

Part 2

The Clarks and Friends and the American Party

While Walter Cannon and his Unitarian allies Stephen Fritchman and Noel Field were tangled in international struggles their friends the Clarks were focused on Party goals and problems in America. Even Jean Clark, who participated in intelligence and Communist intrigues in Switzerland, became involved in America's Communist conflicts. The Clarks' involvements ranged from strikes in New England's factories to Hollywood's studios, to America's farm struggles, and to San Francisco's labor and arts communities. Mother Susan Clark's wide range of left-wing connections in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and the nation, were especially important. She even had ties to Ella Bloor and her son Harold Ware who aided Russia's farms and led an intelligence group in America that included Alger Hiss.

Chapter 5

Jean Clark and Sali Lieberman, From Much More than Fellow Travelers in Hollywood to Almost Red in Mill Valley

Jean Clark, Hermann Fields' ex-wife, and Sali Lieberman, her Swiss Communist husband, faced as many postwar challenges as her sisters Joy and Margot, her mother, or their Cambridge friends such as Stephen Fritchman.¹ Although raised in an upper-middle-class family and educated in elite institutions Jean identified with the working class, aided the Communist Cause, and endured threats of arrest during the Cold War. But unlike her sisters Joy and Margot Jean spent the later years of her life living an almost middle-class life rather than the laboring-class one of Joy or the poverty-level existence of Margot as she wandered to and from mental institutions.

In Wartime Switzerland

By the outbreak of the war in 1939, Jean had finished her PhD work at the Swiss technical university and planned to leave for America. Lack of money for travel and the unwillingness of European nations to grant transit visas to Sali Lieberman, her Russian-Jewish Swiss husband, meant spending the war in isolated Switzerland. During the war Sali, with only a trade-school education, served on-and-off in the Swiss army, usually making films, and found work with some international refugee agencies that were cooperating with the United States. The Strunsky-Henson International Rescue and Relief Committee was one of those agencies. Noel Field's Unitarian Service Committee was another.² Sali and Jean also helped Noel and his wife Herta by providing a home for Erica, their foster daughter, during parts of the war. More significant, Sali

introduced Noel to many foreign Communists he knew through his father's long association with the Party and his own, and continuing, efforts for Switzerland's Party .

Jean, although having young children, had to work because of Sali's low income and Switzerland's rampant inflation. She found employment as a translator, a script editor for films, and as an editor at Japan's Swiss newspaper service. Japan had decided to move much of its intelligence and diplomatic corps and the newspaper to Switzerland for safety when the Allies began their massive bombing efforts against German targets. The Japanese news service was processing much valuable information on Germany, as well as Asia. Jean's job made her a perfect spy for America's Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Allen Dulles. Dulles' men believed she provided invaluable information.

When the war ended Jean again found herself without money needed for a return to America and to a job in the film industry Sali had longed for since the late 1930s.³ She also feared that she was very low on the list of civilians who would be allowed passage to the United States on refugee ships. Another complication was Sali's citizenship status and the possibility that the United States' immigration authorities might enforce its rules against entry of Communists. Fortunately, Jean's secret work for Berne's OSS and her friendship with its leaders helped overcome the difficulties. A loan was arranged, one that was later wiped-off the books as payment for her "voluntary" OSS work. Her OSS friends also secured the priority required for Jean, Sali, and the children to leave on the Gripsholm, the first civilian rescue ship for expatriates in Europe.⁴ Her OSS connection was something Jean always kept to herself, perhaps because she thought her American left-wing friends might be alienated, or because of a pledge of secrecy she gave to the American government.

In November 1945, after saying their goodbyes to Sali's brother, sister, and other members of his large family, Jean and Sali, and Stephen and Margot their young children, took a train through France, then sailed from Marseille. They were happy to leave, but they were concerned about their future. Jean was depressed and anxious. Both she and Sali were in their mid-thirties and neither had a job waiting or significant savings. Sali was not fluent in English and his training as a store and theatrical decorator did not promise a high income, even if he could find work in America's crowded postwar job market. Jean also faced an unfriendly employment situation. Although she was a Vassar College graduate, had an advanced degree from the Swiss Technical Institute, and was a skilled translator she knew there was a limited market for majors in German literature. As a result, the family arrived in the United States deeply worried and dependent on Jean's friends and family.

A Friend Was an Enemy

Their first stop in the United States was in Cambridge, Massachusetts where they lived on the generosity of Jean's mother Susan. Jean and Sali were welcomed by her sisters and by Cambridge's Party community because Jean's family, the Ainslie-Clarks, had become central to the Communist cause in the Boston area. The Clarks and their friends introduced Jean and Sali to many in the Boston region's liberal circles and took them to public meetings related to the Cause, including a large rally that protested Winston Churchill's Iron Curtain speech. Jean's mother went further. Susan was willing to break with Party rules and allow the "outsiders," Jean and Sali, into closed cell meetings. Jean's sisters, Margot, and Joy, called special gatherings at their mother's home to enlist help to fulfill Sali's greatest ambition, a career in the American film industry. Sali was reported to have bragged about his Communism at those meetings, but he

did not make his membership public knowledge. He and Jean sensed that because Sali was not a citizen, his past might put him, and the Clarks, in danger.⁵

The Philbrick and Fritchman Connections

As a first step towards finding Sali a job, the Clarks asked the comrades to build lists of loyal contacts in New York and Hollywood's theatrical and motion picture communities. One of the most helpful of the Party's men was Herbert Philbrick⁶, a publicist for Paramount Pictures in Boston. He provided a lengthy list that included major actors, screenwriters, and influential craftsmen. The names of several set decorators were provided, as well as the name of the Comintern-associated writer, Martin Hall. Among the many famous Hollywood figures on the list with solid credentials of at least fellow traveler status were Hanns (Hans) Eisler, Berthold Brecht, Norman Lloyd, Joe Pasternak, Lloyd Gough, and Peter Lorre. Of significance to the FBI, Hans Eisler was the brother of Gerhard, a suspected Soviet spy who had been married to the Fields close friend Hede Massing.

The list energized Sali. Then, Jean's spirits were lifted from one of her reoccurring bouts of depression after Stephen Fritchman tried to directly help Sali's career. He arranged to publish an article critiquing American cinema that was credited to Sali in the Unitarian's *Christian Register* magazine. Despite Sali's poor English language skills, "Good Films are Rare," read well and its points about the lack of political-social content of films were positively received by the *Register's* liberal audience.

Jean would not have been optimistic about Sali's career if she had realized the comrade who supplied one of the long list of Hollywood contacts was an FBI informant. Herbert Philbrick had been a devoted Young Communist who came to loath the inherent dictatorial nature of Communism. He served as an FBI mole in the Party because of his devotion to democracy.

While he was compiling the Hollywood list he was reporting on the visitors to the Clark's cell meetings. The government may not have needed his reports on the Lieberman's, however. Paul Massing had already told the authorities about his using Jean as a secret Party courier during the mid-1930s and Hede Massing had been cooperating with the FBI. Yet, Philbrick's news about Jean and Sali, and Margot Clark's bragging about her wartime Swiss intelligence contacts, led the FBI to put the Liebermans under a two decades-long surveillance because of feared espionage.⁷

A Sour Apple, Despite Many Important Friends

After Cambridge, Jean and Sali moved to New York City. They visited Jean's relatives, the Dewey's, the rather well-off New York City restaurant and winery owners. But the Party was their main resource in New York. Jean, Sali and the children lived rent-free in comrades' apartments while Sali sought work and evaluated his future. He looked for jobs as a set decorator, an interior decorator, a house painter, and as a refugee aid worker at Jewish agencies. He failed. Although he had glowing letters of recommendations from successful Swiss film and theater people and, perhaps to his later regret, one from Noel Field who wrote that Sali was one of his "closest personnel friends," Sali had no luck. He secured only a few days' work hanging wallpaper.

Jean was as disappointed in her search for employment. Her goal in New York was a job with the United Nations, or, at worst, with a refugee agency or the State Department. Despite her impressive educational credentials and several recommendations from some of the most important men in America, she was rejected by all. The rejections are difficult to understand. They must have been for reasons other than the caliber of those who wrote in her behalf. The best Jean was able to do was a temporary job with an international relief agency. Jean was

surprised and was again sinking into depression as she worried more deeply about finances, although she had help from mother Susan.

