

## Chapter 7

### Susan Clark and the Influential and Famous

Susan Clark was a remarkable woman with many connections to Communists, liberals, and leftists. While keeping her membership secret she did more than pay Party dues. In her mid-fifties, while writing her *Boston Post* newspaper column and shepherding her many times emotionally needy daughters, she led a local chapter of the Newspaper Guild, a radical version of a newspaper union, while making little effort to hide her political beliefs. Her coworkers remarked that she never hid her commitment to Marxist principles and the Soviet Union. Although never a regular Party functionary, until her death she was a public supporter of all types of Communist “front” organizations and during the 1930s she encouraged her daughters to use the family’s Trapelo retreat, near what had been a version of a utopian single tax community, as a hostel and meeting place for radical youth groups. Trapelo also became the home of Massachusetts’s branch of the American Russian Institute for Cultural Relations. Susan always contributed to the many versions of The Friends of Soviet Union that collected funds for supposed foreign relief work and she gave money to the various “peace” organizations, such as the Minute Women for Peace which focused on denouncing the United States’ foreign policies, including the post-World War II’s Marshall Plan and aid to Greece.<sup>1</sup>

Since the 1920s Susan was a resource for the Party’s legal support groups, such as the International Labor Defense and the Civil Rights Congress, and of the Party’s attempts to utilize the power of intellectuals through organizations like the National Council of the Arts, Sciences and Professions. From the 1930s and into the Cold War Susan was counted-on by the Communist-directed Spanish relief groups led by Edward Barsky and she continued her

membership in the Progressive Party and its supporting arm, the Progressive Citizens of America well after Henry Wallace's failed 1948 presidential campaign. Although she had grown obese and had leg, hand, and eye problems, during the postwar years she helped Boston's Party leader Peggy Schirmer arrange talks by visiting Soviet officials who gave glowing reports on the Soviet economy and its postwar peace efforts.

Susan had some direct connections to the Party, ones that caught the FBI's attention. Her lovely Cambridge apartment facing the Charles River hosted cell meetings where she sometimes taught classes in Marxist theory. She was so active that by the late 1930s her New York relatives almost disavowed her, and the FBI began watching her mail, sorted through her garbage, and examined the contents of her basement storage area. The agency went so far as to have an informant list all the communist books and pamphlets in her apartment. The agency kept Susan on its Security Index through the 1950s, although it admitted she was becoming too old for any active roles. But she was active. While her daughters worked as Party foot-soldiers Susan was a behind-the-scenes influential in contact with national as well as local activists. Many of her contacts received nationwide attention as martyrs to the Cause. Among her many friends in the Boston area were Donald Lothrop, Harlow Shapley, Dirk Struik, and Florence Luscomb. A few of Susan's many contacts outside Massachusetts were Ann Braden, Carl Marzani, Jessica Smith Ware, and Jessica's mother-in-law Ella 'Mother' Bloor and her sons Carl and Harold. Braden had many ties to the left-wing of the emerging civil rights movement, the others had links to the Communist's unions, rural crusades, and espionage.

#### **A Minister and Church on the Left, Donald Lothrop**

Donald Guy Lothrop may not have joined the Party, but he and his Boston Community Church were regarded as two of its most consistent supporters. Lothrop came from a lower-middle class

Massachusetts family that traced its origins to the state's colonial founders. He worked while studying at Tufts College and its Universalist divinity school that taught doctrines close to the Unitarians'. Lothrop served some small ministries, became oriented to humanism, and mused over the need for revolution. In 1936, while in his early thirties, he took charge of Boston's Community Church that his Tufts' mentor had established in 1920. It was modeled after New York City's Community Church founded by John Haynes Holmes, the Unitarian minister whose left-wing social and anti-war views led him to part ways with the Unitarian hierarchy during World War I. Despite that break, Holmes expanded his church, focusing on presenting lectures and debates on social issues, many times featuring Party speakers and others who supported the Bolshevik's Great Experiment. Boston's version of Holmes's church did the same and during the 1920s was the center for the protests over the Sacco-Vanzetti seven-year-long anarchy-murder trials. Lothrop always accepted the left's distorted picture of the trial as an anti-immigrant, anti-labor plot against innocent Italian immigrants. <sup>2</sup>

Lothrop followed the New York church's traditions while building his Boston Community Church into one of the largest Protestant aligned congregations in Massachusetts. Although he did not have a church building and had his small office in the same building as Margot Clark's Party bookstore, his Sunday meetings attracted as many as 3,000 attendees at Boston's Symphony Hall. Liberals as well as leftists listened to Party leaders as well as a few liberals. Non-left speakers were a rarity. Norman Thomas' 1937 lecture against Soviet totalitarianism and the impoverishment of its workers was an exception.

Thomas failed to alter Lothrop's and his friends like the Clark's pro-Soviet views. Donald never condemned the great purges and, unlike John Holmes, continued his support for the Party's Spanish operations, such as the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee, after it was

revealed it was helping only Communists, not all anti-fascist fighters and refugees. Lothrop's leftist commitments continued after the war. He and his church were ardent supporters of the Progressive Citizens of America and Henry Wallace's presidential campaign; they aided the protests against the Un-American Activities Committee's investigations; and they sent recruits to the Party's latest versions of the Young Communist League. Lothrop went on to sponsor the great 1949 New York City peace meeting led by the Party-directed Arts, Sciences and Professions group. Expectedly, Lothrop's activities gained the attention of United States army's intelligence agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. After Lothrop retired his church shrank in size, but the Community Church's leaders continued to support the left. They awarded humanitarian and Sacco-Vanzetti prizes to Anne Burlak and Peggy Schirmer in the 1990s and gave a salute to Edward Teixeira, the last of the state Party's old-guard, in 2004. However, Lothrop seems to have become too radical for his denomination's members. Although the Unitarians and Universalists merged, Lothrop was not listed in the denomination's salutes to reformers such as the once rejected John Haynes Holmes.<sup>3</sup>

### **Florence Luscomb, From Feminist to Red**

Susan Clark was involved with another famous Bostonian leftist. Susan was so close to Florence Luscomb that she lived with her before moving to California to be with her daughter Margot. Florence was born in 1887 to a Boston artist and a girl from a well-to-do St. Louis family. Florence's father had great hopes of becoming a famous painter and designer of women's fashions, but he was unsuccessful. After eight years the marriage ended. Florence and her mother Hannah were rescued from poverty by an inheritance from one of Hannah's grandmothers, allowing Hannah to become a devoted feminist and social worker. She could afford to send Florence to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where she earned one of the first degrees

in architecture awarded to a woman. Florence then worked with other ladies in Linda Ryan's architectural firm until World War I cut-off demand. Florence continued to live with her mother and joined her in radical feminist work, even being sent to Europe by the Women's Suffrage Association to study tactics and strategy. She returned to become an executive with the Equal Suffrage Association, gained prominence as a fiery street-corner speaker, and as an aggressive newspaper-seller on Boston Commons. By the 1920s, in her thirties but unmarried and childless, Florence became involved in broader issues, establishing herself as committed liberal, a public one. She ran for Boston's city council, led sanitary and prison reform groups, and joined in the work of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the League of Women Voters, and the American Civil Liberties Union. All received her financial support. She began moving further left, directing the local chapter of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom while aiding local unions during their strikes. In the 1930s she helped organize the United Office and Professional Workers Union that would be expelled from the CIO during the late 1940s because of Communist domination.<sup>4</sup>

Florence became more radical and active after her mother's death in 1933 and after a 1935 trip to the Soviet Union. On her return she ran for congress as a candidate for Party-backed progressive parties and became the Executive Director of the Massachusetts chapters of the Spanish Civil War organizations led by Edward Barsky--the ones Walter Cannon believed were hi-jacked by Boston's Communists. Florence also became close to the Soviet advocate Anna Louise Strong.

Florence probably became a secret Party member by the late 1930s. She certainly was a faithful fellow traveler. Her name appeared on lists of Party members that were published during state investigations. Such announcements were justified by her postwar actions. She led and ran

for state and national office for the Progressive Party long after it became a Party front, worked with Otis Hood and Daniel Schirmer to block national and state anti-Communist legislation, and became close to Ann Prosten and her husband who led Communist dominated maritime, office worker, and packing house unions.. Luscomb kept active in her old age. She was in touch with local and national Party figures, including the Hallinans in California. She saluted their attempt to create a new Party organization for young Blacks, the Dubois Club, which was intended to make the disabled Party relevant to the issues of the 1960s. Florence made at least one more trip to Russia and there were illegal visits to Cuba and China. Her attendance at 1966's memorial dinner for the Party's intellectual Herbert Aptheker indicated Florence had been and remained an insider.

