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The Invention of I.F. Stone:

The Early Life and Career of

I.F. Stone

1907-1953

submitted by Don David Guttenplan

University College London

in fulfillment of the requirements for the PhD

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UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
Abstract of Thesis

Author (full names)Don David Guttenplan

Title of thesisThe Invention of I.F. Stone: The Early Life and Career

of I.F. Stone, 1907-1953.....

Degree. PhD.....

When I.F. Stone died in June 1989 the *Daily Telegraph* described him as “the most notable radical publicist of his time”; the *Guardian* called *I.F. Stone’s Weekly* “essential reading for two generations of opinion makers”; the *Independent* eulogized “the most famous crusading journalist in the United States.” Stone’s death made the front page of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. It was also on all three U.S. network news broadcasts. Yet today I.F. Stone is practically a forgotten figure, a relic of the 1960s like sit-ins or manual typewriters. Even those who do remember Stone’s enormous influence—in the *Washington Post*’s words “felt, though not welcomed, at the highest levels of government” -- know him only through the *Weekly*, his one-man newspaper whose 70,000 subscribers included Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell, Marilyn Monroe, and J. Edgar Hoover.

The Invention of I.F. Stone is partly, then, a work of historical recovery. But it is also a study in post-Cold War history, and in the historiography of the American Left. By restricting myself to the period before the *Weekly* my aim is to show the personal, cultural, and historical roots of Stone’s achievement. Like Upton Sinclair, Ida Tarbell, or Lincoln Steffens, I.F. Stone was a muckraker who wrote to change the world. Drawing on the work of scholars such as Michael Denning, Maurice Isserman, and Ellen Schrecker as well as my own extensive research on Stone’s writings (published and unpublished), and over a hundred interviews with family members, colleagues, friends and opponents, plus the over 6000 pages released to me by the Federal Bureau of Investigation under the Freedom of Information Act I will show that just as Walter Lippmann came to personify the American establishment, so I.F. Stone became not just a symbol but an embodiment of dissent.

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Introduction: The Vanishing of I.F. Stone

(Some Notes on Intention and Method)

It is the Saturday after Thanksgiving, 1949 and to a regular viewer of WNBT-TV in New York, or any other members of the brand new television audience tuning in to “Meet the Press” there is nothing notably different about this particular broadcast. The host, Lawrence Spivak, likes to refer to his guests as “experts”; tonight the expert’s chair is occupied by Walter Judd, Republican Congressman from Minnesota and former medical missionary in China. The topic is the recent downfall of the Nationalist Chinese government and the hasty departure of its leader, Chiang Kai-Shek. Before the program begins, the announcer promises “four of the country’s ace reporters” will “fire questions” at the expert: Robert Sherrod, war correspondent for Time magazine who accompanied the U.S. Marines landing on Iwo Jima; Peter Edson, a syndicated columnist*; May Craig, Washington columnist for the Gannett newspaper chain and the first female reporter accredited to the U.S. Navy; I.F. Stone, Washington Bureau chief for the newspaper PM and the Nation magazine.

* It was Edson who, in September 1952, would ask Vice President Richard Nixon about a rumor “kicking around” Washington that he was the beneficiary of a slush fund set up by a group of California businessmen, prompting Nixon’s famous “Checkers speech.”

Up to this point, Stone has played the same role on the fledgling television program as he plays on "Meet the Press" on radio, where he has been a regular since 1946: a streetwise big city reporter whose quick wit and left-wing politics can be relied on to provoke some of the stuffier guests. Harold Stassen, Randolph Churchill and Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. have all felt the sharp edge of Stone's queries. Controversy is the program's stock in trade—it was on "Meet the Press" just over a year earlier that Whittaker Chambers stunned the nation with his on-the-air accusation that Alger Hiss was a Communist agent—so when Stone asks Judd whether the Chiang's defeat wasn't inevitable, given Nationalist corruption, Judd's rejoinder that Stone's "line" was just what he'd expect from "people of your persuasion" passes without notice. So, initially, does Stone's absence from future broadcasts.

Two weeks later Stone does appear on the radio version, goading Morris Fishbein, editor of the Journal of the American Medical Association, over his opposition to national health insurance: "Dr. Fishbein, let's get nice and rough. In view of his advocacy of compulsory health insurance, do you regard Mr. Harry Truman as a card-bearing Communist, or just a deluded fellow-traveller?"