Jean believed she had prepared well for the return to the United States. She had requested and received many letters of support. William Emerson, the widely respected Emeritus Dean of Architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and leader of the Unitarian Service Committee, contributed a glowing salute. Her OSS contacts in Switzerland were as generous in their praises. All of them were part of America's social and educational elite and were extremely important to American intelligence during World War II and the Cold War. Their recommendations should have eased Jean into an important job. Paul Blum had been the OSS's counter-intelligence man in Lisbon and Switzerland, doing outstanding work against German and Japanese agents. He was so important he was trusted with knowledge of the Ultra Secret, the Allies' ability to read high-level German codes, and he knew of the secret negotiations for the surrender of German troops in Italy. While in Switzerland, he, and probably Jean, had worked with Tracy Barnes, one of the Cold War's brightest intelligence "stars". After the war Paul and his relative Robert Blum became key Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) policy-makers.⁸ There were more OSS admirers. The list included . . . Robert Prather Joyce and James Murphy. Joyce, a good friend of Ernest Hemingway (who also had contacts with Jacob Golos the Communist agent in America), ran the OSS' Berne Switzerland station after Allen Dulles left for Germany. Joyce became a member of the State Department's policy planning group that created the highest-level initial Cold War policies, as well as a CIA officer. James Russell Murphy was a close associate of the OSS' leader William Donovan and led the powerful X2 branch in London that worked with Britain's counter-intelligence forces. Murphy helped identify some 3,000 Axis agents. He was so powerful he could veto OSS operations without explanation.⁹

Hooray??? For Hollywood, But Not in 1947 or 1948

After almost a year of frustration and rejections, at the end of 1946 Sali and Jean abandoned hope for a life in New York City. Sali's grandest dream and gamble now became the couple's focus. Sali, with his list of contacts in-hand bought an old car and put a down-payment on a 1946 house trailer. With little money, Jean, Sali, their two children set-off on a three-thousand-mile motor trip to Hollywood, California---to live in the trailer while Sali struggled to establish a career in the film industry as, at first, a set decorator. He had hopes of someday becoming a director.

The Hollywood trek was ill planned and ill-timed, especially for someone on the political left.¹⁰ Just before the Liebermans began their trip there was another violent wave of strikes at the Hollywood studios. They shut-down much of the film industry for a year and a half and led to deep suspicions and resentment of Communist influence in Hollywood. Worse for Sali, the center of the conflict was an ongoing struggle for power by a new union led by Herbert Sorrel, a reported Communist and friend of Harry Bridges of San Francisco's International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU). Sorrel claimed his new Hollywood union represented all studio painters and set decorators. Unfortunately, those unions controlled the kind of jobs Sali wanted. Partly a jurisdictional battle between the American Federation and of Labor and Sorrel's reportedly "Communist" Conference of Studio Unions, the strike that began in September 1946, like the others since 1943, deteriorated into street battles and even acid throwing on strike-breakers.¹¹ The violence was one of the reasons why California's Tenny Committee restarted its investigations of Communism in the state. The Federal government was also refocusing on Hollywood. During the late 1930's it had conducted an investigation of the Soviet agent Otto Katz, including his influence over screen writers and producers. A Czech born Soviet agent

known to have used dozens of aliases, and known as a Party enforcer, he had worked for and spied on Willi Munzenberg's propaganda mill in Paris before being dispatched to Hollywood in 1936 to tap the riches of its leading actors, film industry leaders, and the Jewish community. His Anti-Nazi League "front" organization raised millions. Then, it generated ire and suspicions. With the signing of the Hitler-Stalin Pact Moscow ordered the end to all anti-Nazi activities, including Katz's league. Many Jewish film industry magnates felt used and were primed to battle Communism. In 1947 they did so as the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) was citing some of Hollywood's leading writers, including Ring Lardner Jr. (who had been with Jean and Hermann Field on their 1934 Moscow trip), for contempt of congress--and calling for their imprisonment. Almost immediately after those Hollywood Ten hearings the film industry's leaders created a "black list" that prevented film-industry employment of those suspected of being Communists. In reaction, the Party portrayed the Ten as innocent and loyal old-fashioned Americans, despite most being active Party members from New York's Jewish community.

So, in 1947 Hollywood was not a hospitable place for a leftist like Sali . There was another factor that should have made him pessimistic about a film career. During the 1930s the movie industry agreed to the equivalent of a closed-shop policy. The studios hired only union workers while the unions limited their membership and provided full-time work only to them. In addition, many of the unions required extremely high initiation fees and dues. The situation became worse at the war's end. During the war, with so many men in the military, the unions had allowed non-regulars to work in the studios. Then, the returning veteran members more than filled the available jobs. At best, postwar newcomers might find themselves in a union's "extra" category. That lowly status was what Sali was assigned to when he joined the largely Jewish

Hollywood painter's union. His many hours waiting at the Set Decorators union hall also led to disappointment.¹²

Influential Friends Tried But It Was the Party That Helped

Many of those on the contact lists Sali brought from Cambridge and New York, and his contacts in the Jewish community, including Ben Hecht the great screenwriter and Zionist,¹³ did try to find work for him. Despite the help of such influentials Sali could not land a steady job. Even temporary film jobs were rare, as was the case for his new close friend David Arkin., the set-decorator father of the actor Alan Arkin. Sali's attempts to gain a position in one of Los Angeles' Jewish refugee agencies also failed. He seemed to never have looked for work outside such agencies or the arts, but he did find time to volunteer with local amateur theater companies, left-leaning ones. Jean was also having problems securing even part-time work.

The traumatic postwar movie industry strikes and lockouts, Sali's poor English, and his lack of experience in American film led the Lieberman's to barely survive. Money from family, Los Angeles' social welfare agency, and from Anne Thorp, the Boston aristocrat of the famed Longfellow and Dana families, and one of Jean's Shady Hill School teachers, barely got Jean and Sali through a year and a half of frustrations. The children were sent to a subsidized extended-day school for working mothers, Sali borrowed money from neighbors, and from high-interest consumer loan companies. Telephone calls were made on friends' phones. Sali fell behind in his union dues. In addition to poverty, was the burden of Jean's sister coming to Los Angeles to live with them. Margot arrived with an intensifying mental illness. The weight and tensions of their Hollywood years contributed to Sali and Jean's never having more children.

There was something that had raised some hope. Six months after their arrival there was another sizeable loan from mother Susan and her Cambridge friends. They sent enough to allow

a down payment on a small fixer-upper house in a less than middle-class neighborhood. The trailer was sold and beginning in May 1947 Sali spent most of his time refurbishing the home. He and Jean expected to sell it at a profit, but always worried if they could make the mortgage payments. The economic situation remained precarious. For several months, the payments were made only because of additional checks sent from New York and Cambridge.

The money problems never ended. The best Sali and Jean could do for a car was a 1930 (sixteen-year-old) Marquette coupe. It was stylish and had panache, but was unreliable. All this was especially hard for Jean who grew up in sumptuous homes with servants.

A Closed World for Internationalists and Friends of the Left

Sali and Jean's Hollywood worries were eased by having the company of many members of the left-wing film community. However, the Liebermans lived in a closed-world. Their social domain was composed of only the newest breed of the "faithful." There is no evidence of them being in contact with the leaders of Los Angeles old-guard Party, such as Dorothy Rosenblum Healey, but they mingled with and had help from Party-friendly actors and famous writers such as Hede Massing's friend Vera Caspary. Caspary had become a legend for authoring the book that became the film *Laura*. Vera had been a Party member during the 1930s and travelled to the Soviet Union.

As well, at times the leftists provided practical help. When in need of medical assistance Sali called on Franklin Bissell, the Party's doctor who delivered services on the promise of future payment.¹⁴ Bissell was another of leftists from well-to-do backgrounds who joined the Party before the membership surge of the Popular Front, anti-Nazi era. He was from a family of assimilated Jewish physicians that traced its past to the colonial and Revolutionary eras. His father moved his practice and family from the mid-West to Berkeley California, establishing

offices there and in San Francisco. He decided to send his son to Vienna for his medical training where Franklin was granted a degree when he was just twenty-four. On his return he joined the Party, passed the California medical examination in 1933, and became a respected heart specialist in San Francisco, then Los Angeles. . But he was busy with much more. He was a West Coast version of Edward Barsky. In 1934 he served as the doctor for the longshoreman strikers and the International Labor Defense. In 1936 he ran for office on the Communist ticket, and in 1938 he went to Spain to serve as a Lincoln Brigade doctor. Back in the states he continued his Party involvements as his family moved to Los Angeles where he established another successful office, joined with allies like Stephen Fritchman to reform medical care for the poor, came to the attention of anti-Communist investigators, and became a friend of the Liebermans.

Jean and Sali also forged close and lifetime friendships with several artists who were temporarily in Los Angeles. Among them were Herman Volz, a fellow Swiss Communist Sali had known in the old country, and David Sarvis who would become an acclaimed director of left-wing plays and films. Both men, and their wives, had been leaders in the at-times bloody Hollywood strikes and had long-term connections to Party cells in San Francisco. They provided Sali and Jean with assistance and advice but neither they nor the Party solved Sali's financial and professional problems.¹⁵ Neither could Stephen Fritchman, the new arrival to Los Angeles from Boston who Jean adored so deeply that she named a son after him.

