words, Taps the Pockets of the Unitarian Board Members, Disobeys Rules

By then, early 1945, the situation had become a tangle of complications-- for both the Unitarians and the OSS. Much of the problem was due to Noel's devotion to Communism. The Unitarian's difficulties came first. In September 1944, while in the Alps' Haute region, Noel had established a relief center for what he called impoverished French citizens. Many receiving his immediate relief were in the maquis--but were not French. Noel allocated a sizeable amount from his Unitarian (War Refugee Board-OSS bolstered) budget to the Alps work and then began a

lobbying campaign to convince the Unitarian committee to focus any of its new efforts in France on providing aid only to the “active” resistance fighters, especially those without functioning or welcoming home countries. Noel did not state his “resistance fighters” were German Communists. Although Noel knew that Francis Henson of the IRRC intended to play the major role in helping Spaniards in the camps, Noel also envisioned a sizeable program that would include providing a great range of services to the ex-civil war fighters remaining French internment camps.

Again, Noel did not wait for approval. He committed funds for the Haute work without Joy or Dexter’s knowledge, despite his being informed several times about the Unitarians’ rules on expenditures. An important one had been created shortly after the Allied liberation of France. United States government regulations did not allow the Unitarians to spend monies on Frenchman or any but certified legal refugees. In addition, giving aid to the resistance, even from secret OSS funds, was questionable because the OSS no longer had a mandate to conduct French operations.⁸¹

It took some time for Charles Joy to learn of Noel’s “Haute” commitment, perhaps because Noel had been dealing with Edward A. Cahill who had taken-on much of the responsibility for the USC’s day-to-day work after Charles replaced Robert Dexter as its executive director. It was not until November 1944 that Charles discovered Noel’s new obligations. Joy again became annoyed. He cabled Noel that he should have known better than to use the committee’s monies for such efforts. Typically, Joy then backtracked. He informed Noel that while committee funds could not be used, out of compassion the members of the Unitarian executive board had contributed \$100,000 for Haute relief from their personal accounts.

There was another source of friction between Joy and Noel in early 1945. Against orders, Noel had appointed a foreigner and a Communist, Jo Tempi, to head the new USC Paris office. There already were complaints about how Jo had been distributing aid in Paris. Noel again responded with the explanation that any seeming bias in favor of Communists or Germans was because they could not find help from anyone else. Inexplicably, Joy's anger at Noel subsided.

Barsky, Once More, Once More, Yet Again, the Inconsistent Joy

Before Joy dealt with the Alps and early Tempi difficulties Noel contributed to another complication that would cause much grief for the Unitarians. The new problem did not begin with Noel, however. Independent of the Unitarians, Edward Barsky's organization launched a new program for the Spanish Civil War fighters remaining in France's camps. Although his Joint Anti-Fascist Committee (JARFC) had not gained the full blessings of the American regulatory boards, the new French government seemed willing to allow Barsky to operate within its jurisdiction. Barsky decided to begin his program by rebuilding the old committee representing the many antagonistic groups in the camps. Pablo Azcarate had led it during the late 1930s. This time, Helen Bryan, and Felix Kusman, Barsky's representatives, chose Manuel Azcarate, who was the leading Communist among Spanish refugees, and a Soviet intelligence agent. Among his many contributions while in exile in Switzerland was membership in the Soviet's Red Orchestra espionage ring that worked for and also against the Allies. Azcarate's supposedly independent committee was to oversee the use of Barsky's monies.⁸²

Just as the Azcarate-Barsky French agreement was being finalized, Noel, still searching for funds for his "active resisters," pressured the Unitarians to convince Barsky to allow his planned French work to be taken-over by the USC and administered by Noel and Jo Tempi. Charles Joy approved the idea and Noel asked Joy and Edward Cahill to convince Barsky to accept the

takeover by explaining that his group could avoid any more condemnations by Strunsky's IRRC or Frederick Woltman, the anti-Red American journalist, if the neutral Unitarian Committee again acted as a front for his effort. Joy responded favorably to the idea of taking-on the Barsky work. But to Noel's surprise Joy stated he had a special demand: The French coordinating committee had to be cleansed of known Communists. Needing Unitarian help and worried the American government would bloc his fund-raising, Barsky agreed.⁸³