When Fishbein denies ever having said any such thing, Stone admits "I was joking." But at whose expense? Stone will never be invited back on "Meet the Press." Indeed, it will be nearly 20 years before I.F. Stone is again allowed to appear on national television.

* * *

Since his death on June 18, 1989, Isidor Feinstein Stone remains in the American consciousness mainly as a kind of mythic figure: Saint Izzy, the maverick, the gadfly, the venerated icon of investigative journalism. The same national media that treated him as a non-person during the most productive years of his life leapt to eulogise Stone, including all three American network evening news broadcasts. His memorial services in New York and Washington drew the cream of the American journalistic establishment. "Funerals," he once wrote, "are always occasions for pious lying."

Stone's death merely completed a process of rehabilitation that began in the late 1960s. When it finally came his way, Stone enjoyed the adulation as much as the next man. Perhaps even more than the next man, since he'd known fame before. But if Stone viewed his journey from iconoclast to idol as practically inevitable—a consequence of the great American hunger for happy endings—he would hardly have encouraged the forms of worship. I.F. Stone was no saint, and he would have known better than to think it a compliment to be remembered as a maverick or a gadfly. Though he set his face against political fashion, Stone was never a lone nut with a typewriter. In that respect the slanderers who, after his death, tried to mark him with Moscow's brand did him more honor than his admirers. To his enemies, even in death I.F. Stone remained a dangerous man.

Stone might have had mixed feelings about being called a muckraker as well. He thought any reporting worthy of the name was supposed to be "investigative." Besides, he wasn't a crusader attacking political boodling, or tainted food, or corporate

chicanery--at least not in L.E. Stone's Weekly, the one-man newspaper he wrote, edited and published for nearly two decades. He had once written about all of those things. As a reporter and editorial writer on the Camden Courier and the Philadelphia Record, Stone covered the depredations of William Vare, who ruled over Philadelphia's Republican machine with a greed that rivalled the Democrats in New York's Tammany Hall. As lead editorial writer for the New York Post, Stone hammered away at Newark boss Frank "I am the law" Hague. As a columnist on PM--the New York tabloid that refused advertisements and revolutionised American newspapers--Stone exposed consumer frauds as well as government malfeasance. And as Washington editor of the Nation, Stone wrote so many columns about corporations fiddling while Europe was burning that he had enough for a book, Business As Usual, published in 1941. The term "muckraker" may have been coined before Stone was born, but there is still no better way to describe someone for whom, as that premature muckraker Karl Marx might have said, the point is not to cover the world but to change it.

In the 1940s, Stone showed how the profiteering of big aluminum manufacturers threatened the war effort, while his exposé of Standard Oil's collaboration with I.G. Farben forced John D. Rockefeller, Jr. to purge Standard's board; in the 1950s, Stone's reporting forced the Atomic Energy Commission to admit that monitoring of underground nuclear tests--and hence a comprehensive test ban treaty--was technologically feasible even if politically out of reach; in 1964 L.E. Stone's Weekly exposed Lyndon Johnson's lies on the Gulf of Tonkin seven years before the Pentagon Papers put the same facts on the front page of the

Washington Post and the New York Times. Stone could play scoop with the big boys, but what made him a muckraker was his stance—and his audience.

The muckrakers, wrote Walter Lippmann, who started out his career in journalism as a legman for Lincoln Steffens, “weren't voices crying out in a wilderness, or lonely prophets.” Their work took place in relation to a larger political upheaval. Historically, writers like Jacob Riis, Ida Tarbell, Steffens and Ray Stannard Baker were nourished by and helped to fuel the Progressive movement that climaxed with the election of Woodrow Wilson. Lippmann underscored the crucial connection between muckraking and its political context when he stressed “the mere fact that muckraking was what people wanted to hear is in many ways the revelation of the whole campaign.”

Lippmann himself preferred punditry. His perspective was too detached, too Olympian, to permit the outrage which prompts a muckraker's pen. But I.F. Stone was no Walter Lippmann. They were, in some ways, mirror images: Lippmann the consummate insider, the American establishment made flesh, and Stone, a journalistic pariah, thrown out of the National Press Club for bringing a black Federal judge to lunch, forced to go to court just to be allowed to sit in the Congressional press gallery. In 1966 Lippmann decided to signal his opposition to the war in Vietnam by inviting Stone, whom he'd met just a few weeks earlier, to his annual garden party. Well aware of why he'd been invited, Stone went anyway. Though he didn't think much of Lippmann, he'd have cocktails with the devil himself if it would help stop the war.