That Massing Woman, Jean's Only Good Job, and Amerasia

While in Hollywood, Jean eventually did somewhat better than Sali occupationally, but not much better. As a Vassar Girl she must have found her life demeaning. She had to tolerate taking night classes at Hollywood High School to re-tool for employment and had to borrow Vera Caspary's typewriter to be able to earn a few dollars copying manuscripts. It was worse for

Jean when Hede Massing visited Hollywood in 1947. Hede had been the Communist controller for Noel Field. She had become close to the other Fields, especially mother Nina. Jean, however, had not liked her, especially after Hede voiced disapproval of the Great Purges in Russia during the 1930s and after the Fields came to believe the Massing had exploited Nina financially. However, when Jean met with Hede in Hollywood she admitted she needed help. It was humiliating for her to have to ask Hede to use her influence to find her a good job. The meeting might have been worse for Jean if she knew that Hede was talking to the FBI about her friend Noel Field.

Jean did find a part-time position, but an insecure one. It may have been arranged for her by Party friends on the East Coast¹⁶, but her new Hollywood acquaintances may have been the route to the job. The work was for Sam Jaffe, one of the movie industry's leading producers and agents. He was another left-winger who had moved West from New York City's Jewish community. Jean had met his brother, Philip Jaffe, in Boston when Susan, Margot, and Joy sponsored his lectures on peace and China's future.

Sam Jaffe had a background as a diaper-baby of a well-to-do family¹⁷. As a youth he acted in New York's Yiddish theater, then attended City College of New York and Columbia University seeking an engineering degree. His sister's marriage to B. P. Schulberg, the film mogul, changed Sam's life. Schulberg helped Sam become one of Hollywood's most powerful men. Sam began his career serving as an assistant to some of Hollywood's earliest Jewish film producers. He also became a staunch fellow traveler, perhaps Party member. He followed the Party-line in the 1930s, publicly approving the Hitler-Stalin pact, supporting Edward Barsky's causes, and contributing to the many Party peace initiatives. Then, with Russia's invasion, Sam went all-out in supporting the war effort. Meanwhile, his brother Philip had become a very

wealthy greeting card manufacturer, at least a committed fellow traveler, and a friend of Owen Lattimore and Frederick Vanderbilt Field. Philip became¹⁸ the publisher of the influential journal, *Amerasia* that voiced approval of the Chinese Communists. *Amerasia* became infamous because it was inappropriately obtaining secret government documents during World War II. It was raided by the authorities in 1945 and Philip Jaffe and others were indicted.

Well before then, Sam Jaffe had been developing into a respected film and stage actor, as well as a junior executive in Hollywood. When his sister (Shulberg's wife) turned the management of her remarkably successful talent agency over to Sam his career took another turn. He became the professional representative and producer for the leading movie stars of the 1930s and 1940s. Humphrey Bogart was just one of his many clients. With a thriving business during the 1940s Jaffe needed bright people to read and select scripts for his clients, as well as for his own production company. Jean, with her Phi Beta Kappa key, her writing experience in Switzerland, and her correct political views (and connections) was what he needed. However, the best Sam could do for Jean was a part-time position. With Sali unable to find much work, Jean appreciated even a small monthly income.¹⁹

A Need to Leave the Old Dreams Behind, for the Golden Gate

By mid-1948, Sali and Jean were realizing their hoped-for break into the film industry would not materialize. In addition, there was a threat to their only source of steady income. Some unwise and heated reactions by several of Jaffe's clients at the congressional investigations of Communism in the film industry led to backlisting and to a decline of Jaffe's business. Jean faced a loss of her job when Sam let her know that he was so desperate he was thinking of going to live with his wealthy sister in Europe until the anti-Communist activities subsided. Jean found herself without work and again turned to friends for help and job recommendations. William

Emerson, the left-oriented Unitarian-USC official, tried to find her government employment. Sam Jaffe attempted, surprisingly, to get her another job--- at his brother's *Amerasia*. However, the magazine was closing its operations because of the government investigations, personnel conflicts, and financial difficulties.

Again, both Liebermans were unemployed. As bad, Jean and Sali worried that their left-wing work and contacts in the 1930s, as well as during the war, might make them a target during the growing number of investigations of Communism in the film industry. The fears were intense because Sali was in a very precarious situation. Being an alien with Communist connections who had not been truthful on his immigration entry papers, he could be deported. Sali and Jean had another reason to worry. They may not have realized it then, but the FBI was watching them, more closely than before because of revelations (including those by Hede Massing) about Noel being a Communist agent. The FBI eventually built a dossier on Sali and Jean that was 4,000 pages long.

The couple was seriously considering abandoning their Hollywood dream. The question for them again became where to go? They decided against returning home to Cambridge although wealthy mother Susan was still alive. The East had those terrible winters, but more important, they and many of their Hollywood friends were looking to Northern California, especially the San Francisco Bay Area, as a place that could serve as a refuge for those on the left. The area had remained faithful to liberalism, and to the Party. Estimates of Party membership in San Francisco alone were at least 3,000 (even during the first postwar years) making it one of the largest Party organizations in the nation. In 1948, the San Francisco Bay Area may have had one-third of the Party's national membership and the area had a special attraction because it had one of the highest concentrations of native, not foreign-born, members.

Additional reasons for heading north were the ambitious plans of some of Sali and Jean's Hollywood friends. They had been thinking of creating a new type of theater that would aid the Cause and its renewed revolutionary mission. Their connections to a well-established community of Comrades in Northern California made the alternative of joining a leftist San Francisco theater project seem very attractive to the Liebermans. In summer 1948, Sali and Jean, and several of their Hollywood friends, including the Swiss mural artist Herman Volz and the aspiring stage director David Sarvis, moved to San Francisco. Both Volz and Sarvis proved critical to the next phases of Sali and Jean's life. None of them realized they would be followed by FBI agents for twenty years.

New? Faces of 1948

Herman Volz had been a friend and fellow Party member with Sali in Switzerland. He was especially important to the Liebermans because he had lived and worked in the San Francisco Bay Area after he and his American wife, who had studied in Switzerland, left Europe in the early 1930s. Wisely, Volz became a naturalized citizen in 1939. His wife's artist mother's owned property in lovely Stinson Beach in Marin County across the bay from San Francisco and with her help Volz quickly became part of San Francisco's avant-garde arts and leftist communities. He and his wife "Mac" built a long and deep Party history (they were members of San Francisco's North Beach wing). Herman's Party aliases were Pike and Raddy.²⁰

Volz was famous/infamous in the art world. He had intensive art training in Europe and rightly became famous as a muralist, painter, and lithographer. In the United States, the mural work he directed for Federal relief projects during the Great Depression followed the theme of the struggling working class. His leftist paintings made him famous, but led to some public protests in San Francisco because his work was considered too radical, but his career did not

suffer. His reputation as a master of large-scale art was one of the reasons he was called by the major Hollywood studios for set designing and the supervision of other artistic work. In Hollywood, Volz soon became involved with the left-wing Actors' Laboratory of Los Angeles that staged many avant-garde theatrical productions. (Sali Liebermann volunteered there). Volz was also a labor advocate. MGM and Paramount studios leaders were surprised to find they hired a true radical and union activist when Herman was arrested at least twice for strike activities after the war. Herman was also a leader in the Party's drive for Henry Wallace's Progressive Party. Although continuing to be a recognized artist, he never got far from the working class. To earn a living after he returned to San Francisco in the late 1940s, he took jobs painting scenery for the Ice Follies, made signs for large display companies, and worked as one of Harry Bridge's stevedores.²¹

Dave Sarvis was not an old friend of Sali's, but was a significant ally for the Liebermans.²² They met him in Hollywood through Party and theater acquaintances, such as Winnie Mann, Sarvis' girlfriend, and future second wife. Winnie had married the soon-to-be famous director Danny Mann who was important to the Actors' Laboratory.

Dave Sarvis had an unusual background---and future. The son of an important American missionary and church official, he was born in Nanking, China but educated in the United States. Where he attended the secular and the reform-minded Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. While there he pursued his deep love for the theater. He went to Yale University for a graduate degree in acting and when he was in his mid-twenties did the illustrations for a major work on the history of stage costumes. He then worked in the theater, served as a Captain in the Marines in the Pacific in World War II, then settled in Los Angeles. Sarvis made a critical Hollywood contact while in Marines: Michael Wilson, the soon-to-be blacklisted screenwriter of a string of

renowned films such as *It's a Wonderful Life* and *Lawrence of Arabia*. In Los Angeles, Dave joined the Party and became involved with its radical theater movement. He married Winnie Klein after her divorce. She also was a believer in the Cause and later a noted stage actress who used her first husband's name, Mann. Like Dave, she became a major player in San Francisco's left-looking arts community.