Joy's plan for re-doing the committee was, however, a bit illogical. It also dismayed Noel. Joy had back-tracked from his non-Communist demanded and stated that at least a non-Communist must head the committee. Joy now deviated from his rule. He tried to convince Pablo Picasso, the famed artist and long-time friend of the Haviland and Field families and who had recently declared himself a Communist, to take the chair. Joy believed using Picasso's name would serve as a great fund-raising tool reasoning that his international fame would overcome any political objections. Barsky agreed to appointing Picasso, but Noel Field argued in favor of retaining Manuel Azcarate because, Noel argued, Manuel had such a long record of providing help to all types of refugees. Noel lost. Manuel became just a committee member.

Charles Joy then ordered Noel and Jo to ensure the distribution of the millions of dollars Barsky was raising would be used in a non-partisan manner. Despite Joy's neutral goals, Noel hoped to convince Barsky's team to allow him to give special attention to those in France who had been "true resisters," especially Germans. Noel and Jo thought in terms of very special Germans. For them, the Free Germany group, not German socialists, deserved help. . Noel strengthened his argument for special attention to the Free Germans by emphasizing the new French government had outlawed the movement and that the Allied liberation funds for Willi Kreikemeyer had been cut-off. Noel stated that it was only by some bureaucratic legerdemain by

Jo Tempi that the Free Germans were kept alive, and he emphasized she could no longer work such miracles without new financing.⁸⁴

Noel was persuasive. Barsky's assistant soon forwarded money and a list of some six hundred Germans who had fought in the Brigades in Spain. Barsky then began a huge fund-raising campaign with a goal of \$7,000,000 advertised as for all (note all) Spanish refugees around the world, with the donations to be distributed by the unbiased Unitarian Service Committee. Meanwhile, to the USC's later embarrassment, Noel began publishing articles explaining that not all Germans were bad and there were many who deserved exceptional treatment because of their great anti-fascist sacrifices . Noel never used the term Communist, but the evidence makes it clear those deserving Germans were Willi Kreikemeier's men. As before, the use of earmarked funds soon led to protests by others in France's refugee communities.

**Toward Unitarian Sufferings, Walter Cannon's Son-in-law, and the Diamond Merchant:
Communists No, Liberalism and the ADA Yes**

While Joy and the Unitarians were negotiating with Barsky and Bryan, Allen Dulles and the OSS were bargaining with the bureaucrats in the United States Army's occupation offices and with officials in the State Department. Neither of those organizations had wanted Noel in France, but after three months of attempting to convince the military that Noel had viable plans for shortening the war, and calling on the influence of Noel's old friend Sam Reber at the State Department, ⁸⁵ Noel was finally allowed to travel to Paris. Shortly after he arrived in February 1945 he presented one of his plans to two bright young OSS officers. One was Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Walter Cannon's son-in-law and a devoted Unitarian. The other was Albert

Jolis. Arthur's father was a famous Harvard historian; Albert's was an international diamond merchant with interests in the great South African mines.

The twenty-eight-year-old Arthur Schlesinger had toyed with leftism but became disgusted with communism and Communists after the purges of the 1930s and the signing of the Hitler-Stalin pact. By 1945 he was about to become a famous historian, a famous liberal, and a public intellectual. Arthur had a commitment to liberal social reform and was on the edge of publishing some of the most credible and powerful anti-Communist articles ever to appear in America's popular press. And his 1949 book, *The Vital Center*, was a near bible for those who supported a greater role for government but had thrown off a Popular Front mentality.⁸⁶ Arthur also became central to the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA). That 1947 organization followed Reinhold Niebuhr's Philosophical Realism, continued the 1930s alliances with Dubinsky and liberal labor organizations, forbid membership for communists and fascists, accepted the reality of a Cold War, and deemed America's involvement in international affairs a necessity. The ADA's members formed the core of what neo-Marxists later disparagingly labeled "the Liberal Establishment."