* * *

F. Scott Fitzgerald observed that there are no second acts in American lives. But I.F. Stone's fame rests almost entirely on the events that followed his "vanishing" from the mainstream media after his last daily newspaper, the New York Daily Compass, closed its doors in November 1952. When Peter Jennings, the anchor of the ABC Evening News, eulogized Stone as a "journalist's journalist," urging his television audience to "read or re-read Stone's views on America's place in the world," or when the Los Angeles Times called Stone "the conscience of investigative journalism," or when Murray Kempton told the hundreds of mourners at Stone's New York memorial that "our children's children will refer to Izzy Stone as we do to Mencken and Macauley" it is likely they all had in mind I.F. Stone's Weekly, whose 19 year run was indeed one of the most astonishing feats in the history of journalism.

By the late 1940s I.F. Stone was already one of the best-known journalists in the United States. And not only in the U.S. Kingsley Martin, editor of the New Statesman, courted Stone for his magazine, as did Jean-Paul Sartre for Les Temps Modernes; when Claude Bourdet, hero of the French resistance and founder of L'Observateur (later Le Nouvel Observateur) wanted an American view on the Korean War, Stone was the obvious choice. Yet in all the commentary since his death on June 19, 1989 it is as if Stone's career began with the Weekly. Because when I.F. Stone vanished, a whole culture—what could loosely be described as the culture of the American popular front—vanished along with him.

In recent years historians have begun to attend to aspects of that culture. Books like Michael Denning's The Cultural Front, Andrew Hemingway's Artists on the Left, and the work of historians such as Maurice Isserman, Mark Naison and Alan Wald, have already recovered a great deal. But with the exception of Paul Milkman's PM: A New Deal In Journalism these studies tend to treat journalism as a peripheral matter. Yet in my view it was precisely I.F. Stone's roots in popular front culture—his life's forgotten first act—which both enabled his subsequent achievements and which provide a crucial context for understanding them. Stone's own output as a journalist, in turn, offers a rich but neglected resource documenting a period that has been, in some cases, not just forgotten but actively erased. In "The Invention of I.F. Stone" my aim is redress this historical neglect, and in the process contribute to a revision in our understanding of the history of America in the 20th century, particularly the history of American dissent.

Today I.F. Stone is remembered chiefly by two mostly disparate groups: journalists and radicals. In the process of turning him into one of the icons of the profession journalists have stripped away almost all of his still-radical political context. From his prescient criticism of America's imperial adventures in Greece, Korea, Latin America and Vietnam to his prophetic warnings about the cost of Israeli irredentism (a passionate advocate for the dispossessed Jews of Europe, Stone, who favored a bi-national state in Palestine, was also an early and persistent champion of Palestinian rights) Stone's views would place him, even today, well outside the spectrum of mainstream opinion. Yet the same radicals who also claim him as an inspiration are often

most ignorant of Stone's own history, which included both an embrace of (small-c) communism and a rejection of the American Communist Party, and whose trenchant critiques of American power derived, in no small measure, from his own experiences as an intimate with some of the most powerful figures in New Deal Washington. Restricting myself to the period before I.F. Stone's Weekly allows me to trace, in considerable detail, the personal, political, cultural and professional connections which gave Stone the standing, the ability, and the confidence to not only withstand but resist the terrors and blandishments of McCarthyism, Vietnam, and the Reagan era.

* * *

Like all works of history, this thesis is a product of its time. When I.F. Stone died the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union was drawing to a close. Stone had long been a critic both of the conduct of that conflict and of the assumptions which underlay it. Indeed on his very deathbed Stone was transfixed by the protest then taking place at Tiananmen Square in China. And if my intention in writing a portion of Stone's biography is also to produce a work of post-Cold War history, that must have some bearing on method as well. How best to avoid what Stone's fellow Cold War-resister, E.P. Thompson, "the enormous condescension of posterity"?

In part, surely, by not writing backwards from the present, and by striving to avoid, or overcome, the tendency to treat the outcome of historical conflict as a series of foregone conclusions. Also by attending to a multiplicity of sources. Edmund Wilson

called To The Finland Station "A Study in the Writing and Acting of History." What follows here is more in the way of a study in writing as acting in history. I.F. Stone had no divisions, led no insurrections. The only columns at his command were the neat lines of type underneath his byline. And so it is his words—his language—which furnish the primary material for his biography. But I have also included the results of hundreds of hours of interviews with Stone's family, friends, colleagues, competitors and ideological opponents. Not to mention the large and constantly increasing body of secondary literature on topics such as the Great Depression, the New Deal, the history of the American Communist Party and the origins of the Cold War.