After World War II, Sarvis held various jobs, including being the stage manager for the road production of *Deep are the Roots*, a play about race relations in the South that had premiered in New York City under the direction of Elia Kazan. It had a cast that included Lloyd Gough, one of the men on Sali's original Hollywood contact list. Sarvis was with *Deep are the Roots* when it played in San Francisco in 1946. On that trip Dave became aware of the potentials for innovate theater in the area and the needs of the Party-aligned California Labor School of San Francisco. Dave returned to Los Angeles, to the Party, to its strikes, and to thinking of what he might be able to do with a "peoples" theater at the San Francisco Labor School.

Goodbye Hollywood, Hello to a New Party Goal

In 1948, Dave Sarvis passed his enthusiasm to Jean and Sali Liebermann. They became very hopeful, especially because there was more to the possible move north than the promise of a job for Sali and safety from anti-Communist investigations. Jean wrote her mother that exciting work for the Cause was available in San Francisco. She told Susan the move meant she and Sali would become "involved in a vital project".²³ Susan responded with a warning: Do not jump from frying pan into fire by acting precipitously. Despite the warning, in July 1948 Sali, Jean, Dave Sarvis and a Spanish Civil War veteran, Red Herrick, made a quick trip in a friend's car to take a preliminary look at the possibilities in Northern California. They stayed at Party members' flats, some of whom Jean had known when they lived in Cambridge. They also visited with Herman

Volz and his family. Pleased with what they saw and the people they met, Jean and Sali returned to Los Angeles to wind-up their affairs. Sali soon headed back to San Francisco—again in a borrowed car. Jean and the children were to follow after Sali’s friends secured him a job and a place for the family .

Jean turned the responsibility for her mentally ill sister Margot over to mother Susan and began settling the family’s business affairs. Jean was able to sell the Hollywood home at a profit, but only after finding a truly “progressive” real estate agent who charged less than the friend they had first signed as their representative. The proceeds from the sale were almost eaten-up by a lawsuit by the first agent, however. Fortunately, he agreed to a small settlement. In July, mother Susan, who had flown from Cambridge to take charge of Margot, helped Jean with the children and accompanied them on the California Flyer train to San Francisco, then returned to Los Angeles.

The Liebermans, Saving the Party And Helping A New One

The Lieberman’s and their Los Angeles friends moved to San Francisco for more than jobs. The Party needed help to reinvent and reinvigorate its California version of a “people’s college” and ensure it conformed to the revolutionary mandates the Duclos letter announced.²⁴ The California Labor School had become one of the largest and most important of the Party’s educational institutions, but was in danger in 1948. Begun early in the century as the small Workers School in the city’s Skid Row District it was renamed the Tom Mooney School to salute that labor-left martyr of the 1916 Preparedness Day bombing in San Francisco. The school moved to better quarters but it remained small in comparison to the Party’s huge Jefferson School in New York City or Boston’s Sam Adams School. That began to change in 1940 after the Party sent David Jenkins from New York City to establish new programs. Although the

Party had drifted from the Popular Front policy after the Hitler-Stalin Pact, when Germany invaded Russia. Jenkins began making alliances with unions and businessmen. David had been a labor and Party “tough guy” in earlier years and always followed the Party line, but he began mellowing into an alliance-builder rather than a head-buster. He managed to organize a significant coalition in San Francisco by 1942. Some seventy unions in addition to Harry Bridges’ International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) supported the school as did major business leaders. The American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations managed a peaceful coexistence at the school, and the hard-line Communist’s Ruthenberg Cultural Center for the arts agreed to cooperate.²⁵ In exchange for that help, and because of Moscow’s dictates during World War II, Jenkins refrained from anything that might hinder the war effort. There were no agitprop theaters sent to the farm areas; racial harmony was a theme in the school; and, there was no encouragement of class hatred. Instead, there were community events such as grand costume balls and arts festivals.

The school offered many night courses, ranging from required orientation classes for longshoremen to classes in acting, painting, jewelry-making, and modern dance. Important, the school was not pretending to be a true college. There were no entrance requirements and charges were minimal. The faculty was part-time, instructors were not required to have credentials, and teachers’ wages were minimal. A drawback: The school’s classes did not transfer as credits to regular colleges. Most of the faculty earned their livings at day jobs and were either friendly to the “left”, Party members or members of the Bay Area’s unique group of intellectual longshoremen and trade-unionists. However, there were famous, or soon to be famous teachers and supporters. On a very long list were Alexander Saxton, Frank Oppenheimer (Robert’s brother), Kenneth Rexroth (the poet father of the beat Generation), Mara Alexander, Paul Radin,

Jessica Mitford, Pele De Leppe, and Lincoln Steffens. Several of the instructors and students became leading of San Francisco's postwar cultural revival. There were links to Jules Irving and Herbert Blau's Actor's Workshop and to Gloria Unti's dance companies.

Too Much Cooperation and Too Few Sponsors

During the war Dave Jenkins followed Party dictates and toned-down the school's radicalism, but Marxist-Leninist teaching remained at the core of the school's curricula. As well, the national Party remained in control, although it kept in the background. It dictated that older local Party leaders, such as Jack and Tillie Olsen, were hired to ensure the critical Marxist theory offerings remained true. Certainly, most of the students, such as Marguerite Johnson (Maya Angelou), knew they were enrolled at a decidedly left-of-center institution. At times during the war Jenkin's inclusive policies went too far to the right. The Party let him know of its disapproval of the large number of offerings in psychology, psychoanalysis, and modernistic literature. Those courses were enrolling huge numbers of students although they were tagged as capitalistic intellectual trash by Party theoreticians.²⁶ Jenkins did not always follow orders. He continued offering classes in psychology and art.

At the war's end, the school was a success and Jenkins had plans for new buildings and for turning the school into an accredited college. He had become such a good politician he convinced California's authorities to approve the school for the GI Bill and San Francisco's school district was giving credits for its classes. By 1947, there were 220 full and some 1,800 part-time students. Branches were established in Los Angeles and several Bay Area cities. The numbers were impressive but they hid serious problems. The school had overextended through real estate purchases, just as the old coalition of unions and businesses was eroding. Enrollments dropped, especially when the GI Bill approval was withdrawn after less than two

years. The school was also under investigation by California's Tenney Committee, the states' version of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). Those problems tempted Jenkins to demphasize Marxism and Party connections but doing so would put him a push-me-pull-me situation. Local friends advised him to pursue a moderate approach but he was under intense pressure as orders arrived from New York's Party headquarters to stop hesitating and return to the doctrines of the days of revolutionary ardor. With the publication of the Duclos letter the national Party had declared the policy of cooperation with capitalists a fundamental error. The Party's cooperation leader, Earl Browder, was immediately expelled. It took longer for the West Coast's debate over Duclos to be resolved. Dave Jenkins, who had become much less of a passionate Marxist, was angered over "interference" from the East Coast. After he was reprimanded for his hesitation Jenkins turned much of the management of the now struggling school over to Holland Roberts, a more Party-compliant man, and began to think of another career. Just a few months after Sali and Jean, Dave Sarvis, and Red Herrick arrived in San Francisco for their "vital project" David Jenkins left the school and took a job in the ILWU. He also directed the organization battling Harry Bridges' deportation.²⁷ Those jobs soon led him to become a major figure in San Francisco's politics and its Democratic Party.

A Bad Time to Try to Rejuvenate the School

The Labor School's new director, Holland Roberts, was an assistant professor of education at Stanford University, not a full-time Party man and organizer like Dave Jenkins, but he accepted his new responsibilities at an especially challenging time because he was a devoted communist. He faced great challenges. Soon after he took charge the school did not have enough income to pay the mortgage on the old Redman's Lodge building it had recently purchased.²⁸ But Roberts struggled on, convinced communism was the future, a belief reinforced when he traveled

to Russia in 1949 and found, he believed, the standard of living for Soviet workers already was well above that of America's proletariat.