#### **Shapley and Struik, Science and the Left**

Susan Clark was linked to two very famous Boston scientists, men who were at least fellow travelers. Harlow Shapley and Dirk Struik were internationally known, and Shapley was one of the most famous and influential scientists of his time, more famous than his close friend Walter Cannon. Harlow had an unusual background for a scientific star. Raised in rural Missouri he attended that state's less than prestigious state university to study journalism but switched to astronomy, a field just modernizing. He was awarded a scholarship to Princeton University, one that allowed him to obtain a position at the Mt. Wilson Observatory, the most advanced observatory in the world, where he began building an international reputation and writing widely read works on science and its relationship to contemporary problems. In 1921, at age thirty-six, he was lured to Harvard University to lead its astronomy program and observatory. He continued his professional and popular writing and was welcomed throughout Europe. By the mid-1930s, while popularizing and raising funds for science, he gave more attention to political

and social issues. Although he declared he was an agnostic he aligned with Boston's Unitarians to support Edward Barsky's JAFRC despite revelations of the Communist biases of his Spanish operations.<sup>5</sup>

After World War II, Shapley's political involvements increased, and he became a public figure. He was a leading supporter of the Progressive Party, aided the Unitarians' Martha Sharp in her contest against the anti-Communist Joe Martin for a congressional seat, chaired the state chapter of the Arts, Science, and Professions group and aided the latest versions of Barsky's organization. He also accepted a seat on the national board of the Russian-American Institute while publishing his belief the Soviets were dedicated to peace. All that led to a 1946 call to testify before congress. He appeared but stated he did not have the requested documents on Barsky's organization or those of the Arts, Science group. He then made the headlines by declaring the hearings an example of Gestapo tactics. Although appointed to the chair of the powerful American Association of the Advancement for Science the following year, Shapley remained politically involved. He continued to be active in the Progressive Party, gave talks at leftist meetings, and was one of the heads of the large Party-orchestrated 1949 New York City peace meeting that declared the Cold War a result of misguided American policies. Although never brought to trial, the FBI had a watch, even a phone tap, on him.

Dirk Struik was not as famous as Shapley but was more involved with Marxism and with Susan Clark and her children. A Dutch born mathematician; he gained one of America's Rockefeller Foundation grants allowing him to study at Europe's best universities. He joined Holland's Communist Party in 1919, admittedly remaining a member all his life, but in 1926 he chose an offer from the United States' Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) over one from Moscow University and, wisely, soon gained American citizenship. Anton, his brother also

left Holland, but not for the United States. He was one of the first international volunteers at the International Workers of the World's 1922 Kuzbas Siberian industrial colony, then worked on the great Turk-Siberian railroad project, always remaining faithful to the Cause.

Dirk's academic contributions were substantial, but he did not become a mathematics star, perhaps because he gave so much time to his intellectual studies of Marxism and to the history of science from a Marxist perspective. He founded the Marxist journal *Science and Society* and established a home for it in the same building that housed Margot Clark's Communist bookstore and Lothrop's office. Dirk was also politically active, and evidence indicates he was a member of several Boston-Cambridge Party cells. He sat on the broads of the Party's Boston and New York schools, and gave talks on theoretical Marxism, including at least one on the need for a new American revolution. He knew all the Clarks, Martha Fletcher, and the Schirmers and was with them in the Progressive Party and its predecessors. He also joined Harlow Shapley in Barsky's organizations and in the Arts, Science and Professions group and aided Stephen Fritchman and Thomas Addis' pro-Chinese Communist and anti-Korean war campaigns. He participated in the protests of the 1949 Foley Square trial of the Party's national leaders.

Struik's actions were noted by the government. The FBI had a watch and phone taps on him, and he was called before the Un-American Activities Committee where he used the Fifth Amendment to avoid questions. He skirted deportation only because he proved he was naturalized. But, along with Martha Fletcher and two Massachusetts functionaries, he was indicted and convicted under the state's old anarchy law, accused of advocating the overthrow of the government. Dirk was lucky: MIT only suspended him with pay, and a 1956 Supreme Court decision invalidated the state's law before he was imprisoned-- but not after his



supporters such as George Sarton turned him into a national martyr to the causes of free belief and speech. <sup>6</sup>

### **The Bradens, A Southern Connection**

Another of Susan Clark's contacts received more attention than Dirk. Anne McCarty was unlikely to become a Civil Rights heroine. She was raised in a middle-class Alabama family in the 1920s when racial segregation was an established way of life. She seemed destined to be a traditional Southerner. She did not go north to a reform minded Seven Sister college but to Virginia's Randolph Macon College. Unexpectedly, its faculty loosened her ties to the old ways of race relations. She returned to Alabama to break with another tradition by working as a reporter rather than immediately marrying or remaining dependent on her family. She worked at newspapers in Alabama for nearly a decade, then took a position in Louisville, Kentucky. Soon after arriving there, she fell in love with a fellow reporter who was ten years her senior. In 1948, she married Carl Braden, a man already very much on the political left.

Braden was the son of a devoted Catholic mother and a left-wing working-class father who came from a back-woods Kentucky farm. The Bradens had done well in Louisville but faced economic reversals because of a 1922 railroad strike. Carl always remembered the strike and its consequences. That predisposed him to communism. Because he was idealistic and bright and because his mother was so devoted to the church he was sent to a Catholic seminary to train for the priesthood when he was fourteen. Surprisingly, he left after two years. Somehow, he immediately found a job in 1930 as a copy-editor and cub reporter for the Louisville branch of a nearby Cincinnati, Ohio paper. During the next two decades Carl also served as a reporter and editor for rural Kentucky papers and, tellingly, for the Federated Press, the Party-backed international news service. There are hints that Carl became more than sympathetic to the Party

and its separate miner's union when he was covering the 1930s violent coal strikes in Harlan County, Kentucky.<sup>7</sup>

After spending eight years as a bachelor-reporter he married, soon having two children, something that helped him avoid being drafted. Sadly, by the mid-1940s the marriage ended. Carl never talked about his first wife, but he and his mother remained close to his daughter Sonia, as did Carl's new wife Anne McCarty. From the beginning of their 1948 marriage Carl and Anne were active in liberal circles, joining the NAACP and Episcopal Church groups supporting legal battles against segregation in schools, hospitals, public parks, and housing. At the same time, they were devoted to Henry Wallace's Progressive Party presidential campaign. They were also becoming increasingly radical. There was testimony that Carl led a Communist cell in Louisville, and it is certain he and Anne worked as publicists for the Party-directed Farm Equipment Workers Union (FEW) that conducted an aggressive 1947-1948 strike at Louisville's new International Harvester tractor plant. The FEW, the United Electrical Workers, Harry Bridges' ILWU, and the Mine, Mill and Smelter Union were among the unions expelled from CIO in 1949 because of their Communist policies and dictatorial managers.

The Bradens continued their activism and helped Party-influenced causes. In 1951, Anne, a new mother, was arrested during a demonstration against the death sentence of a Mississippi black man accused of raping a married white woman in her home while her family was asleep. The Party had decided to turn the Willi McGee case into another version of its great Sacco-Vanzetti trial protests. Its Civil Rights Congress poured funds into five years of appeals and called on the talents of Party-related lawyers of the National Lawyers Guild. Its lawyers included an employee of Lee Pressman's firm, the New York City second generation Jewish immigrant Bella Abzug (Savitzky) who became a radical feminist icon.

Carl and Anne began receiving national attention in 1954 after they decided not to wait for the conclusion of ongoing legal cases to end residential segregation in Louisville. They acted just as the Supreme Court declared segregated schooling un-Constitutional after years of liberals' lawsuits. The Party had conducted many lively crusades to attract black members since the 1920s, but there is no evidence the Bradens were following any Party orders when they deceived a local home builder and neighbors by purchasing a new house, then immediately transferred it to a middle-class black veteran and his family. In reaction, there was a cross-burning and shots were fired into the home. No one was injured, but there was much publicity and the city's police set-up guards. Carl wanted more. He arranged to have a group of "friends" stay in the house. The group had the characteristics of radicals willing to travel to help a cause and several were found to have Communist literature in their homes. One night when Carl's group was at the house a bomb went off, destroying a rear section of the structure, but injuring none as the volunteer guards were on a porch at the opposite side of the home.

Evidence suggested the explosion was the result of Carl and Anne group's plan to create an incident that would aid their desegregation battle. After a lengthy investigation sedition charges were placed against the Bradens and members of their group for trying to incite racial conflict. That led to national and international attention for the Bradens who claimed that racism, racial bigotry, and McCarthyism were the reasons for the charge and conviction. The newest versions of the Party's legal and funding arms immediately stepped-in with advice and money as Anne was sponsored by front groups and liberal organization to give talks around the country. Meanwhile, she wrote a well-received and widely publicized book denouncing the trial and racial segregation in general. Although the sedition charges were dropped Carl and Anne continued to have serious legal problems while they were expanding their roles in what became

known as the Civil Rights Movement. Along with Frank Wilkinson, a noted California reformer and Communist, Carl defied a 1958 HUAC hearing's orders and after years of appeals served prison time for contempt of congress. A few years later he was again arrested for sedition while he was organizing poor whites in Appalachia's mining areas. As Carl and Frank Wilkinson were starting a drive to abolish the Un-American Activities Committee, Anne kept being arrested for such things as pro Cuba and anti-segregation picketing and for her behavior during the famous 1963 Black-rights March on Washington.

Meanwhile, the Bradens were making their most remembered contributions. They joined with some of the most important Whites in the South's civil rights movement to work for and then lead the Southern Conference Educational Fund that was a force behind the 1960s and 1970s civil rights activities in the South. The Fund had ties to the 1930's Southern Conference for Human Welfare and the Highlander Folk School that trained many labor leaders and reformers such as Kate Field (Hermann's wife), then turned to training negro leaders such as Rosa Parks, John Lewis, and Martin Luther King--as well as young White idealists who became known as "freedom riders". The Fund was so admired that King saluted it and Anne Braden in major speeches.<sup>8</sup>

Carl and Anne contributed crusading until their deaths. Carl formed the Institute for Propaganda in Louisville, supported Party-aligned organizations such as the American Committee to Protect the Foreign Born, and gave lectures on the coming American revolution. Anne penned many books and articles criticizing America's domestic and foreign policies and hosted noted radicals such as Angela Davis. Anne received honors and a substantial monetary award from the American Civil Liberties Union in 1989.