As with Schlesinger, Albert Jolis was young, thirty-three, and had moved from the left to the political center and had been a founding member of the Emergency Rescue Committee. Although Jewish, the Communists' actions against the Spanish socialists during the civil war led him and his friends, such as George Orwell and Sidney Hook, to, at most, tolerate with a wary eye the left-liberal cooperation during World War II. After the war Albert became, like Schlesinger, an ally of the Henson-Lovestone-Sheba Strunsky-IRRC's postwar battles against Communism and an important asset for the Central Intelligence Agency.⁸⁷

Noel met the young OSS officers in Paris with two related proposals in hand, claiming they had Allen Dulles' approval.⁸⁸ The first was to use the Free Germany's men and its allies in the French camps for secret operations in Germany. The other was a plan to utilize the most politically correct men for a re-education program within the French camps. Like the social workers he was training in Switzerland, the camp's re-educated would be used to run the governments in newly liberated parts of Germany. Noel suggested that Jo Tempy act as the coordinator between the OSS and the Free Germans. Sensing there was some hesitation by Schlesinger and Jolis, and that they and Sam Reber of the State Department had some concerns about Jo Tempy, Noel composed two very long defensive memoranda.⁸⁹

In his first memo Noel pictured Jo Tempy as a saint who had sacrificed for peace since the 1930s. He never mentioned her Communism. His other memo gave a history of his relations with the Free Germany "resistors" in France (but not with his contact with its branch in Switzerland). He saluted their Comité de l'Allemagne Libre Pour l'Quest (CALPO)-related paramilitary and espionage work against the Nazis since 1940 and pictured CALPO's leaders as selfless anti-fascists who could have fled to safety in South America but remained in France to battle the Nazis. He portrayed CALPO as a group independent of Soviet influence and as one with only a tiny percent of its members being Communists. Noel wrote that CALPO had 16,000 adherents in the French camps and among them were 2,500 German "political refugees". Of those, only 350 were Communists, he stated. Noel emphasized the critical need for immediate OSS funding for re-education because his sources of monies for them had been cut-off and his resistors were near starvation.⁹⁰

Schlesinger and Jolis rejected Noel's arguments. Although other sections of the OSS approved supplying funds to CALPO, and the use of some of its members for espionage

operations, for Schlesinger and Jolis Noel's plans appeared as just a ploy to get Communists entrenched in liberated Germany. The two officers already knew something about CALPO and did not like the organization. They were aware of CALPO branches in several countries each with exiled German Communists in control. Besides Russia and France, there were large groups in Mexico and London and smaller ones in Switzerland and Sweden.⁹¹ The OSS had trained some of French members in a secret London camp and parachuted them into Germany. They arrived too late to be of much use and by that time the OSS' London staff began to worry about undue Communist influence. Intelligence reports about the Mexican situation intensified the suspicions about Communists dominating all CALPO branches and about Moscow's directing them.⁹²

Ideological Déjà vu, All over Again, the Unitarians Confronted

Schlesinger and Jolis had more suspicions, ones that fed into a resurgence of concerns about the aims of Noel, the Unitarians, and Barsky's group. Soon after the war ended a growing anxiety led to near replays of the late 1930's anti-Communist protests targeted at Walter Cannon's Medical Bureau and the Dies committee's investigation of Barsky's organizations. There also were repeats of Sheba Strunsky's 1943 warnings to the Unitarians about Communism.