More than the school was in trouble.²⁹ Party membership was declining nationwide, leading to a membership of one-half of its World War II dues-payers by 1951. Part of the decline was due to a changed perception of the Soviet Union from being an ally to being an enemy as the Cold War began. The conflict's onset was signaled by the the Soviets blockading and trying to starve West Berlin. The Party's image also suffered as governments throughout the Soviet sphere, including once democratic Czechoslovakia, were turned into brutal dictatorships, and as evidence of Soviet spying in America became public. Investigations were also causing membership declines. Proddings by anti-Communists, including Lovestone-Hook type anti-Communists, generated renewed congressional investigations of Communist influence and espionage. Investigators called on ex-Communists to testify about what they had been telling the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for years. In 1948, Whittaker Chambers spoke of espionage within the government and by members of the Eastern liberal establishment such as Alger Hiss and Noel Field, not just by Party hacks or Soviet agents. Hede Massing soon became a famous and talkative witness, as did Helen Bentley. In addition image problems fear was weakening Party. The American government was deporting foreign radicals and in 1949 it began the first of a series of trials against Party officials. The Foley Square trial of national party leaders indicated the government was interpreting Party membership in itself a violation of the old Smith Act laws against conspiracy to overthrow the government. In addition, Party leaders were jailed as state governments were broadly applying their old anti-syndicalist laws.

Sali, The Vital Project, and More Friends Going West

The testimony and trials meant Jean's 1948 "vital project" could be a dangerous one. The central task for Sali's group was to move the San Francisco school's theater programs back to a focus on class and race struggles. Dave Sarvis took the lead, helped by Sali, Herman Volz, and additional others who had moved from the East to the more liberal West Coast. Several of those who migrated after the war were or would become friends of Jean and Sali, as well as contributors to the new California Labor School. Leslie Arnold had owned the Progressive bookstore in Boston, been associate director of its Sam Adams School, and, with his wife, been active in all the correct causes of the 1930s and early 1940s—including radical theater projects. Kenneth Howard was a graduate student at Harvard while working in Marxist education projects in Boston. Sydney Rubin and his wife had been involved in "left" drama in Chicago.³⁰

They and Sali's Los Angeles friends immediately got to work, although they all had to hold outside jobs because of the declining finances of the Labor School. While working as a draftsman Dave Sarvis wrote, produced, and directed *Stevedore*, a play using longshoremen in the cast. The play returned to the 1930's theme of labor exploitation. Sali spent much time helping with that and the school's other stage productions. The Sarvis team was soon augmented by many blacklisted Hollywood writers who went on to produce a landmark underground film classic. 1954's *Salt of the Earth*, was a controversial documentary financed by and about the struggles of the very radical Mine, Mill and Smelter Union and its striking workers in New Mexico. The film stressed race and gender, as well as class.

Despite such artistic and ideological achievements, Dave's theater department and the School struggled with more financial problems, continually declining enrollments, and recurring government investigations. After the Federal government cancelled the school's non-profit status and demanded payment of back-taxes in 1957 the school was doomed. That, however, did not

mean an end to Sali Lieberman's or his friends' theater work or their contributions to radical causes.

1948, A New Life, A Strange Job, and a Haven Just Outside the Big City

In summer 1948, the Liebermans' move to San Francisco went smoothly, but not exactly as hoped. Although there was not a film industry in San Francisco, Sali thought his friends would find work for him in the arts. Herman Volz and Dave Sarvis did have many contacts among the faithful left, ranging from those in the emerging Beatnik community in San Francisco's North Beach, to leaders in the city's many labor unions. Dave and Hermann had promised they would find a job for Sali, and they did so on the first day he arrived---but it was not in the arts or even in the industries most influenced by local Communists. They did not secure him a theater job, nor one as an ILWU dockworker or warehouseman. Rather, they had contacted other union friends and arranged a featherbedding job for Sali at San Francisco's beautiful Palace Hotel on Market Street as an upholsterer! Sali told Jean he was excited about getting one of those "make-work" positions the union had negotiated because it would give him time to do what genuinely interested him, theater work. There was a serious difficulty, however. Sali knew nothing about upholstering. His tolerant boss taught him as best he could, but Sali was a slow learner, a person who disliked taking orders from anyone, and a man who found many excuses to not show-up for work. Despite the influence of the union and his friends in the company that contracted such hotel work, Sali lasted less than a year before he was fired. His next job was for only one day. His new employer found him totally unqualified.³¹

Sali spent almost all of 1949 unemployed. He kept busy remodeling his and Jean's home and volunteering at the California Labor School. After much effort, his friends arranged another upholsterer's job, this time working for a leftist at the luxurious Huntington Hotel. The

Huntington was on Nob Hill with its famous cable cars and was across the street from the exclusive Union League Club and the posh Fairmont Hotel. Sali, again, did not stay long, just a few months. Surprisingly, Sali held his next position for three years. It was at a hotel that was on the decline and in a section of the city that had seen better days. The job did not pay very well but was acceptable to Sali because it demanded relatively little time, allowing him to work on his theater projects and on his teaching at the Labor School. At his highpoint in 1953, Sali made seventy-five dollars a week. That was a bit above the national average, but not much more and San Francisco had a high cost-of-living. In addition, Sali and Jean had made a decision that significantly increased their living expenses.

“Let Them Eat” the Idyllic Muir Woods and Mill Valley

Jean and Sali may have been crusading for the downtrodden, but they decided not to live with them. In 1948, they chose a perfect setting for artistic-intellectual liberals. Rather than picking Hunters Point or the Potrero in San Francisco, where World War II shipyard workers were living on-the-dole, or in San Francisco’s North Beach, an emerging low rent arts area, the Liebermans chose a semi-rural retreat. Unlike the situation in San Francisco, where public transportation was good and cheap, their new home called for the expenses associated with owning automobiles and commuting. Their choice meant the expense of two hopefully reliable cars. Sali had to make daily trips across the high-toll-charging Golden Gate Bridge. Jean needed a car while he was as gone. Sali saved the family money by buying her a French Renault, an unusual choice in America in the 1940s and one that made Jean stand-out.³²

The Liebermann’s new home was in Mill Valley, Marin County. Mill Valley was just a few miles away from, the huge World War II Marin City temporary housing complex for “the people,” largely Negro people. Although it was a short ride away Marin City was great social,

racial, and cultural distance from Sali's new house. Marin City was like a ghetto, Mill Valley was a quaint country town, as was most of Marin County. Until the Golden Gate Bridge began to outcompete ferry-boats in 1937, Marin was an isolated collection of fishing villages, dairy ranches, summer beach cottages, rustic arts colonies, stunning redwood groves, and a few retreats for the ultra-rich. In 1948, most of it remained a beautiful rural retreat despite the appearance of a few middle-class suburbs.

After Jean and the children arrived from Los Angeles in late 1948, the Liebermans learned of Mill Valley while living rent-free in a cabin nearby on Stinson Beach. The beach had a gorgeous setting on the bay with a view of San Francisco's skyline. Herman Volz's wife's relatives provided the cabin, and more. The Volz's Mrs. MacBatten soon helped Jean find a homeowner in the hills above the beach who was in financial trouble. His house was next to the famous Muir Woods with its stand of ageless giant redwood trees. The owner of the almost-completed small 1,100 square foot home could not pay his mortgage and sold the house to Jean and Sali with the provision he could rent a room from them. Susan, Jean's mother, may have helped with the purchase, and she is known to have loaned Sali a great amount of money to renovate the property.³³ The home was on a large, wooded lot, had only one neighbor, had a private road, and was a few yards away the world-famous panoramic highway that hugged the Northern California coast. Their Mill Valley "Lone Tree" was a true haven in an idyllic setting. The area also had high-quality but lily-white public schools.

However, there were few jobs in or near Mill Valley.. That meant a daily trip for Sali over the bridge to San Francisco. The tolls, and other commuting expenses led Jean to again try to find work while mothering two young children.

It Wasn't the Worst of Times, but Almost

Jean's fear of the anti-Communist movement and the many-times dire state of the family's finances caused her to have recurring bouts of depression and anxiety, sometimes so bad she required medical attention. She was no longer the brave, strong and determined courier Paul Massing used to bring sensitive information from Switzerland to London. Her neighbor believed that Jean would become an alcoholic if she had any money to spend on more liquor. Observers, including her relatives, remarked on her always-dour expression. Life's stresses were causing her facial contours to change. Jean might have had a complete emotional breakdown if she learned that Sali was on the DETCOM (Communist Detention) list of those to be taken into custody by the FBI to prevent sabotage or espionage at the onset of a national emergency. The tensions Jean was under may have led her to have what an FBI's informant thought was an extra-marital affair with Herman Volz, the family friend, during the early 1950s.³⁴ By then, the imprisonment of so many Party leaders, and fearing that the FBI had Sali under constant observation worsened Jean's emotional condition. Sali's responses during a 1951 interview with FBI agents added to her anxieties. When asked if he or Jean were, or had ever been, Communists, if they knew any Communists, or had been engaged in any type of underground activity, Sali stated "no" to each question. That was the kind of lie that might be used in a criminal trial or deportation hearing.