### **More than Reformers, Espionage, and the Famous Mother Bloor?**

Two of Susan Clark's other national contacts were involved with more than reform and political issues. Jessica Smith and Carl Marzani had ties to Soviet espionage. Jessica was linked to her husband Harold Ware's work that included furthering Russia's agricultural revolution, to the Party's crusades to bring Communism to America's farms, and to Harold's group of influential government employees who were supplying information to the Soviets. That group included Alger Hiss. Marzani had a closer relationship with intelligence issues than Jessica.

Carl Marzani's Italian parents brought him to the United States in the mid-1920s. He soon began climbing the social ladder, receiving a scholarship to Williams College then one to England's Oxford University where he studied economics. He interrupted his work to join an anarchist column in the Spanish Civil War, then returned to England for his degree, a conversion to communism, membership in the British Party, and a round-the-world trip with his new American wife. The couple returned to New York City and its Party, with Carl using the false name of Tony Wales. Then, the highly educated couple faced unemployment. Both were embittered when all they could find were Works Project Administration make-work jobs. Meanwhile, Carl gave lectures at secret local Communist cell meetings on economics, the need for members to join the American army to subvert it, and the coming American revolution. His luck then changed. He avoided military service and found a well-paying job with what became the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the new American intelligence agency. He did well as an analyst and presenter, both at home and abroad. He handled much sensitive information and served as a liaison with the army's command. He also made propaganda films with the Garson Kanin, the famous stage and film director and author. At the same time, Carl was serving as a source for Soviet intelligence, later receiving mention in the Venona project's decrypts of secret Soviet messages as "Kollega."<sup>9</sup>

When the OSS disbanded in 1945, Carl was transferred to the State Department, to a handsome salary, and to handling sensitive documents. Marzani's career was going well and he and some colleagues created Presentations Inc. to provide the private sector with the kind of services they were developing at State. Then, a general personnel loyalty review at the department discovered that as early as 1942 the FBI had known of his Party membership, something he denied on an employment application. Carol thought he was safe because he had formally resigned from the Party when he joined the OSS, but he was sentenced to prison for two years. He had never left the Party--and it didn't abandon him as it would so many others. After his release, the Party arranged to have the United Electrical Workers Union (UEW) finance his Union Films company. It produced documentaries denouncing American foreign and labor policies. Carl also authored books for the union as he worked as its journal's editor until the mid-1950s. He then started a book publishing firm that rushed out books and pamphlets that followed Party and Moscow dictates. A Soviet agent later revealed Carl's Prometheus Book Club was subsidized by Moscow.

### **Suffragette to Red, Jessica Smith**

Susan Clark had another link to someone involved in what the American government suspected was espionage. The woman, Jessica Smith, had been a Soviet supporter since the 1920s, receiving subsidies for her publishing for the Cause in the United States. As well, her first mother-in-law had ties to the Party and the Soviet Union beginning in 1919. Most significant, both of Jessica's husbands were Party men with links to Soviet intelligence.

Jessica Granville-Smith was the daughter of a famous New York illustrator, designer, and painter who became a member of New York City's artistic and social elites. Although he had financial problems after turning from commercial work and depressed by his wife's suicide in

1933 Walter remained part of “society”.<sup>10</sup> While not rich he supported Jessica through the Quaker-affiliated Swarthmore College, a liberal, not radical institution. She was beautiful, but a cotillion, then marriage, were not her choices. After her 1915 graduation she focused on reform causes, spending seven years with liberal organizations such as the Friends Service Committee, as well as with more radical feminist organizations including the aggressive National Woman’s Party whose demonstrations went far beyond those of the mainstream suffragettes. She was a devoted worker for the women’s suffrage movement and campaigned for Anne Martin who was running for senate seat in Nevada during the flu epidemic. Jessica’s position as the executive secretary of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society also led her to know many famous liberals, helping them with political and policy campaigns. Jessica also supported the Socialist-linked People’s Freedom Union that protested wars in general, America’s participation in World War I, and the imprisonment and deportation of American radicals.

The National Woman’s Party was especially important to Jessica’s future. Living with three other bachelorette professional women in New York City she worked as one of its journal’s editors and soon became a member of its executive board. She and the Woman’s Party were passionate supporters of Russia’s revolutions, citing them as establishing true freedom for women. The party demanded the United States end any actions against Russia, especially the sea blockade they claimed was ruining its economy. The party leaders did more. Woman’s Party representatives began visiting the new Russia, returning to praise its achievements. Jessica led a national campaign to raise millions of dollars to purchase and send emergency supplies to the new Soviet state.

Jessica, having dropped Granville from her name, went to Europe in 1921 then to the Soviet Union, but not with a Woman’s Party group. She served with a Quaker relief organization

dealing with the Russia's famine. While there, she encountered Robert Dunn, a Quaker Yale University graduate and, surprisingly, a Communist who became one of the Party's intellectuals and an influential in such organizations as the American Civil Liberties Union and the Garland Fund. The famine experience changed Jessica. She returned home in 1924 to begin working as a writer, not for the Quakers or the Woman's Party but for the Bolsheviks at their New York City headquarters. She also led the National Woman's Party's Russian-relief fundraising drives and wrote books about the status of women under the Great Experiment. They all saluted Soviet achievements.

In 1925, at age thirty, Jessica finally married. Her husband Harold Ware was an idealistic American Communist with three young children who she met during her Russian adventure. She also became one of the left-wing's intelligentsia, socializing with New York City's Max Lerner, Mike Gold the Party's cultural commissar, and Rexford Tugwell, the economics professor who became a major figure in the New Deal's attempts to solve America's farm problems.

### **The Devoted Ware Family**

Jessica's husband, Harold Maskell Ware, was an unusual man from a more than uncommon family. His mother, known as "Mother Bloor," became one of the most famous American radicals because of her five decades of work for the various socialist parties then Communist organizations.

Ella Reeve Ware Cohen Bloor Omholt (she had three, perhaps four marriages) was born a year after the American Civil War began. Charles Reeve, her father, was a well-off rather conservative Bridgeton, New Jersey tailor then druggist-businessman. For unexplained reasons, by her teen years Ella was alienated from Charles' Presbyterianism and his political beliefs. She searched for new ideas, causes, and an identity. A first exploration was Quaker beliefs. Then,



prompted by Dan Ware, her atheist great-uncle (a famous chair-maker) and by a Philadelphia-based academic Marxist philosopher, she travelled through Prohibitionism, Unitarianism, the Ethical Culture movement, Feminism, the major Socialist doctrines and, she later claimed, the syndicalism of the Industrial Workers of the World. She then devoted her life to Communism. Ella did all that while having seven children by her first husband and two by her second and, strangely, remaining a member of the conservative Daughters of the American Revolution.

Young Ella had long been discontented at home but the break with her family came after her mother's unexpected death in 1879 at age thirty-eight, then her father's courting and soon marrying the mid-forties spinster lady of the very rich and influential Buck family of New Jersey. Ella left home, never mentioning her father, her new mother, nor her brothers and sisters. The split was mutual. Although becoming neighbors in Philadelphia, the Reeves had nothing to do with her. But Ella stayed within the broader family. In 1881, the year her father remarried, she wed Dan Ware's son, her distant cousin Lucien Bonaparte Ware of Philadelphia. She was nineteen, he was twenty-six. Lucien was not rich but would do well. Starting as a helper to his house painter and -chairmaker father when he was fourteen Lucien became a court reporter, stenographer, an executive secretary to a corporate leader, and the inventor of a paper clip, one of the devices revolutionizing office work. Although never reaching his goal of becoming a lawyer, and never becoming wealthy, he prospered and provided a home and middle-class lifestyle for Ella.<sup>11</sup>

Ella's marriage to Lucien lasted fifteen years through the heartbreaking deaths of three of their seven children--and through Ella's deepening involvements in union organizing for the radical wing of the Socialist Party of America. After his divorce from Ella, when their last child was just four, and Ella was thirty-four, Lucien willingly began contributing to the upkeep and

education of all the children. That allowed Ella to begin a new life, but one ill-suited to raising middle-class children. She moved to New York City, expecting to become a writer while continuing her work with the radical DeLeon Socialist Party. She met another party worker and in 1897 Ella married Louis Cohen, the son of Jewish Yiddish-speaking immigrants. He was twenty years younger than Lucien. The marriage between the thirty-five-year-old Ella and twenty-one-year-old Louis came just a year after the split with Lucien, suggesting the relationship began before the divorce. The fourteen-year age difference between Cohen and Ella would not be unusual, at least for Ella. She was attractive to and attracted by younger men who were as much as twenty years younger. There were rumors that the younger men included Party leaders Charles Ruthenberg and Earl Browder.