In history, as Henry James observes in his preface to Roderick Hudson, "really, universally, relations stop nowhere." For the biographer, as for the novelist, "the exquisite problem," as James called it, is "to draw, by a geometry of his own, the circle within which they shall happily *appear* to do so." The biography of a writer poses a special case; that of a writer whose aim is political change still a further special case. In drawing the circle around I.F. Stone, my choice of what to include has been constrained not only the usual biographical contingencies—for example, the fact that Stone kept no diary and left very few personal letters—but by the need to attend constantly to the particular circumstance of a subject who is primarily a writer yet whose ends are primarily extraliterary.

As a working journalist, Stone had a certain kind of language available to him; as a polemicist, he wrote under certain pressures. And as J.G.A. Pocock points out: "any polemicist who desires to reject as illegitimate the greater part of an existing and

traditional order” faces additional difficulties.¹ To understand what resources Stone had—and the use he made of them—I decided to expand my circle to include not only Stone's texts and their historical context but also what structuralists would call his “intertext”: the set of books and readings his writings refer to, or simply take for granted.

This attention to Stone's language and his use of language is one way in which this thesis differs from other works about him. Another is my focus on the Popular Front. In my view the disappearance of Popular Front culture marks a kind of “paradigm shift” in both politics and the language of political possibility of the type meant by Pocock in his discussion of Thomas Kuhns.²

There are differences in emphasis as well. Andrew Patner's evocative L.E. Stone: A Portrait (1988), for example, never pretends to be more than an edited composite of interviews with Stone. The result is a kind of assisted—indeed, brilliantly assisted—self-portrait. Robert Cottrell's Izzy: A Biography (1992) contains an extremely useful chronology, but the sketch of Stone's life before the Weekly is fairly cursory, and the social context is thin. The bulk of Cottrell's research was done in the early 1980s (the book was adapted from his doctoral thesis). The timing is significant for two reasons: first, both Cottrell and Patner rely heavily (in Patner's case entirely) on Stone's recollection of events. Since most of the interviews with other sources were done while Stone was still alive, candour is more likely to be tempered with deference. Also Stone's FBI file—thousands of pages of documents covering his political involvement from the late 1930s forward, sometimes in minute

detail--was only beginning to be released when Cottrell was finishing his research (though I filed my own Freedom of Information request in July 1989, I was still receiving material from the FBI in 2002!). When Cottrell's book was published the very existence of the Venona decrypts--Soviet cablegrams intercepted and decoded by the U.S. National Security Agency, including a number that refer to I.F. Stone--was still a secret. Stone's FBI file in particular has proved an invaluable resource.

My hope is that with the collapse of the Soviet empire it is now possible to speak frankly both about the role of the United States as an imperial power and about the tragedy of American communism. As Ellen Schrecker has observed: "Every scholar who deals with the [Communist] movement reports the same difficulties. Ironically, contemporary historians need the same kinds of confessions the congressional investigators of the 1950s did, including, if at all possible, the naming of other people's names."³ With the end of the Cold War it has become morally easier to ask for such information--and practically easier to obtain truthful answers.*

Finally a personal note. I never knew I.F. Stone while he was alive. Of course as a working newspaperman in New York I knew of his reputation. I also knew, through friends and through my own reading, his immense importance during the 1960s as the one journalist of his generation both trusted and respected by the activists of the New Left. Paul Booth, a national officer of the

* Though not in all cases. One aged American academic nearly had me physically ejected from his apartment when I made the mistake of asking directly "when it was exactly that you left the [Communist] party?" Perhaps for that reason I am still grateful to Simon Gerson for his bemused reply to the same question: "Left the party? Why never."

Students for a Democratic Society, described the “close ties” between the student protesters and Stone: “We depended on him to interpret all the events of the world for us. The moment his Weekly arrived, we devoured it.” Stone’s New York memorial, which I covered for my paper, described a man who had become an institution. Yet when I began to interview those who knew him best they described the toll taken by years of isolation and ostracism. What was it—in himself, in his work, and in the world around him—that led to Stone’s marginalization? The passage from left to center, or even from left to right, was after all common ground for a generation of American intellectuals—Stone’s generation. What made him different? And what was it about Stone that enabled him not just to endure, but to emerge from his internal exile with sufficient energy and sufficient credibility to become, as he did become, an icon of integrity and independence for a whole new generation? The pages that follow are my attempt at an answer.