In addition to anxiety Jean had other serious health problems. In 1951, she spent two weeks in a San Francisco hospital recovering from an operation. Sali had his own health concerns. He had to have operations for growths on his tongue and a tumor on his elbow. There were also family legal worries. Sali endured several immigration service and FBI investigations related to his deportation as well as his applications for citizenship. He survived partly because the immigration authorities, while believing Sali had been and was a Party member, could not locate

documents about his activities in Switzerland, and because he used the shrewd legal advice provided by San Francisco's Jewish centers and by left-leaning attorneys such as Allan Brotsky of the National Lawyers Guild and Harry Bridges' ILWU.³⁵ The Guild was the organization that would defend Angela Davis and Brotsky was involved with clients ranging from Bobby Seale to Daniel Ellsberg. Ellsberg became a neighbor of Sali's in Mill Valley after his problems over his illegal release of the ultra-secret Pentagon Papers in 1971.

It was not until Sali was in his sixties, and when the political scene appeared safe, that he made a successful attempt to be naturalized. With the help of a special relief bill submitted by Phil Burton, his friend and the Democratic leader of Marin County, and aid from Marin County's Jewish leaders, Sali was naturalized in 1974---twenty-eight years after he reached America.³⁶

How Could A Vassar Girl....

Meanwhile, during the 1940s and 1950s, Jean was tolerating years of humiliation. Her initial San Francisco area job-goal fit her high-status educational background and language skills. She wanted to teach in a real college, at least in one of the many new junior colleges in California. But that required commuting to San Francisco State College to take night-time education courses for teacher certification for foreign language teaching. San Francisco State was an institution barely emerging from its status as a lowly teacher's college, something hard to tolerate for a Vassar Girl with a PhD. But it was the closest college and had a very low tuition. Sadly, after completing the required courses there came a series of rejections and disappointments. Jean interviewed at several junior colleges, including one a hundred miles away in Sacramento, California. None offered her a position. There were more frustrations. Her attempts at play-writing brought her to meet with many other aspiring San Francisco writers, but not to publications or income.

Jean had to turn to degrading alternatives. She began to awake early every morning and get fully dressed hoping for a phone-call to summon her to just a one-day stint as a substitute public school teacher. After several years, she finally landed a job as a full-time instructor at the high school near Lone Tree—but the school district’s superintendent soon fired for her incompetence. She suffered the same fate when the district gave her more chances as a school researcher and a home-school teacher. Interspersed, were more hospital-stays for both she and Sali. It was not until 1956 that Jean found her niche. She obtained what grew into a permanent position. She became a junior-grade editor at the research center for biomechanics at the University of California’s Sutro Forest medical campus in San Francisco. The editing position bolstered Jean’s spirits. Her outlook was also helped by an inexplicable upswing in the Lieberman’s finances during the 1950s.

Just after having to ask for another large loan from her family, and Sali having to take a consumer loan to pay a \$100 property tax bill, an inheritance allowed Sali to buy a new car, to quit his job in San Francisco, and to open his own upholstery and drapery store in a new Marin County shopping center. In addition, the family could afford to bring Sali’s mother from Switzerland to visit and Jean could pay for a trip to Moscow in 1958. Sali’s store, where he also displayed modern and “left art,” was in Corte Madera, just a few miles from Lone Tree. Unfortunately, the business lasted only a few years. Sali moved to nearby Greenbrae for a year or so. Then, he based the business at his isolated house. By then, Sali seemed to have made his real interests, the theater and ultra-liberal causes, his major activities.³⁷

It May Not Have Been a Heaven for the Left. But It Came Close,

Mill Valley was a near perfect setting for Sali, if not for Jean. During the three decades before it morphed into an enclave for the ultra-rich, achieving the nick-name “Beverly Hills North,” the

Valley and Marin County became artists' havens and the home of Hollywood Ten writers such as Lester Cole, jazz artist Jim Hendricks, counter-cultural luminaries Jack Kerouac and Ken Kesey, and others of the ideologically pure. The valley had many distinguished leftist visitors including the Hollywood Ten's Will Geer, Herbert Biberman, Gale Sondegaard and Howard DeSilva as early as 1951.³⁸ Significant for the Liebermans, especially Sali, Marin County was the home of many influential politically active leftists, including Vincent and Vivian Hallinan. They were public leaders of the Independent Progressive Party (IPP), the latest version of a national pseudo-Communist political party.³⁹ Sali and Jean worked for the IPP in their own neighborhood then became part of the movement and demographics that changed Marin County from a Republican to one of the most left-leaning and secure Democratic strongholds in the nation.⁴⁰

After they arrived in Mill Valley, the Liebermans were of, but not formally in, the Communist Party branches in Marin and San Francisco. Perhaps it was the threat of Sali's deportation and Jean's known Communist links that kept them from joining. (Although sometimes included on investigators' lists of Party members, Sali was never called to testify at HUAC or similar hearings because there was no direct evidence of formal membership).

However, at minimum, the Lieberman's were ultimate examples of fellow travelers and, as in Hollywood, Jean and Sali's social life revolved around "left" acquaintances and organizations. The Volz and Sarvis' remained their closest friends, but they Sali and Jean found others among the members of Marin's Party, even providing a room in their home for Kenneth Howard. Howard was the Party's leader during a period when he was estranged from his mother, was homeless, and under psychiatric care. Sali and Jean did meet with Jean's sister Joy Figueiredo at

family gatherings, but Sali thought it best to avoid being publicly linked to such well-known, hard-core Comrades as the Figueiredos.

While Sali was not a full member, the Marin Party occasionally invited him to its secret meetings, including one in the early 1960s when its members discussed whether they should reform as a version of France's World War II armed resistance movement. Sali also attended social gatherings at Vincent Hallinan's beautiful estate in Ross where he could socialize with major Communist figures such as Harry Bridges, Archie Brown, Lester Cole, Mickey Lima, and, later, the New Left representative, Bettina Aptheker. There was more to the Lieberman's social life than Marin: Sali's long-time connection to San Francisco's California Labor School served as a source of contact with San Francisco' liberals and their public radio and television outlets.

Almost the Middle Class

Although Sali and Jean were long-time supporters of the very left Independent Progressive Party, they evolved to be became part of Marin's liberal community as they helped both "front" and traditionally liberal organizations. Such activities appear to have become Sali's real job, but Jean also participated. She did not forget her progressive Seven Sister heritage. For example, she joined the local chapter of the American Association of University Women. She also became a respected contributor to other voluntary organizations, continued with her mother's feminist and social crusades, and kept in contact with her Cambridge-Shady Hill school classmate May Sarton, the acclaimed Unitarian lesbian writer and lover of the anthropologist Cora duBois.⁴¹ Jean also continued her support for the Quaker and Jane Addams 'related Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

In addition, Jean contributed poems, one of which, in the *Beliot Poetry Journal* of 1980, reflected her continued puzzlements about life's meaning, but also that she had begun to have religious beliefs. Jean made such an impression on liberals she was the subject of a biography in a *Who's Who of American Women*.⁴² That biography did not mention her OSS or Communist connections, her earlier career failures, or something that caught the attention of the American authorities: She somehow raised the money to make at least one more trip to the Soviet Union during the 1960s, still the Cold War years.⁴³ During the late 1940s and early 1950s, Jean had been more like a radical. She helped distinctly left causes, sometimes generating concerns about her politics. She circulated petitions against the atomic bomb, the Korean War, and the House Un-American Activities Committee. She went further and became a public figure when she authored harsh articles in the local newspaper against the committee's or any attempt to prevent teaching communism in the public schools. Indicating Jean had not cut herself off from the Field clan, she and Sali were able to afford a 1978 trip to see Herta Field in Budapest, with a stop in New England to visit with her ex-husband Hermann at his Valley Farm.⁴⁴

Jean and Sali's Marin progressivism was soon augmented as Marin County attracted a new wave of those on the left. Mill Valley was becoming the home of many of 1960's New Left and, later, one of the central figures in two 1990s versions of left radicalism, the Green and Social Justice Movements. Drummond Pike, who led the multi-million-dollar Tides Foundation, found the Valley a perfect base for launching dozens of ultra-liberal initiatives.⁴⁵

Mr. Modern Liberal

Beginning as early as 1955 Sali became involved in so many left-liberal political activities it is hard to imagine how he earned a living. Never revealing any of his Party ties, Sali fended-off some of the local beliefs that Jean and he was "communistic" and built a reputation as a kindly

left-of-center, but not radical, activist. While Sali and Jean continued to be involved with left causes, they were ones that fit with San Francisco and Marin's political mainstream Democratic Party policies. They sponsored lectures by Stephen Fritchman on "peace" at union halls and Unitarian gatherings, but Sali seemed to drift toward the ideologically middle when he persuaded Yugoslavian diplomats to present Tito's case to Marin audiences. Sali and Jean continued to raise funds to support the Hollywood Ten Backlist martyrs, including Dalton Trumbo who had fled to Mexico. Sali helped produce a film about the "riot" at the 1960 HUAC hearings in San Francisco⁴⁶ and he and a local Party member ran a local spin-off of the Civil Rights Congress, whose one-time leader, Frank Marshall Davis, would mentor Barack Obama, a future Democratic President of the United States.⁴⁷ Sali supported front marches and protests against HUAC, segregation, and the Viet Nam War. He devoted time to the fight to free the Soviet spies, the Rosenbergs and Martin Sobel, as well as Wesley Wells the many-times convicted killer. Sali raised money so he and a friend could go to Alabama and participate in the Selma civil rights protest, and he quietly approved the Party's attempt to gain a stronger place in the new Negro movements through its Dubois clubs and its struggle to gain a presence in such New Left causes as Free Speech at Berkeley and other college campuses.