Cohen and Ella settled in Philadelphia where he became a salesman for Philadelphia's Fels-Naptha soap company. But he continued his Socialist party work. Ella, now a rising star in Pennsylvania's party, believed Louis was an ideological soulmate, especially because he worked for a millionaire who was subsidizing radical causes and utopian communities. Ella bore Cohen two sons, but she and Louis did not stay together long. They separated in 1902 after five years because, Ella claimed, Louis had abandoned his socialist commitments for his travelling salesman work. The break with Louis must have been nasty: Ella changed the last names of her two new sons to Reeve (her maiden name), changed the elder boy's first name from Victor Hugo to Richard (Dick) and gave the middle name "Marx" to her younger son Carl. Carl believed that Louis had abandoned the family but there are indications Ella had the primary role in the separation.

The forty-year-old Ella was left with five youngsters to worry about. Fortunately, Lucien Ware felt responsible for his children, providing allowances, and a second home. He had

supported his daughter Helen through music lessons in Philadelphia and Europe and watched as she became an acclaimed concert and recording violinist. Lucien helped Grace, his other daughter, through three years of Philadelphia's art school before she had a bad romance, then aided her through nursing school and a difficult spinsterhood. Grace spent some lonely years as a visiting nurse then settled into a new life, one quite different from the other politicized Wares. She found religion and then a permanent job as a resident nurse in the sumptuous Philadelphia home of one of America's most famous lumber barons. Charles Hebard's family owned huge Michigan and Okefenokee Swamp timber operations. Grace did, however, return to her family later in life. She retired to and was buried in their utopian Arden community near Philadelphia.

Lucien helped Hamilton, his youngest son, complete a commercial art course in Philadelphia and to establish an arts-crafts business there. Lucien also paid for the education of his older son, the rather sickly Harold. Lucien assisted him through high school and an agricultural program at Pennsylvania State College, then financed the beginnings of Harold's small commercial farming operation. Someone, perhaps Lucien, supported Cohen's two children, Dick and Carl, through college-years in Boston, New York, and California. It seems that Cohen had been unable to do much for his boys, or Ella. He fell on tough times after the separation from Ella, losing his well-paying job with the Fels company. The last trace placed him unmarried, living in a boarding house with his young son Dick in a decaying Pennsylvania coal town and managing, not owning, a small department store.

Meanwhile, Ella had been deepening her ideological and political involvements, although she had to take part-time work for a few years after leaving Cohen to support herself. Fortunately, she had moved with the children to Arden, a new low cost, socialist-oriented utopian arts

colony, one founded on Single Tax and Arts and Crafts principles. It was financially aided by the Philadelphia millionaire Joseph Fels who built his own retreat there.

Arden, Delaware, was an idyllic semi-rural retreat, but never an example of a poverty-level workers' commune. Because it was only six miles from Wilmington and twenty-seven from Philadelphia its founders envisioned its residents making a living tending truck gardens while devoting most of their time to the arts and leisure-- and costumed festivals. Arden was soon filled with artisans and artists. After it became more than a summer retreat, custom-designed historic homes were built, replacing its original tents and rustic shacks. Reflecting its values and demographics, the community built a workshop to be shared by its artisans, and a tennis court, but only later a schoolhouse. With no nearby school's youngsters were trained by the parents or in the case of the youngest Ware children, by Harold. Although it attracted those with a bent towards communalism it experienced conflicts. Several residents were jailed for a night after a spat with Arden's resident anarchist. One founder created an adjacent but independent spin-off community after leading Arden for twenty years.<sup>12</sup>

Ella first lived in what she called her Arden "eighty-dollar shack" but soon had her own house. Important, she could always rely upon her politically sympathetic neighbors, and Lucien, to care for her children while she was so often away on personal and political chores. Although Ella was a wanderer, Arden became the anchor for the Ware family. Lucien Sr. built a house there in the 1910s, it was where grandchildren were born, and where many of the Wares were buried.

Arden was within commuting distance of Philadelphia where Lucian maintained another home and where, during the early 1900s, Ella took college courses, found part time work at the University of Pennsylvania, and continued her organizing efforts for the Socialist Party and its

allied unions. She soon expanded her activities and geographic reach. Besides union organizing and anti-war activities, she penned socialist-oriented books for children and managed Socialist efforts in Connecticut and Ohio. She returned to New York City to write for popular magazines, ran for political office in several states, and conducted protests that led to her becoming famous for an extraordinary number of arrests. One estimate is that over her life she was arrested one hundred times. She was jailed when she was in her seventies. All the while, she never hid her beliefs and was known to wear bright red Russian peasant blouses while always more than hinting the United States needed a revolution.

During the early 1900s Ella met and helped many leftist reformers. Her writing efforts while in New York City led to connections to many famous Muckraking journalists, including the legendary Lincoln Steffens. She also had close contact with Scott Nearing and Upton Sinclair. Nearing was an economist who led many political and legal protests, becoming an anti-war and academic freedom martyr. By 1908 he was an Arden resident and soon after the revolution a visitor to Russia. Upton Sinclair was a gifted writer who called-on Ella to conduct research to substantiate the claims in his famous expose of the American meatpacking industry, 1906's *The Jungle*. That book made him wealthy, but he remained a utopian. In 1906 he used part of his new wealth to create Helicon Hall, an urban commune in a large Englewood, New Jersey home. A central goal of his paradise was to free its members from the distractions of house-keeping, cooking, and childcare. Experts were to be hired to do the cleaning, meal preparation, and full-time care of the commune's children. The "experts" were never found, however---worse, the home burned in 1907. Sinclair did not abandon his utopian and his reported free love goals, however. He built a house in Ella's Arden where he met many others who were searching for an

egalitarian paradise. One of Sinclair's Helicon's residents, the strange John Collier, also spent time in Arden.<sup>13</sup>

William (John) Armistead Collier was the son of a wealthy Kentucky publisher who headed The Associated Press. Collier Sr. worried about Armistead's troubled years in colleges across the nation, his being expelled from Union Theological Seminary, his efforts on behalf of the IWW, his advocacy of syndicalism and Emma Goldman's version of anarchism, and his practicing free-love while in Europe and America. William placed Armistead in an asylum for a brief time. A wanderer, the young Armistead became a reporter, poet, writer, editor, sometime movie actor and hobo. Later, he took a short agricultural course (when he was in mid-30s) and continued travelling from one utopian colony to another hoping to find the perfect farm commune. One of Collier's visits connected the Wares to Charles Garland, an important financier of the radical left during the 1920s and 1930s. In 1924, Armistead took-over the utopian Massachusetts "April Farm" colony Garland began a few years before he founded another farm colony in Pennsylvania, one that also failed, later becoming Ella's home during her old age.<sup>14</sup>

Two decades before Collier started his farm, in 1906, while in Chicago doing research for Sinclair the forty-four year old Ella was aided by Richard Bloor, a twenty-nine year old socialist Welshman she first met while he was a laborer in New Jersey, just across the river from where Ella was living in rural Washington's Crossing, Pennsylvania. Ella took his last name and later, because she was so much older than many activists, became known as "Mother Bloor." Whether she had an affair with Richard or married him or just assumed his name for protection against accusations of an immoral relationship remains undetermined. But she did use his name for her 1938 Social Security registration and, at times, when travelling abroad.

Ella did more than research. She was involved with many strikes before World War I, including the great 1913 battle against General Electric in Schenectady, New York, and the bloody ones at Ludlow, Colorado and Calumet, Michigan. She also joined in anti-war protests, working alongside noted liberals such as John Reed, Roger Baldwin, and John Haynes Holmes. She became close to Socialist leaders like Charles Ruthenberg while gaining a reputation for being slovenly and somewhat of an embarrassment. It took some strong hints before she changed her appearance and became one of the Party's best "lecturers."

### **Ella and Communism**

Ella Bloor remained a faithful socialist but became disappointed with the Socialist Party. She and her son Carl were with the group of radical Socialists from New York that traveled to Chicago in 1919 to establish the tiny Communist Labor Party. Ella and her labor friends were in opposition to the policies of the much larger ethnic federation-based Communist Party of America (CPA) established at the same meeting. The foreign-born CPA members objected to doing any public work such as supporting labor unions. The CPA expected the immediate outbreak of an American revolution and thought above-groundwork before then would lead to persecution by the authorities.

Ella went with the labor-oriented group that travelled to Moscow to convince the Comintern to approve of what became America's publicly active Workers Party, its Trade Union Education League (TUEL), and its American Labor Alliance that lobbied for the reopening of trade with of the Soviet Union and the recognition of its government. The TUEL planned to operate within existing labor unions to convert their members to Communism. The Party tried to hide its control of the Alliance and the TUEL to gain adherents. Ella took a leading role in that work and its efforts to free political prisoners, including Earl Browder. She also became a national organizer

and leader of efforts to aide Soviet Russia, often taking some of her children with her as she travelled across the United States. She worked so hard she became seriously ill while in Detroit, spending weeks hospitalized. To help her recuperation, the Party assigned her as an organizer in the better climates on the West Coast in 1922.

Ella returned to Moscow at least three times during the 1920s, participating in an international women's conclave, the first conference of the international Communist labor organization, the Profintern, and in a Stalin-dominated gathering attempting to end another American Communist factional struggle. On her trips she met Lenin who introduced her to other top Bolshevik leaders. Perhaps because of fears of arrest, she never used any of her own names when applying for passports to Russia, even when she attended 1937's celebration of the Soviet Union's twentieth anniversary. She accepted the invitation to that all-expense-paid trip despite the country being involved in a brutal purge of its founders, something known to America's top Party leaders.