The postwar reruns had almost the same cast of American liberals and socialists pitted against "the left." There was a very important difference between the two eras, however. This time the Unitarians were directly involved, and the protests came from within, as well as outside, the organization. Old-time socialists and liberals joined with Unitarians who thought the denomination had moved too far towards pure secularism. All wanted to remedy the ills created by the Communistic influences of Noel Field and Stephen Fritchman.⁹³

Notes

- ¹ Subak *Op cit*, 161; USC 161144/2 (20).
- ² NARA RG 220 b21.
- ³ *NYT* 5-17-1941; USC 16031/2 (1), 16114/ (20).
- ⁴ USC 16185/2 (4); NARA RG226 160a b15.
- ⁵ Ship lists.
- ⁶ USC 16031/2 (1), 16114/2 (20).
- ⁷ By 1943 the Service was sending appreciable aid into Spain, probably for the remaining Brigades members, USC, 16114/2 (18).
- ⁸ Eddis, Charles, *Stephen Fritchman: The American Unitarians and Communism: A History with Documents* (np: Lulu.com, 2011), 135.
- ⁹ USC 16024/4, 16135/4 (14), 16007/8 (3) .
- ¹⁰ USC 16136/1 (8).
- ¹¹ NARA RG226 160a box 12, 2-15-43; USC 16114/2 (16, 16114/1 (18).
- ¹² Subak, *Op cit.*, 67.
- ¹³ USC 16024/1 (15).
- ¹⁴ USC 16114/5 (97), 16035/2 (4).
- ¹⁵ Brooks, "Prisoners," *Op cit.*
- ¹⁶ USC 16031/1 (6).
- ¹⁷ Barth, *Op cit.*, 522.
- ¹⁸ Bungert, Heike "The OSS and Its Cooperation with the Free Germany Committees, 1944-45," *Intelligence and National Security*, 12, 3 (July 1997): 130-144; On CALPO and USC and JAFRC aid after the war , USC,16007/16 (19), 16007/18 (4).
- ¹⁹ NARA RG220 b12, 1 11-3-43.
- ²⁰ USC 16035/1 (11),16007/24 (18), 16146/2/ (3) 2-14-44. Funk, Arthur R., "American Contacts With the Resistance in France, 1940-1943," *Military Affairs*, 341 (Feb., 1970): 15-21.
- ²¹ USC 16035/1 (11), 16024/4 (12).
- ²² USC 16146/2 (3), 16034/4 (12,
- ²³ USC 16114/8 (149).
- ²⁴ USC 16114/4 (70), 16007/26 (23).
- ²⁵ USC 16007/26 (23) 1-31-45., 16146/1 (2).
- ²⁶ USC, 16024/4 (12), 16146/2 (3) 12-12-1944, 16024/2 (12) 12-12-1944.
- ²⁷ USC 16024/4 (2), 16114/4 (70).
- ²⁸ USC, 16114/4 (70); 16024/4 12 u/u 347/50 (4).
- ²⁹ USC 16007/16 (19).
- ³⁰ USC 16024/4 (12),16007/16 (18).
- ³¹ USC 347/50 (4) , 16007/16 (22) & (22), / 347/50 (4) 7-1945., 16024/4.,
- ³² USC 16006/16 (19).
- ³³ USC 16007/16 (19).
- ³⁴ USC 16031/1 (6).
- ³⁵ USC 16007/16 (19).
- ³⁶ USC 16035/1 (6).
- ³⁷ USC 16114/3 (37), Noel's. Speech in the United States.
- ³⁸ *Christian Register* December 1946 and *passim*, 1947; USC 347/50 (4), 7-1945..
- ³⁹ *NYT* 9 1-44 and USC 16114/5 (97), *passim*.
- ⁴⁰ USC 16035/1 (6) 12-44. Noel's excuse is a bit weak as the JAFRC soon began sending significant amounts for Spanish refugee released in France.
- ⁴¹ USC, 16114/6 (17), 19114/2 (16) 16114/6 (107), 161/1 (12).
- ⁴² USC 16031/1 (7).
- ⁴³ USC, Joy to Hughes, 11-27-1942, USC 16114/6 (104).
- ⁴⁴ USC 16146/1 (12), 16114/2 (16), 16114 /6 (107)...
- ⁴⁵ USC, 16114/6 (102, 104, 1-7).
- ⁴⁶ USC16114/6 (107) and Dexter to Gano 11-21-1942.