Sali and Jean's more public activities trumped those that might have given them permanent reputations as "commies." Their efforts to appear mainstream succeeded, with Jean being dropped as a threat by the FBI in the early 1960s, although the State Department worried over Jean's 1964 trip to Switzerland to see Sali's ailing mother, a trip that included a known stop in Communist Poland and another stop in Russia. Sali was dropped from the FBI's watch a decade later. Sali did seem to be morphing into a moderate. He aided the American Friends Service Committee and the B'nai B'rith and gave much time to the Unitarian church. He became a major

figure in Marin County's American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the county's branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Sali also gave time to efforts to ameliorate the low-income housing problem in the county. As well, as aspiring members of the middle-class, he and Jean were supporters of the Sierra Club, the Parent Teachers Association, even the Boy Scouts.⁴⁸

Sali became very active in the county's Democratic political party, something the Communist Party approved after the demise of the Independent Progressive Party in the late 1940s. Sali began working directly with Democratic Party leaders in Marin. Phil Burton and Clem Miller called on him for support for projects such as the creation of the Pont Reyes National Seashore that saved the Marin coastal area from becoming another suburb. The Seashore kept the coast (and the view from Sali's home) as it had been since the early Nineteenth Century.⁴⁹ Burton also created what became regarded as a gerrymandered electrical district that guaranteed Democratic victories. The district included Marin County and, oddly, the across-the-bay districts of San Francisco that were predictably Democratic.

The Liebermans were also integrating themselves into the Jewish community. They became friends of Sydney Kluger, a San Francisco leader who had befriended Ben Hecht and Henry Wallace while on a 1930s Mexican vacation. Kluger then worked with the Office of Strategic Services in Mexico during the 1940s. His Zionism made the American authorities very suspicious, but by the 1960s he was a part of the Bay Area's influential liberal establishment.

Meanwhile, Sali and Jean had tried to raise their children in a middle-class life-style, and did not treat them as archetypical "Red diaper babies." When they could afford it, the family took trips to Lake Tahoe and the Donner Pass and Sali began stretching the family's budgets by

buying a series of newer automobiles, ones that would not embarrass the children, even when Sali insisted on painting each of the cars green.

Sali's True Love and His Many Artistic Friends, and San Francisco's Educational Elite

Despite all those activities and his work and family responsibilities, Sali target his energies on his greatest loves, the theater, and the arts. That, despite his theater work having some 'left' orientations, became the foundation for his public image as a modern liberal.

For a time after the demise of the California Labor School and its theater program Sali was as much a consumer as a producer in the new cultural scene in the Bay Area. He aided the development of a community theater in Mill Valley during the 1950s,⁵⁰ but the town had less than 7,000 residents and its Homestead Players were limited in what they could accomplish with small audiences and funding. In the 1950s and early 1960s, the exciting cultural action was across the bay in San Francisco's North Beach where the Beatnik culture was blossoming. The Beach had coffee houses, left-wing bookstores, peoples' art galleries, and avant-garde nightclubs. The Beat poets Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti read their works over a tinny microphone system in the smoke-filled Cellar bar and the Beatniks argued great philosophical issues in the local coffee houses.

A few blocks down from the Cellar was the famous HungryI nightclub where Alvah Bessie, the Hollywood Ten writer, ex-Lincoln Brigade member, ex-neighbor of Nina Field, friend of Stephen Fritchman, and a Sali Lieberman acquaintance worked. Alva had been convicted for contempt of congress and blacklisted . After his release from prison, he began writing for the ILWU, then became a light-man and announcer for stars such as Barbra Streisand who went on to fame, and a to great fortune she used to support many left-liberal political causes. Bessie continued to author left-oriented books devoted to the cause of equality. But, like many of the

'left' in San Francisco he sent his child to a famous intellectually and to a degree socially elite Lowell High School (San Francisco's version of Cambridge's Latin High School).⁵¹ Lowell had educated the influential and famous since the mid-Nineteenth Century. However, great scientists, artists, and jurists were not all it produced. In the 1960s, as Sali's generation of the left was beginning to be seen as ideologically outdated some of Lowell's students became members of the New Left and joined organizations such as the radical Students for a Democratic Society. One, alumnus, Mike Botin, slid into membership in the violent Symbionese Liberation Army that robbed banks, murdered liberal educators, and kidnapped the heiress Patty Hearst. That group of ex-convicts and ideologues was much more violent than the old International Workers of the World.⁵² Another Lowell graduate of the 1960s had a non-violent but important future. Nicolas Clainos went from Lowell to Princeton University to study political science. He then obtained a law degree at Stanford University. Soon after he began his law practice he became the legal and business advisor to Bill Graham just as Graham was building a rock music empire based in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district where another re-inventing of the American intellectual-cultural was taking place left—the Hippie Movement. It would replace the Beatnik culture of the 1950s and shift San Francisco's radical cultural locus from North Beach to the intersection of Haight and Ashbury streets. Graham's music empire included the Grateful Dead and the Doors. Both Graham and Clainos became rich and significant contributors to liberal causes and the campaigns of leading Democratic Party candidates in later years.

Although Alvah Bessie was of an older generation, he had some links to the latest trends. After graduating from Lowell High School, his daughter enrolled in the then radicalized and riot-torn San Francisco State College. While there she joined in the Hippie cultural revolution.. Eva Bessie did more than observe. She was at the center of those cultural uprisings in San

Francisco's Haight district. She married Wes Wilson who created the now iconic music posters, including those for the Grateful Dead, which helped turn Bill Graham's rock concerts and anti-establishment celebrations into a world-wide cultural phenomena.⁵³

Old Before His Ideological Time, But 'Theater is My Life'

Sali and Jean had found the Beatnik culture and the radicalism of the 1950s acceptable, but they, in addition to many others of their generation, became increasingly culturally and politically marginalized. There were new issues and organizations in the mid-1960s and the 1970s. The great labor battles seemed outdated and the rock-of-Marxism, the unions, were becoming the enemies of the radicals of the 1960s. Even the vocabulary of radicalism was changing. Esoteric academic pundits, who had no links to the working class, and who used a near private language, were replacing Marx and Lenin, even Mao. While Marin's Party faithful supported the causes of such visitors as Bettina Aptheker and Angela Davis, their philosophy and life-style were barely comprehensible to the members of Sali and Jean's cohort.⁵⁴ And, unfortunately for the Hippies, for Sali, and for the Old and New Left(s), by the late 1960s America was beginnings to turn away from radicalism⁵⁵

Such trends and the feeling that his 1930s type of radicalism was being superseded led Sali to a shift in priorities. Beginning in the mid-1960s he retreated from many of his political activities. He continued his leadership role in Marin's ACLU and helped with that anti HUAC film, but most of his energies went into reshaping the Bay Area's mainstream cultural scene. Sali contributed to the growth of San Francisco's ultra-liberal KQED public television station and helped start the city's international film festival. Most significant, he and Jean were important to expanding Mill Valley's old local community theater into a well-regarded company that presented prestigious plays and promoted the work of new authors. The Marin Theater Company

featured avant-garde productions, not the old rather crude agitprop of the Labor School days. Some of its offerings became major hits, including *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Sali also helped establish the Marin symphony, and he lobbied for the funding of its elegant concert hall.