Chapter One

Feinstein's Progress

Before he was anything else he was a newspaperman. He was the eldest son, a first-generation American, a schoolboy, a Jew. He was all of those things without choosing. The newspaper was his.

It was called The Progress and cost two cents (marked down from a nickel). The first edition appeared in February, 1922. On the front page, under a half column attack on the Hearst newspaper chain for "malignant propoganda against Japan," were the editor's initials: I. B. F. Isadore B. Feinstein. The "B." was a fiction--his first assumed name. He was fourteen years old.

As befit its high-minded title, most of the six unnumbered pages that made up The Progress, Volume One Number One were devoted to editorial exhortation or to poetry. A speech from the Antigone (credited to "Saphocles") warning that "money ... lays cities low" is followed by a demand to "Cancel the War Debts." Arguing on behalf of "every individual in the United States, more or less," the young writer tried his hand at economics: "The war debt is the chief cause of the business depression. Why? Because the war debts lower the rate of foreign exchange and increases the value of the American dollar."

The Progress showed a playful side as well, publishing "A. Nut. E. Poem. (by an Animus)" along with jokes, humorous headlines and a feature on "Unusual Occupations" credited to the New York American—a Hearst paper, but then good features were hard to find.

Pragmatic, precocious, enterprising (the first issue included 11 display ads), sophomoric—were it not for the career that followed, there would be little reason to take note of Feinstein's Progress. Here is scant trace of the mature, wised-up style, the Talmudic relish for documentary evidence, the acidulous provocations and devastating deadpan that enlivened every issue of I.F. Stone's Weekly. In a young man, high ideals are hardly more remarkable than high spirits. Still, in light of what would come after, it is perhaps worth recording that from the very first he was immune to the charms of the parochial. Hearst, the Versailles Treaty, the economy—these were the causes that excited his 14-year-old's passion. The only local element in The Progress is the advertising—which, so far as addresses are given, seems to all come from shops on the same street as the editor's house.

Tucked discretely away on an inside page was an ad for the United Department Store, "B. Feinstein, Prop." B. Feinstein was the editor's father, and though the presence of the paternal name might have given readers (who were mostly neighbors) the impression of an indulgent, even proud father supporting his son's venture, the truth was more complicated.

There is a Yiddish expression which perfectly captures the career of Bernard Feinstein, at least in the eyes of his eldest son: *Asakh melokhes un veynik brokhes*. "Many trades but few blessings." More poignant than the English "jack of all trades" the Yiddish phrase has a sense of hard circumstance, of fatality, mixed in with the dismissal. Born in Gronov, the Ukraine, in 1876, Baruch Feinstein had already served a number of years in the Tsar's army before fleeing the country to escape being sent to the Far East. One family story has him making his way across Poland on foot, but there is general agreement that after stops in Hamburg, Liverpool and Cardiff, he boarded a ship in London, landing in Philadelphia on April 12, 1903. He was a peddler.¹

"At that time," his youngest son recalled, "they were building the Main Line [of the Pennsylvania] Railroad from Philadelphia out to Paoli ... and the Polish workers didn't have a chance to go to shops. My father went up and down the line, selling watches out of a suitcase."²

Somewhere along his travels Baruch Feinstein became Bernard. He was becoming Americanized in other ways as well. In the old country there was *Shabbat*—the Sabbath—a day devoted to prayer and study. In the New World, Bernard Feinstein had his Saturdays to do with as he pleased, and he seldom spent them in synagogue. Like hundreds of thousands of his fellow immigrants who flocked to Coney Island, Atlantic City or Asbury Park, Bernard Feinstein used his leisure time for leisure. On one trip to the Jersey shore in the summer of 1906 he was walking along the beach when he met a friend, Dave Novack, a recent immigrant from Odessa. Novack introduced the young peddler to his father,

Zalman, and his little sister, Katy, a sewing-machine operator in a shirt factory.

An extremely dapper man who sent his wife and children out to work while he stayed home studying Torah, Zalman (or Solomon as he soon became) Novack was a traditional Jewish patriarch. His house on South 10th Street in South Philadelphia was strictly kosher. The fact that he'd taken his wife's family name--Novack--rather than his own, was a mark of respect for the father-in-law who supported his studies, not a feminist gesture.