Ella had been a force in the American Party since it began and one of its most public faces. As a result, she became a target for government investigators after she attended the infamous 1922 Bridgman, Michigan meeting that was mandated to unite the factions into the Comintern approved above-ground, Workers Party. The meeting was raided by the authorities before much was accomplished. Ella and her friend Rose Pastor Stokes were not caught but were indicted and put on the government's permanent watch lists. After rushing into hiding to avoid prosecution, including living in disguise in her daughter Helen's Greenwich Village apartment in New York City, then fleeing to Russia, she followed Party orders and returned for trial, escaping jail only because of technicalities.



Ella remained a devoted (perhaps exploited) Party worker, assigned to organize demonstrations at violent strikes across the country, tasked to speak on many topics in cities throughout the nation, and put to work on such causes as the Sacco-Vanzetti case. Ella became well-known and, importantly, well regarded by the liberal-left community. For a time, she led the Party's legal aid arm, the International Labor Defense. She came to know and work with most of the Party's leaders--while gaining a positive reputation in Russia. She never stopped working, although by the mid-1920s she was deeply disappointed that American workers had not flocked to the Party. She believed they let America prosperity pull them away from revolutionary action. She had reason to be disappointed. After the Party stopped including all those in its associated ethnic groups, membership dropped by half, to less than eight thousand. Ella stood by the Party, however. While in her sixties, attempting to raise membership by reaching out to a broader audience, she crusaded for the Party's newest newspaper. She hitchhiked giving talks across the country on behalf of the *Daily Worker* and convinced her son Carl to drop-out of college and write for it. Then, in the late 1920s she was one of the first to attempt to link the Party to radical farm organizations. She was rewarded, at least symbolically, by the Party. When the famed union organizer "Mother" Mary Jones passed away Ella was formally given the honor of being the Party's new "Mother." By then, the 1930s, she was serving on the Party's Central Committee while continuing to organize "spontaneous" protests, even in small western towns and helping to turn labor strikes into violent ones that might bring members into the Party's new radical unions.

Ella never explained how she supported herself during her decades of Party work, but she seemed content with her lifestyle. One thing was certain: Ella was a political survivor. She kept in the good graces of the Party through all its factional struggles. There was one episode that was

dangerous, however. In 1929, Ella travelled with Jay Lovestone's group to Moscow to convince Stalin to favor it in a struggle with William Z. Foster over Third Period policies. Lovestone lost and feared he might not be allowed out of Russia, as did Ella. They were finally granted permission to leave but, on his return, Lovestone was expelled from the Party, worried he might be assassinated, and formed his own splinter party. The resilient Ella did not fear for her life and decided to stay with the old Party and Foster, despite her personal friendships with Lovestone, as well as with James P. Cannon who had created his own splinter Trotskyite – party.

### **Ella Begot**

Ella passed her dedication onto her children. Helen, Harold, and Carl joined the Party, Dick gave Marxist lectures, and Hamilton was known to be on-the-left. Helen, after her concert and recording career, settled in Washington, D.C., hosting Party cell meetings at her violin studio. Carl became a radical strike leader, including at the bloody Gastonia, North Carolina textile strike of 1929. His involvement led him to fear he might face a formal murder charge, as did his co-worker Fred Beal. Carl avoided arrest and went on to become a national full-time Party functionary. But it was Harold, Jessica Smith's husband, who became the most famous/infamous of Ella's children. That was because of his central role in supposed 1930's espionage activities in Washington, D. C. and his long history of involvements with the Party and the Soviet Union. <sup>15</sup>

### **Red Farmer**

Harold and his twin brother Lucien were born in Philadelphia in 1889, at first living there with Ella and Lucien Ware, then with Ella and Louis Cohen. Two years after Ella left Louis tuberculosis struck the boys. Lucien Jr. died, and Harold was sent to the rural utopian Arden farm to recover. Under Lucien Sr.'s guidance he tended a small truck farm there, beginning a

life-long interest in agriculture. Within a year he returned to Philadelphia to live with Lucian Sr. while finishing high school, commuting to Arden whenever he could. Harold did not develop into an artist or craftsman. He looked to farming--at least commercial truck gardening, for a way to earn a living. Immediately after high school he entered the forestry program at Pennsylvania's isolated State College. Soon after arriving, he decided to shift to its shorter two-year general agricultural course, one that focused on familiarizing farmers with scientific methods and modern technologies such as gasoline tractors.

Harold returned to Arden to live with Lucien but was still unsure of his life-path. He resumed his small truck gardening business, selling his products in nearby Wilmington, sometimes Philadelphia. He soon decided to expand and took a lease on a larger Arden plot. Then, in 1912 he married Margaret Eakins Stephens, the daughter of Frank Stephens. Frank was a renowned sculptor, associate and brother-in-law of the illustrious painter Thomas Eakins, and Arden founder. With the birth of his son Robert in 1913 Harold Ware decided it was necessary to expand his commercial farming if he was to support a family. He leased more Arden land. Three years later he and Margaret went to New York to incorporate Arden Gardens, an orchard as well a mushroom "conservatory." Just as his new business began tragedy hit his family. A month after birth of baby Nancy, Margaret died of an infectious disease she had been fighting. Harold was left to care for an infant and a three-year-old. While his mother Ella had little time to spend as an on-site grandmother, the Stephens family provided help.

Harold did need help, and for more than child rearing. He had assumed more responsibilities when he used Lucien's patrimony to put money down on another farm, a full-fledged one with cattle and cows, animals that needed all-year constant attention. His new "Jolly Waters" farm was located in West Bradford, Pennsylvania some forty miles from Arden and Philadelphia. At

the same time, although he declared he was a conscientious objector when the United States entered World War I in 1917, Harold took employment as an accountant, then as a draftsman, at Philadelphia's naval shipyard. The income helped, but the jobs also meant he could only be a part-time, commuting farmer. Despite that he bragged about his farm and introduced gas-powered tractors to the region, although by the time he took-over the farm the United States' farmers had 275,000 of them.

There was more than the new farm. Harold had already found a new soul-mate and had become a Party member. He remarried in late 1917, just ten months after Margaret's death. The twenty-eight-year-old Harold wedded the twenty-five-year-old Clarissa Smith, another woman devoted to leftist causes. Little is known about Clarissa. She came from an old-line, middle-class Massachusetts family but how she became involved with the Party remains unknown, as is when she began working as a secretary at Party headquarters in New York City. Clarissa took time away from Party work and helped on the Jolly Waters farm. She soon bore Harold a child, Judith, in 1919. That added to Harold's responsibilities. In addition to the farm, the thirty-year-old now had three young children and a wife to support.

Despite Clarissa's, and at times his step-brothers and Ella's assistance, Harold's farm was unsuccessful. He claimed he used the modern techniques he learned at Pennsylvania State College but the farm proved a failure by 1920, perhaps because Harold had been busier with more than the Philadelphia job, the farm, and his family. Like his mother, he had taken-on many Party duties. Along with Ella, Harold was active in Party affairs, becoming an executive in some of its first organizations raising funds to aid the new Soviet Union. He also wrote for the Party's underground section as N. H. Harrow<sup>16</sup>, accepted the job of business manager of the publications

of what became the above-ground Workers Party, and was appointed an alternative to its executive board.

### **Harold's Farm Crusade**

Harold took on much more. He tried to convince the Party's leaders it was necessary to recruit America's farmers as well as industrial workers. He asked the Party to create an agricultural bureau and let him direct it. The Party was hesitant, despite hints that Lenin was determined to begin courting Soviet peasants. Although recognizing the American Party's caution, in late 1920 Harold, with no money, began what he labeled a survey of American agriculture. It was, however, more of a scouting expedition to gain the evidence needed to prove the Party could enlist farm workers and radicalize existing farm organizations. Harold had already learned something about unionizing farm workers. During his years at the Philadelphia navy yard, he met many members of the often-violent International Workers of the World (IWW) union that had won victories at the yard and Philadelphia's docks. They told him of their union's old victories in Massachusetts' mill towns and, more importantly, its recent successes recruiting "the stiffes," the men who lived in track-side "jungles" when not working as seasonal farm hands or lumberjacks in the American West. The union claimed its Agricultural Workers Organization had signed-on more than one hundred thousand of those "hobos."<sup>17</sup>

Leaving his wife and three young children, Harold became one of those drifters, the transient farm workers who travelled from harvest-to-harvest in the trans-Mississippi West. With his Prinz Nez glasses, Harold was a strange sight sitting atop or between freight cars--- as did the rough-and-tumble workers who avoided paying railroad fares. Harold's trip was dangerous for more than the chance of falling from a train or being beaten by a railroad policeman. Just being associated with IWW members was risky. During the war, a hundred of the union's leaders had

been arrested for sedition and more than a thousand IWW members and sympathizers had been shoved into freight cars in Bisbee, Arizona then left alone in the desert until the U. S. Army provided for them. In 1919, the union's members faced vigilantes throughout the West, topped by a bloody confrontation at Centralia, Washington at year's end.<sup>18</sup>

Harold met many farm owners as well as laborers on his 1921 expedition, including those involved with the radical arm of the Non-Partisan League. The League was a farmers' version of the Socialist Party. It advocated for government ownership of grain storage and processing facilities, a government farm loan bank and crop insurance, and a graduated income tax. The League scored some significant political victories in the Midwest, finding much support among immigrant farmers, but declined after World War I. Harold learned much about other farmers' organizations, concluding the leading older ones, such as the Grange, the National Farmers Union, and The Farm Bureau Federation, were unlikely to be radicalized. Important, he learned about the new huge industrial-efficiency-mechanized large-scale farms of the West, especially the wheat farms in the Dakotas and Montana. He witnessed small but well-organized teams of workers using the latest tractors and implements on farms covering thousands of acres, taking only a few days to seed or harvest what would have taken hundreds of old-fashioned farm laborers weeks.<sup>19</sup>