- ⁴⁷ Subak, *Op cit.*, 152, 175, 209; USC161114/5 (97); RG226 160a b12.
- ⁴⁸ Haynes, John Earl and Harvey Klehr, *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America* (New Haven: Yale U, Press, 1999): 76-77. USC 16024/6 (8), 16007/26 (23), and Dexter to Board 7-31-1942. Joy's 1942 trip also suggests he might have been "Dr. Joe", the Soviet 'source'. See Haynes, *Op cit* "Venona."
- ⁴⁹ USC 16024/6 (8).
- ⁵⁰ Erbelding, Rebecca, *Rescue Board: The Untold Story of America's Efforts to Save the Jews of Europe* (NY: Doubleday, 2018); Suback, *Op cit.*, 165..
- ⁵¹ USC 16146/2 (3).
- ⁵² USC 16024/6 (8).
- ⁵³ USC 16024/6 (8) 5-17-44. The relations between Joy and Dexter were so strained they may have led to some distortions of memory. In a 1945 letter, USC 34750 (13), Joy wrote that Dexter had forced Noel into many of the relations with Communist exiles and that Dexter had kept his ties to the OSS a secret from the Unitarians.
- ⁵⁴ Subak *Op cit.*, 208..
- ⁵⁵ *New York World Telegram* "U.S. Backed Group Sticks to Red Line," 9-1-1944.
- ⁵⁶ USC 16114/5 (97), 19114/6 (104).Dexter seems to have first told Noel of his OSS work in the summer of 1942 and asked Noel to forward money to the German Brigade men in France, but Dexter may not have linked Noel formally to the OSS until Noel reached Switzerland, Barth "Der Fall", *Op cit* '152.
- ⁵⁷ Mosley, Leonard, *Dulles: A Biography of Eleanor, Allen, and John Foster Dulles And Their Family Network* (NY: Dial Press, 1978).
- ⁵⁸ Marton, "True Believer.," *Op cit.* 27, cites an incident in Washington when Dulles encountered Noel in an anti-segregation demonstration that may have alienated Dulles because the demonstration was connected to the 'left'.
- ⁵⁹ USC 19114/6 (104).
- ⁶⁰ Marton."True Believer," *Op cit.* , 112.
- ⁶¹ Marton, *ibid.* 112, gives the number as '394'.
- ⁶² NARA RG59 Central Decimal file FW 811.20251/5, FBI 1043 report; Harsch, Joseph C., *At the Hinge of History, A Reporter's Story* (Athens GA.: University. of Georgia Press, 1993); Marton, "True Believer", *Op cit.*,120.
- ⁶³ NARA RG 226 entries 210-212; Kinzer, Stephen, *The Brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and Their Secret World War* (NY: Times Books, 2013).
- ⁶⁴ O'Donnell. Patrick, *Operatives, Spies, and Saboteurs* (NY: Free Press, 2004). NARA RG226 entries 210-212
- ⁶⁵ Bancroft, Mary, *Autobiography of a Spy* (NY: William Morrow and Co., 1983).
- ⁶⁶ USC 16146/1 (12).
- ⁶⁷ Sharp. 'Stalin's Spy,' *Op cit.*, 128.
- ⁶⁸ USC 16146/1 (12), 16114/5 (91); Marton, "True Believer," *Op cit.*,121. One source stated she also had a relationship with an American officer who later moved to Chicago and joined the Party while there.
- ⁶⁹ USC 16146
- ⁷⁰ USC 16114/5 (92), Barth, "'der Fall," *Op.cit.*; FBI FOIA,liebermann, 4-25-1946.
- ⁷¹ Telephone and e-mail interviews with Andrew Kluger.
- ⁷² FBI FOIA, liebermann.
- ⁷³ NARA RG59 Central Decimal File, fw 811.20251/5; Weber, "Lisbon" *Op cit.*.
- ⁷⁴ USC 16114/8 (149) , 16114/4 (70).
- ⁷⁵ Fischer, *Op cit.* 334.
- ⁷⁶ USC 16114/3 (45).
- ⁷⁷ USC 16146/2 (3)16024/1 (15), 16035/2 (4) 16035/1 (4).
- ⁷⁸ USC 16035/3 (4).
- ⁷⁹ USC 34750 (13); 16146/2 (3) and 16114/3 (37) in which Noel intimates the resistance forces the USC had been helping since 1940 had initiated the trip.
- ⁸⁰ In USC 16114/3 (37), Noel described the trip but did not mention an attack.
- ⁸¹ USC 16146/2 (3).This rule certainly applied to the funds the USC received from the War Fund and may have extended to the Unitarians' other monies.
- ⁸² USC 16031/2 (3), 16007/16 (19& 22). The committee seems to have gone through several names. One was. the Spanish Aid Advisory Committee, another was the National Union of Spanish Republicans. On the Red Orchestra.
- ⁸³ USC 16031/1 Joy to Bryan, 1-10-1945.
- ⁸⁴ USC 161144 (87), Issued by Noel Field;
- ⁸⁵ Reber had been a classmate of Noel's at Harvard and in the department's school, as had George Kennan. Reber went on to major assignments, including the years of negotiations with the Vichy government, as a political-