But Sali's love remained Mill Valley's theater. In some ways it was his link to his past as a leftist. Visitors to the theater included May Sarton and her old acting-school classmate Will Geer. A blacklisted admitted Communist, Geer made his way back into the theater world and was on the verge of becoming a cultural icon as the kindly grandfather "Zeb" on *The Walton's* long-running television series. Sali seems to have maintained other of his and Jean's connections to those involved in the 1940's controversies over Communism and civil rights in Hollywood. Three years before his death, the Marin County chapter of the ACLU honored Sali at a dinner that featured a panel on blacklisting and a speech by one of the Hollywood Ten.⁵⁶

Despite that Old Communist connection Sali was remembered as a devoted and self-sacrificing liberal. Yet Sali never criticized the Soviet Union, even after the revelations about its government-caused famines, the Great Terror, the gulags, and espionage. Nor did he criticize the barbarities in Communist China, Vietnam, or Cambodia. Sali died at age seventy-three as a pillar of the community rather than as a radical outsider--- as did Jean thirteen years later in 1995 after being cared for by her daughter and son⁵⁷

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- ¹ On Sali and Jean before 1945, Burke, "Information" *Op. cit.*
- ² Kluger, *Op. cit.*
- ³ Sali and Jean had been searching for an American job for Sali for years. FBI FOIA, margot clark,
- ⁴ FBI FOIA, lieberman.
- ⁵ FBI FOIA, lieberman..
- ⁶ Philbrick, Herbert A., *I Lived Three Lives: Citizen, Communist, Counterspy* (Washington, D.C.: Capitol Hill Press, 1972); Weiner, Tim, *Enemies: A History of the FBI* (New York: Random House, 2012).
- ⁷ FBI FOIA, lieberman..
- ⁸ Greene, Robert S., *Blum-San! Scholar, Gentleman, Spy: the Many Lives of Paul Blum* (New York: Jupiter/Rsg, 1998); *NYT*, 7-10-1965; NARA, OSS Personnel Files.
- ⁹ Robert P. Joyce Papers, Yale University; NARA, OSS Personnel Files.
- ¹⁰ FBI FOIA, lieberman.
- ¹¹ Herzberg, Bob, *The Left Side of the Screen: Communist and Left Wing Ideology in Hollywood* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 2011). The original name of the ILWU union, that included 'mens', was changed after the 'PC' era began.
- ¹² Vorspan, Max & Lloyd P. Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles* (San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1970).
- ¹³ Kluger "nterview," *Op. cit.*
- ¹⁴ Healey, http://keywiki.org/Dorothy_Healey#Early_Life.
- ¹⁵ Volz, http://www.askart.com/askart/v/herman_roderick_volz/herman_roderick_volz.aspx;
<http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/transcripts/ohanlo64.htm>; Sarvis,
[thewebsite.com/garb/sarvis/ welcome.html](http://thewebsite.com/garb/sarvis/welcome.html),
http://articles.sfgate.com/2007-05-20/bay-area/17246349_1_magic-theatre-ms-mann-lincoln-center ; Lee Anthony W., *Painting on the Left: Diego Rivera, Radical Politics and San Francisco's Public Murals* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).
- ¹⁶ FBI FOIA, lieberman , Jean worked for Jaffe from 2-1947 to 1-1948,
- ¹⁷ *NYT*, 3-25 84, 1 19 2000.
- ¹⁸ Fariello, Griffin, *Red Scare: Memories of the American Inquisition, an Oral History* (NY: W. W. Norton, 1995).
- ¹⁹ Jean's income was just at the official poverty level with four members in the household.
- ²⁰ Volz citations above and FBI FOIA, lieberman..
- ²¹ Additional on Vloz: <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-herman-volz-12509> ,
<http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/transcripts/volz64.htm>.
- ²² On Sarvis, <http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Dave-Sarvis-3076025.php> ' Sf Gate 7-10-1999; United States Congress, House. Committee on Un-American Activities, The Northern California District of the Communist Party, structure, objectives, leadership. Hearings, 1960; http://www.conservapedia.com/California_Labor_School.
- ²³ FBI FOI, lieberman 7-1948.
- ²⁴ On the Labor School, Regional Oral History Office The Bancroft Library University of California Berkeley, California International Longshoremen's, and Warehousemen's Union Oral History Series David Jenkins; *Reports of the Subversive Activities Control Board* (GPO, Washington D.C., 1966). Ginger, Ann Fagan, & David Christiano (eds.), *The Cold War Against Labor*, vol. 2 (Berkeley, CA: Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute, 1987); Gettleman, Marvin E., "No Varsity Teams: New York's Jefferson School of Social Science, 1943-1956." *Science and Society*, 66 3 (Fall 2002): p336-359; <http://www.gothamcenter.org/festival/2001/confpapers/gettleman.pdf> text.
- ²⁵ Jenkins, 'Interview,' *Op. cit.*
- ²⁶ Gettleman, Marvin E., "No Varsity Teams: New York's Jefferson School of Social Science, 1943-1956." *Science and Society*, 66 #3 (Fall, 2002): 336-359
- ²⁷ FBI FOIA, hallinan.
- ²⁸ FBI FOIA, hallinan.
- ²⁹ FBI FOIA, hallinan.
- ³⁰ FBI FOIA, lieberman.
- ³¹ FBI FOIA, lieberman, ICE addendum..
- ³² FBI FOIA, hallinan,

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- ³³ FBI FOIA, lieberman1951.
- ³⁴ FBI FOIA,, lieberman 7 & 9-1953.
- ³⁵ The Jewish groups provided the lawyer Franklin K. Brahn and, perhaps, Ernest Besig.
- ³⁶ FBI FOIA, lieberman ICE; *Marin Independent Journal* ,10-21-1982, also Mill Valley Historical Review Spring 2015.
- ³⁷ FBI FOIA,ICE.
- ³⁸ FBI FOIA, hallinan.
- ³⁹ The FBI believe Hallinan was a Party member but could not prove it. One of its trusted informants belied he was being “used ” by the Party. FBI FOIA, hallinan
- ⁴⁰ Hallinan Vivian, *My Wild Irish Rogues* (NY.: Doubleday, 1952); Hallinan, Vincent, *A Lion in Court* (NY: Putnam and Sons, 1963). As early as 1955 Sali had become a major fund-raiser for progressive causes, hosting, for example, A Liberty Ball at the home f a noted Marin County physician in the exclusive Kent Woodlands development..
- ⁴¹ May Sarton Papers Collection, New York Public Library; Seymour, Susan C., *Cora Dubois: Anthropologist, Diplomat, Agent* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), p277,
- ⁴² BU b28 f4. *Who's Who Among American Women* ; Jean Clark Lieberman, “Inheritance,” *Beliot Poetry Journal*, Fall 1980, May Sarton Guest Editor, p39-40.
- ⁴³ FBI FOIA, lieberman; NARA RG59 Central Decimal Files, b187, Jean to Budapest and Russia
- ⁴⁴; NARA RG59 Central Decimal Files.
- ⁴⁵ http://www.undueinfluence.com/drummond_pike.htm
- ⁴⁶ FBI FOIA, lieberman
- ⁴⁷ FBI FOIA, lieberman 5-1952; Obama, Barack., *Dreams From my Father: a story of race and Inheritance* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2004).
- ⁴⁸ FBI FOIA, ICE.
- ⁴⁹ *Marin Independent Journal*, *passim*.
- ⁵⁰ <http://www.marintheatre.org/about/history/>
- ⁵¹ Bessie, Alvah, *Inquisition in Eden* (NY: The MacMillan Co., 1965);Bessie, Dan, *Rare Birds: An American Family* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001).
- ⁵² United Press International, 1-18-2002; Lowell Alumni List.
- ⁵³ Bessie ,Rare“, *Op. cit.*;’ http://www.aavw.org/protest/subversive_fbi_abstract02_full.html
- ⁵⁴ Jenkins ,”Interview“” *Op. cit.*; Aptheker, Bettina F., *Intimate Politics: How I Grew Up Red, Fought for Free Speech, and Became a Feminist Rebel* (Emeryville CA: Seal Press, 2006); FBI FOIA, lieberman 6-1967.
- ⁵⁵ Diggins, John Patrick, *The Rise and Fall of the American Left* (NY: W.W. Norton, 1992); Gottfried, Paul Edward, *The Strange Death of Marxism* (Columbia, MO; University of Missouri Pres, 2005).
- ⁵⁶ *Marin Independent Journal*, *passim*;; Morgan , Ted , *Reds: McCarthyism in Twentieth Century America* (NY: Random House, 2003).; Rosenberg, Daniel, *Underground Communists in the McCarthy Period: A Family Memoir* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellon Press, 2008); http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ella_Reeve_Bloor#Biography.
- ⁵⁷ *Marin Independent Journal*, 10-21-1982. Margot, Joy, and Stephen cared for her at the Lone Tree house, an apartment on Camino Alto in Mill Valley and at the vacation retreat in a rugged section of mountainous Albion, California.