### **The Modern, Efficient Farm**

An outstanding example was Thomas Campbell's Montana grain farm that began with massive funding by the Morgan banking interests as a response to predicted grain shortages if the United States entered World War I. Designed on engineering and scientific management principles it covered 95,000 acres, used 100 tractors, had its own railroad station, provided housing and medical care for its workers, and had good relations with them. After its shakedown years it

produced crops at costs well below those of traditional farms. Harold also heard of an experimental “industrial” farm in Montana run by M. L. Wilson, a college professor whose research into methods and machines was supported by the Laurence Spellman Rockefeller Foundation. Harold also made his own brief try at wheat raising in North Dakota then learned more about scientific and industrial farming when he spent a few months working as a horticulturalist at one of the nation’s most advanced all-purpose farms at The Loyal Order of Moose’s Indiana orphan’s complex. That Indiana farm was a showpiece.<sup>20</sup>

### **Connecting to Russia**

After he returned to the East Harold was financially hard-pressed and without a job. Ella used her connections and found him one. He was appointed the executive secretary of the New York City-based Federated Russian Famine Committee. With Sidney Hillman’s Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union leading a coalition of left-leaning unions, and with support from leading progressives such as Lincoln Steffens and Robert Dunn, it was one of the first of many organizations dealing with the emerging food problems in the Soviet Union. The committee raised millions of dollars and prepared to send tons of food and clothing. The committee quickly became part of the larger Comintern-directed American branch of Germany’s Willi Munzenberg’s International Workers Aid (also known as International Workers Relief (IWR)) The American organizers tried to avoid identification as being Communist affiliated, calling their branch The Friends of Soviet Russia, but all its leaders were Party stalwarts.

While working with the Federated committee Harold continued lobbying the Party to devote resources to organizing America’s agricultural sector. Still thinking in revolutionary terms and seeing no hope of working through the established farm organizations such as The Grange, he argued for penetrating and changing the anarchistic IWW and, perhaps, the Non-Partisan

League. He proposed recruiting the already radical proletarian farm workers in the West while creating new Party mechanisms to convince the “backwards semi-bourgeois” farmers in the East to break with exploiting capitalists and aid the revolutionary urban proletariat. Harold emphasized that a successful revolution depended on food and, thus, on farmers.<sup>21</sup> The Party continued to be reluctant to spend scarce resources on the agricultural problem and Harold’s pleas to the Comintern for funding were ignored<sup>22</sup>. Only after Lenin formally recognized the need for cooperation with farmers and created the Red Peasant International, then sent praises of Harold’s work, did the Americans establish an Agricultural Bureau. In 1923, the Party made Harold that bureau’s first leader. But that was when the Soviets realized a world revolution was not imminent and announced their patient United Front policies. In response, Harold shelved his radical program and recommended creating an organization like Ella’s close friend William Z. Foster’s Trade Union Educational League (TUEL). It focused on gradually converting existing labor organizations rather than founding competing radical unions. The party agreed and created the United Farmers Educational League (UFEL) to do the same in agriculture, ordering it to avoid radical action.

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### **Bigger Farm Problems to Solve, Knutson and America, Harold and Russia**

Busy with its newest factional conflicts the Party paid little attention to the UFEL, leading to protests by Harold.<sup>23</sup> Frustrated, Harold participated in some minor UFEL activities in the West and represented its tiny Dakota branch at a Moscow convention, but he began concentrating on a bigger problem: Saving the Great Experiment, especially from its critical farm crises. Worse for the effort to recruit American farmers, the UFEL had to wait until 1926 for the Party to support a full-time organizer. The responsibility for the league was handed to Alfred Knutson, a Norwegian immigrant who had graduated from the University of South



Dakota then became a carpenter and a Socialist and Non-Partisan League organizer in the upper Midwest. He claimed he was tarred-and-feathered because of his work. He then became a charter member of the foreign language-based Communist Party of America, and a Party organizer in North Dakota. He also worked with Harold in the Party's failed attempt to gain control of the Farmer-Labor Party during the early 1920s. Knutson was rewarded for his efforts with a trip to the Soviet Union in 1925.<sup>24</sup> He returned to face great UFEL challenges. The radical farm organizations he expected to infiltrate were moribund. The IWW had become small and faction-ridden, and the Non-Partisan League had withered. Undeterred, Knutson gathered some ex-Non-Partisan and Farmer-Labor Party leaders such as Charles Taylor then focused on recruiting the many discontented Norwegian, Swedish, and Finnish immigrant farmers who had supported the old radical parties. He founded a newsletter, *The United Farmer*, which emphasized the evils of capitalism and the need for a socialist reorganization of American agriculture. He seems to have had 5,000 subscribers but had difficulties because the Party gave him little support. He had to sell his car to pay the UFEL's debts and relied on friends for transportation—and, he had enemies within the Party, ones who wanted to create a new radical farmers union that would be aggressive and not hide its Party connections.

### **Harold and the Soviet Crises**

Meanwhile, Harold was focusing on Russia's great needs. In 1921, the Soviet Union was in serious trouble and the Bolsheviks were close to losing control. The nation's economy was a disaster. Disease and starvation were sweeping the nation. World War I, the conflict with Poland, and the civil war caused the nation's industrial production to drop to approximately twenty percent of its prewar level. Iron production was at two percent, cotton goods were at five percent. The railroad system was a shambles, magnifying the shortage problems. Hyperinflation was

destroying all faith in the monetary system. The rubles exchange rate with the American dollar spiraled from 2 to 1,200 to 1. Adding to the woes, there were 7,000,000 orphaned or abandoned children to care for. Central to Harold's concerns, agricultural output had declined by at least one-third. Farming essentials had been destroyed, with the nation losing so many horses farmers were dragging their primitive, in many cases wooden, plows with their wives or children steering them.<sup>25</sup>

War Communism's economic policies had intensified all the problems. The Bolsheviks outlawing private businesses, seizures of farm crops, forcefully drafting millions of young men it could not feed or clothe, and paying less than survival wages to industrial workers led to massive uprisings. By the early 1920s there were widespread peasant rebellions (one in the Tambov region involved 100,000 peasants and 15,000 executions), millions of military desertions, bloody strikes in factories, and a revolt by the armed forces at the great Kronstadt naval base. Lenin first responses were brutal. The death toll from his political police's reprisals is estimated in the hundreds of thousands, more than all those executed during the hundred's years of rule under the Tsars. Then, cruel responses to assassination attempts on Bolshevik leaders led to a political Red Terror that took the lives of two hundred thousand left-wing political opponents. That gave the Bolsheviks a monopoly of political power, but their polices were not solving the country's severe problems---including one of the greatest famines in modern European history.<sup>26</sup>

A 1920 drought led to a further decline in agricultural production, a situation made worse by the Bolsheviks sending additional armed brigades to the farming areas to seize food. By 1921 Russia's heartland was experiencing a major health disaster, including the spread of diseases such as typhus. Starvation and infections took an estimated ten to fourteen million lives between

1920 and 1923. There also was cannibalism. The toll would have been greater if the world had not responded to Lenin's plea for help. Many nations acted, but the rich United States played the dominant role. The billions of dollars of emergency famine aid from the United States' government, and many voluntary organizations such as the Quaker's American Friends Service Committee, Catholic and Jewish charities, the YMCA, labor unions' charitable organizations, and the Party's Friends of Soviet Russia financed critical emergency relief. Hundreds of American volunteers went to Russia to distribute food and clothing. The government's Herbert Hoover-directed American Relief Association (ARA) that had been aiding Western Europe was the major player. Establishing its independent organization and staff within Russia, it fed millions of people every day for two years.

Lenin was grateful for ARA's help but also fearful and angry. He and his colleagues suspected Hoover was undermining Bolshevik rule, so much so that within a few years Russians who worked for the ARA and other foreign charities were treated as enemies and purged, many by execution. Lenin was also resentful because accepting the foreigners' aid suggested that Communism did not, would never, produce a functional economy. He turned to foreign communists for help. Lenin's ordering Germany's Communist leader Willi Munzenberg to shift emphasis from propaganda to fund-raising for relief led to the founding of the International Workers Aid (IWR) organization. It was instructed to prove that communists could care for themselves, even in emergencies.<sup>27</sup>

#### **More Than Charity Needed, To the New Economic Policy and Concessions**

Lenin soon had to admit that such organizations as the IWR, and his own government, could not solve Russia's long-term agricultural and industrial problems. The situation was bad and the

Great Experiment remained an example of a backwards nation, one unable to return its industrial or agricultural sectors even to their low pre-war production levels.