diplomatic advisor to General Eisenhower during the war, and as a supervisor of postwar Germany. Langer, William L., *Our Vichy Gamble* (Hamden, CT.: Archon Books, 1965); Barth, "der Fall", *Op cit.*; USC 16114/5 (91 & 97).

⁸⁶ Wreszin, Michael, "Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. Scholar-Activist in Cold War America: 1946-1956," *Salamagundi*, 63/64 (Spring-Summer 1984), 255-286; Schlesinger, Arthur M. Jr., *A Life in the Twentieth Century* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 2000); Schlesinger, Arthur M. Jr., *The Vital Center; the Politics of Freedom* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1949).

⁸⁷ Jolis, Albert, *A Clutch of Reds and Diamonds: A Twentieth Century Odyssey* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1996); Ceplair, "Anti-Communism", *Op cit.*; Epstein, Edward Jay, *The Rise, and Fall of Diamonds: A Shattering of a Brilliant Illusion* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1982). Jolis was aligned with the IRRC.

⁸⁸ Schlesinger, "Life" *Op cit.*; Chalou, George C. (ed.) *The Secrets War: the Office of Strategic Services in World War II* (Washington, DC :National Archives and Records Administration,1992).

⁸⁹ USC 16114/5 (97); 16114/6 (120).

⁹⁰ USC 16114/5 (97).

⁹¹ Bungert, *Op cit.*; USC 16114/6 (112); Sharp, *Op cit.*

⁹² Waller, Douglas, *Wild Bill Donovan: The Spymaster Who Created the OSS and Modern American Espionage* (NY: Free Press, 2011).

⁹³ American Unitarian Association, *Unitarians Face A New Age: The Report of the Commission of the American Unitarian Association* (Boston: AUA, 1936) shows the drift of Eliot and other 'liberals' that began with the Great Depression. Wilson, Edwin H., *The Genesis of a Humanist Manifesto* (Amherst, NY: Humanist Press, 1995) shows how some post-WWII intellectuals, including Unitarians such as Raymond Bragg pushed humanism further 'left'.