Russia's attempt at industrialization was the result of the Tsarist government's modernization drive of the 1890s. The progress in industry under the reform governments of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was impressive. Major transportation investments and concessions to foreign investors and manufacturers led to a growth rate greater than that of advanced European nations, eight percent a year. Prime Ministers Witte and Stolypin also implemented policies aimed at creating private and efficient farms. The resulting advances were remarkable, but Russia's modernization programs began so much later than those of Western nations that its per capita income was only twenty percent of England's and ten percent of the United States at the onset of World War I. Then, the progress was undermined by the war, the revolution, and the policies of War Communism that included nationalizing all industries without compensation to owners, foreign or domestic.<sup>28</sup>

In 1921, Russia's economy had to be quickly revitalized. Lenin finally admitted the country needed, long-term, not just emergency, help from the outside. A first step was a world-wide call, asking for ongoing financial and technical aid. The German Party's Willi Munzenberg led an international drive, including a Tool Collection Week to provide advanced technologies for manufacturing and agriculture. In United States the Party helped organize programs to recruit skilled workers, to acquire farm and industrial equipment, and to provide technical expertise. Russian emigres in New York City and the unofficial Soviet representative Ludwig Martens founded The Society For Technical Aid to Soviet Russia, Jewish groups began collecting funds to help establish modern Jewish farming communities, labor unions laid plans to finance industrial recovery, and the Party's American Labor Alliance that Ella Bloor worked for

organized a permanent umbrella organization, a reworking of the Munzenberg-related Friends of Soviet Russia (FSR). The FSR established branches across the nation and coordinated the recovery efforts of many organizations. Allied with liberals and their charitable organizations, the FSR raised over nineteen million dollars within in a year. It also helped recruit technicians to work in Soviet factories and sponsored groups to travel to Russia to start new farms and businesses.<sup>29</sup>

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Lenin knew foreign contributions would not be enough and decided to make fundamental changes to Soviet economic rules. Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP) eased restrictions on private enterprise, ended most price fixing, reduced taxes on farmers, and granted "concessions" that allowed foreigners to establish relatively independent and, hopefully for them, profitable operations. NEP, to the anger of ideological purists, also encouraged the development of private 'kulak' farms in hopes of increasing crop production levels. NEP appeared to many not to be something new, but rather, a return to hated capitalism and imperialism. Some Bolsheviks such as Trotsky protested the changes, but Lenin stood by NEP and asked foreign businessmen, especially Americans, to consider investing in and running entire major Soviet industries, bringing capital, technologies, and know-how. The Friends of Soviet Russia, for example, advertised for investors to rebuild lamp works, shoe factories, even chinaware companies. The FSR and other organizations expanded their campaigns to recruit skilled factory workers for Russia's reemerging industries. They promised high wages and special food and housing for foreigners.<sup>30</sup>

As had the leaders of many underdeveloped countries without capital and technical expertise, including those of old Russia, granting special privileges and protections to attract foreign investments seemed inescapable to Lenin. Protected concessions in minerals, precious

metals, oil, and manufacturing were offered by the national government. Local governments offered subsidies for sewer, water, and transit lines. Foreigners were allowed independent decision-making and special privileges, ones investors demanded before they would make risky commitments. The concessions typically ran for twenty-five years before their assets became government property.<sup>31</sup> The estimates of the number of business concessions run from 350 to 2,000, the higher number includes those granted by local communities.

The offers were taken by European as well as American companies. German corporations such as the huge Krupp steel and armaments giant contracted for millions of acres for lumbering and grain farming. A Swedish firm took a concession for electrical appliances and electrifying farms.<sup>32</sup> Among the many American concessions were ones held by Armand Hammer, the American Communist friend of the Soviets. The United States' Harriman railroad family had a huge manganese mining operation. The Sinclair Oil Company was granted a five-year concession to explore and extract the oil in the Sakhalin Island.

Some larger concessions were considered. Percival Farquhar, the American who had brought streetcar systems to Cuba and South America came close gaining control of Russia' steel mills and gold mines. His \$40,000,000 offer for the Donets basin's resources was almost accepted. The Ford motor company came near to an agreement for automobiles but backed away because of the limited time-span of the Soviet's guarantees. However, Ford was glad to continue selling cars and tractors to Russia (some 10,000 in just 1925) and later agreed to help design and build the Soviet's 1930s huge car factory. America's Dupont chemical company was offered a fertilizer concession but like Henry Ford declined, then soon helped build the Soviet's plants. An American consortium under the famed engineer Hugh Cooper almost gained the rights to build and control what was to be the largest dam and hydroelectric plant in the world. Cooper's

investors backed away because of insufficient guarantees but he agreed to take charge of the Soviet-financed billion-dollar project that eventually built the Dneprostroi complex during the 1930s.

Concessions were granted to other than profit seeking businessmen. American emigree groups were offered land and tax incentives to establish autonomous farming and lumbering communes while radical unions, such as the IWW and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, were approached, asked to take-over and revitalize steel and manufacturing industries. They agreed and created separate organizations, promising profits to investors.<sup>33</sup> The Amalgamated organized a joint Soviet-American company, the Russian-American Industrial Corporation to rebuild Russia's textile industry. The union spent its own funds to send hundreds of seamstresses and sewing machines to Russia, built a showcase factory in Moscow, ran twenty-five plants, invested in the bonds of the corporation, and told other investors the Soviets would honor the fifteen million dollars of bonds they purchased.

### **Ella Friends and Concessions**

The Friends of Soviet Russia (FSR) helped with other and more charity-like ventures, including many ill-fated agricultural concessions. It recruited 7,000 American and Canadian Finns to establish self-sufficient colonies and communes in the Karelia region near the Finish border. They brought their skills, work discipline, and tools, including the newest implements and tractors to the vast lumber and fisheries of the region. The Friends also had links to the establishment of some twenty smaller emigree agricultural communes that attempted to merge a romantic version of the old Russian "mir" with full communal living and new technologies, including expensive tractors. The largest and longest lasting, 1922's "Seattle" had some ninety members. It was granted a lease for an old estate south-east of Rostov. Although it continued-on

for a decade longer than most other such communes, by 1939 Seattle had experienced internal conflicts, defections, and the frustrations of a poverty level existence. Its failure came despite an initial investment of over \$2,000,000, a sum that included the life-savings of some members.

34

A more ambitious FSR- union-involved concession was the Kubaz colony. Having the Party' approval, the Friends, and liberals such as Roger Baldwin, the young and rich Powers Hapgood, and the radical IWW's Wild Bill Haywood promised to provide funds and 6,000 skilled workers and managers to revive critically important coal mines and steel plants in Western Siberia's Kuznetsk basin. Haywood and Baldwin promised good conditions for workers in the idealistic commune and profits to those Americans who invested in the project. Haywood pledged the Kuzbas colony would pay for itself, asking nothing of the Soviet government. But he also demanded that it be run as a true anarcho-syndicalist (not communist) commune with workers determining all policies, not the managers or the Soviet government. Although the colony was granted autonomy, the Soviets soon intervened. Frustrated when only 600 workers arrived, angered by less than expected rebuilding results, by conflicts between the IWW-syndicalists and Communist Americans, and by fights between the managers and the 5,000 Soviet workers the government soon took-over the concession requesting Jacob Golos of the American Communist Party and its espionage apparatus to supervise its dismantling.<sup>35</sup>

### **The Jewish Problem**

A charitable concession that dwarfed and lasted longer than Kubaz or other American sponsored adventures was an attempt to save Russia's Jews from the hardships caused by Bolshevik social and economic policies. Russia's Jews were heavily involved in commerce, so they were exceptionally hard-hit by the Bolshevik's outlawing private businesses and turning the



bourgeoisie into non-citizens. That left many Jews without rights to jobs, education, even ration cards. Jews were starving, even before the famine of 1921. They continued to suffer such discrimination throughout the 1920s and much of the 1930s. Americans learned of the situation. Led by Joseph Rosen they devised a solution, one that fit Rosen's background. Rosen was an internationally trained Russian agronomist who fled to America in 1903 to escape imprisonment by the Tsar's forces because of his radicalism. In the United States he ran a specialized high school to train Jewish boys to be farmers. He also became an important man in secular Jewish reform circles. His Russia program would be financed by his rich American friends and by the Soviet government because it served Russia's as well as Jewish interests. Important to America's Jews, it was a means of compensating for the probable cut-off of Jewish immigration to the United States. The growing demand for restrictive legislation frightened Jewish leaders.<sup>36</sup>

Rosen's plan became 1922's resettlement program of the American-Jewish Joint Agricultural Corporation (Agro-Joint). His goal was to resettle Soviet Jews on farms, but not in foreign lands as Zionists demanded. Obtaining a promise of funding from the giant Jewish Joint Distribution Committee's (JDC charitable organization and its rich supporters, then gaining approval of concessions from his old friends remaining in the Soviet bureaucracy, Rosen began resettling urban Russian Jews in agricultural collectives in the Ukraine and the Crimea, Russia's frontier areas. As many as 300 colonies were established housing 200,000 settlers. Rosen's plan was attractive to the Soviets because it helped their drive to increase agricultural productivity, and it alleviated the urban housing problem. Rosen's staff planned the Agro operation well, providing money, an abundance of technical advice, and millions of dollars in modern equipment such as tractors. The Agro-Joint sent 182 tractors during just the first year of settlement. Many colonies were electrified, and Argo supported the creation of factories in some

of the agricultural collectives to provide more jobs. Rosen arranged for medical care, even by bringing persecuted Jewish German doctors to the colonies. Jewish charities and their friends, primarily American, provided \$240,000,000 over the fifteen years of the project. The Soviets helped with free land, free transportation, and tax incentives, and they allowed much autonomy. However, the Soviets soon envisioned a more ambitious plan to end their “Jewish problem”:  
Move a million Jewish families to eastern Siberia.

Although Agro-Joint was the most successful of the charitable concessions it became a target of the Red Terror of the late 1930s when the government turned against all foreign-linked groups--and people. Agro-Joint’s administrators, even its farmers, were jailed and executed.

With the outbreak of World War II and Germany’s invasion the project ended.

Before then, Ella Bloor, the FSR, and Harold Ware began their own project to save Soviet agriculture.

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<sup>1</sup> Susan’s biography was built on college and alumni records, mentions in published works about others, newspaper articles such as *Daily Boston Globe*, 5-14-1011 and 11 -23 1933, census and family history materials, discussion with relatives of friends., and for her later years the FBI releases for the Clarks and other Boston radicals.

<sup>2</sup> A good introduction of Lothrop’s life: *NYT* 3-5-2002 and *Boston Daily Globe*, 1-1-1953 and 2-22-2022. . For an example of his many writings: *The Duty of Dissent* (Boston: the Community Church, 1956). On Sacco and Vanzetti: Russell, Francis, "How I Changed My Mind about the Sacco-Vanzetti Case," *The Antioch Review*, 25 4 (Winter 1965-1966): 592-607; Pernicone, Nunzio, "Carlo Tresca and the Sacco-Vanzetti Case," *The Journal of American History*, 66 3 (Dec., 1979): 535-547.

<sup>3</sup> *Dictionary of Unitarian & Universalist Biography*, on-line. An insight into Holmes: *I Speak for Myself: The Autobiography of John Haynes Holmes*. (NY: Harper, 1959).

<sup>4</sup> On Luscomb: Strom, Sharon Hartman, *Political Woman: Florence Luscomb and the Legacy of Radical Reform* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001). And very useful: <https://www.harvardsquarelibrary.org/biogras/florence-hope-luscomb/>

<sup>5</sup> Helpful on Shapley: Bart, J. Bok, “Harlow Shapley, Cosmographer,” *The American Scholar*, . 40 3 (Summer, 1971): 470-474; . *NYT* 1 21 1972; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harlow\\_Shapley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harlow_Shapley) .

<sup>6</sup> Overviews on Struik from different perspectives: Rowe, David E., “Dirk Jan Struik, 1894–2000,” *Isis*, 93, 3 (September 2002):456-459; *NYT* 26 Oct 2000. An insight into Struik’s philosophy: Struik, Dirk J., “Social Responsibilities of the Scientist,” *The Science Teacher*, 13, 2 (APRIL, 1946): 70-72.

<sup>7</sup> On the Bradens, for example, *NYT* 1-19-2003, 10-10-1954 and *WP* 1 21 -1990, were helpful. Useful and readily available on the Bradens: Fosl, Catherine, *Subversive Southerner Anne Braden and the Struggle for Racial Justice in the Cold War South* (NY: Palgrave, 2002); Gilpin, Toni, “Left by Themselves: A History of the United Farm Equipment and Metal Workers Union, 1938-1955” Volumes I and II (PhD., Yale University, 1992): Treleven, Dale

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<sup>8</sup> Overviews of the organizations: Wlla, Ridley, "Highlander Folk School, Grundy County's "Public Nuisance," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, 66 4 ( Winter 2007):350-369 and Klibaner, Irwin, "The Travail of Southern Radicals: The Southern Conference Educational Fund, 1946-1976," *The Journal of Southern History*, 49, 2 (May, 1983) 179-202.

<sup>9</sup> On Mazani: *NYT* 12 -14-1994; Haynes, John Earl And Harvey Klehr, *Decoding Soviet Espionage In America* (New Haven Yale University Press, 1999); a surprisingly thorough and balanced biography is at [https://www.conservapedia.com/Carl\\_Marzani#Early\\_years](https://www.conservapedia.com/Carl_Marzani#Early_years).; Marzani, Carl, *We Can Be Friends: The Origins of the Cold War*. (NY: Topical Nooks Publishers 1952).

<sup>10</sup> *NYT* 12-8-1938 . On Jessica 's later life useful secondary sources are: Mickenberg, Julia L. " Suffragettes and Soviets: American Feminists and the Specter of Revolutionary Russia," *The Journal of American History*, 100 4 (March 2014):1021-1051. Brown, Kathleen A. and Elizabeth Faeu, "Social Bonds, Sexual Politics, and Political Community on the U.S. Left, 1920s-1940s," *Left History* 2000; Abt, John, *Advocate and Activist: Memoirs of an American Lawyer* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

<sup>11</sup> Much was written on Ella and her relatives in newspapers, secondary works on other party members, and government documents. Especially useful on Ella: FBI FOIA in the Smith College Collection. A bibliography of recent secondary sources is in Brown, Kathleen A., "The 'Savagely Fathered and Un-Mothered World' of the Communist Party, USA: Feminism, Maternalism, and 'Mother Bloor.'" *Feminist Studies*, 25,3 (Autumn 1999),: 537-570. Bloor's ghost written autobiography (by Jessica Smith), *We Are Many an autobiography by Ella Reeve Bloor* (London Lawrence and Wishart, 1941) has usable facts.

<sup>12</sup> Helpful on Arden history: Harris, Matthew M., *Arden History Lessons from Attempted Utopias: Fairhope, Al and Arden, DE Lincoln Institute of Land Policy*, 2004; Taylor, Mark, "Utopia by Taxation: Frank Stephens and the Single Tax Community of Arden, Delaware ." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 126, 2 (Apr., 2002): 305-325.

<sup>13</sup> General works are: Harris, Leon A., *Upton Sinclair, American Rebel* (NY: Crowell, 1975). Kaplan. Lawrence " A Utopia During the Progressive Era: the Helicon Home Colony, 1906-1907," *American Studies*, 24 2(Fall 1984): 59-73.; Whitfield, Stephen J., *Scott Nearing : Apostle of American Radicalism* (NY : Columbia University Press, 1974).

<sup>14</sup> Samson, Gloria Garrett, *The American Fund for Public Service: Charles Garland and Radical Philanthropy, 1922-1941* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1966).

<sup>15</sup> Harold's historical record is spread over dozens government reports, newspapers ,and journal articles, none of which is complete. The book by his workmate Lem Harris, *Harold M. Ware, 1890-1935, Agricultural Pioneer, U.S.A. and U.S.S.R.* (NY: American Institute for Marxist Studies, 1978) has some useful facts but the best sources are the FBI reports on him including that in his Files on Whittaker Chambers.

<sup>16</sup> H R Harow (Harold Ware) "Our Agrarian Problem," *The Communist* (NYC unified CPA) 1 5 (Nov. 1921):20-21.,2 3..

<sup>17</sup> Carl Reeve, *New York Herald Tribune* 5 21 1922 gives an emotional account of the work.

<sup>18</sup> Xole, Peter *et al. (eds). Wobblies of the World: A Global History of the IWW* (London: Pluto Press, 2017) is helpful.

<sup>19</sup> Lowell K Dyson's works provide insight into all farm organization of the era, see for example his, "Rural Farm Organizations and Periodicals in America, 1920-1960," *Agricultural History*, 54 2 (Apr. 1971):111-120.

<sup>20</sup> On Wilson's and other farm "factories": Wessel T. R., "Wheat for the Soviet Masses: M. L. Wilson and the Montana Connection,:" in *Montana The Magazine of Western History* 31 2 (Spring 1981): 42- ; Drache, Hiram, "Thomas D. Campbell : The Power of the Plains, *Agricultural History* 51 1 #77 (Jan 1977): 78-91; Fitzgerald, Deborah, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

<sup>21</sup> Harrow, *Op cit*.

<sup>22</sup> Useful on Harold's farms organization plans. Pratt, William C., "Communists and American Farmers in the 1920s," *American Communist History*, 17-2: 162-175; Dyson, Lowell K., *Red Harvest: The Communist Party and American Farmers* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982).

<sup>23</sup> Lowell K. Dyson, "The Famer and the Left," in Peterson, Trudy H, (ed), *Farmers Bureaucrats and Middlemen* (Washington, D. C.: Howard University Press, 1980).

<sup>24</sup> See Dyson, Lowell K, "The Red Peasant International in America," *Journal of American History* 58 4 (March 1972):958-973; Pratt William C., "Farmers, Communists, and the FBI in the Upper Midwest," *Agricultural History* 63 3 (Summer 1989):61-80.

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- <sup>26</sup> On the Red Terror: Baberowski, Jorg. *Scorched Earth: Stalin's Reign of Terror* ( New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016); Sebastien, Victor, *Lenin : The Man, the Dictator, and the Master of Terror* New York:: Pantheon Books, 2017); McMeekin, Sean, History' Greatest theft: The Looting of Russia by the Bolsheviks, (New Haven: Yale University Press., 2009).
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- <sup>30</sup> See advertisements in *Soviet Russia Today*, *passim*.
- <sup>31</sup> For example, NYT 7-28-1929.
- <sup>32</sup> Nebeker, Frederick, *Dawn of the Electronic Age* (Hoboken NJ: :Wiley IEEE, 2009).
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- <sup>34</sup> Bernstein ,Seth and Robert Cherney, "Searching for the Soviet Dream: Prosperity and Disillusionment in the Soviet Seattle Commune, 1922-1927," *Agricultural History* 88 1 (Winter 2014): 22 -44.
- <sup>35</sup> Morray, P. J., *Project Kuzbas: American Workers in Siberia (192101926)*, (NY: International Publishers, 1983).
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