As it happened, Bernard's father, born Judah Tsvilikhovsky, had also changed his family name. Most Russian Jews only took second names (aside from the Hebrew patronymic) when they were ordered to do so by the Tsarist government. Since under Alexander III this same government instigated a wave of officially-sponsored pogroms, and since the measure was designed to make it easier for the Jews to be taxed and their sons drafted, resistance was widespread. If a family had four sons, three would be drafted. But if a family only had one son--or appeared to have a single son--he was exempt. Judah Tsvilikhovsky's father had four sons; their last names were Tsvilikhovsky, Burrison, Steelman, and Feinstein.³

In March 1907 Katy and Bernard were married in Philadelphia. She was 20; he was ten years older. At first they lived with her parents, and, at least in the beginning, Bernard and his father-in-law got along well enough. Bernard continued in his secular ways, but after they moved into a home of their own, on nearby South Wharton Street, the young couple even kept a kosher kitchen so that the Novacks would feel comfortable when they came to visit.

Isadore Feinstein was born in his parents' house on December 24, 1907—nine months after their wedding. His birth certificate lists his father's occupation as "salesman." His father's name is given as "Barnet Feinstein."

Like many American cities after the turn of the century, Philadelphia was really two largely separate aggregations. There was the somewhat parochial, patrician backwater where, on a 1905 visit, Henry James was struck by "the absence of the note of the perpetual perpendicular, the New York, the Chicago note-- and I allude here to the material, the constructional exhibition of it." For James, Philadelphia's endless array of row houses "seemed to symbolize exactly the principle of indefinite horizontal extension and to offer, refreshingly, a challenge to horizontal, to lateral, to more or less tangential, to rotary, or better still to absolute centrifugal motion."⁴ There is a photograph of center city Philadelphia, also from 1905, which perfectly captures this bucolic prospect: though the City Hall clock shows it to be a quarter before two in the afternoon, there are fewer than a dozen people in the street. In the foreground, where a contemporary picture of New York would have been crammed with traffic of all sorts, a herd of sheep are being driven down the middle of South Broad Street.⁵

Just a few blocks further south, however, was the area known as "Little Russia," where in 1910 the greater part of Philadelphia's 90,697 Jewish immigrants lived and worked.⁶ It was in this community that the Hebrew hymn *Adon Olom* was composed; here also lived the author of *Hatikvah*, the Zionist anthem. Surrounded by enclaves of Irish, Polish, and Italian immigrants, most of the Jews arrived at about the same time as

Bernard Feinstein. In 1910, Jews were already the city's largest single ethnic group, making up nearly a fourth of the immigrant population. By the time the U.S. entered the first World War, there were over 200,000 Jews in the city.

Though they were spared the indignities of tenement life, the immigrant families jammed into row houses along the blind, bandbox alleys of South Philadelphia were a world away from the contented burghers of Rittenhouse Square. Even those with good jobs were often hard-pressed. But there were also stirrings of resistance. In May, 1909, the city was paralyzed by striking street railwaymen. When a settlement with the streetcar monopoly broke down the following February, Philadelphia's central labor union called the first general strike in modern American history. Thousands of non-union workers walked off their jobs in solidarity.⁷

For those without regular work, times were even tougher. As an occupation of last resort, peddling became increasingly popular. "From Monday to Friday," says one account, "the roads along the Delaware River ... were clogged by Jewish peddlers." ⁸

It may have been this sharpening competition that drove the young Feinstein family to light out for the west. But there were other factors as well. "The story, I don't know whether it's apocryphal or not, is they had to move so that my father could get my mother away from her mother," recalls Louis Stone. One version of this family tale has Katy Feinstein clinging to her mother's apron strings. Another blames the continuing tension between the militantly secular Bernard and his devout father-in-law. Yet another ingredient was Katy Feinstein's post-partum

depression, which was evidently serious enough for Isadore to spend months at a time with his Novack grandparents.⁹

In 1911 Bernard, Katy and young Isadore moved to Richmond, Indiana. Here the Yiddish-speaking boy first entered kindergarten. Towards the end of his life, he made light of the day he "went out into the street and started talking *mame-loshen* to the schoolchildren."¹⁰ To his own children, though, Stone spoke of Richmond as his first encounter with anti-Semitism.¹¹

It was also his first encounter with small town America. Located at the junction of the Chesapeake & Ohio and the Pennsylvania railroads, Richmond's manufactures extended from the American Seeding Machine Company's agricultural implements to William Waking Company's "bicycles, water closets and bathtubs." There were three daily newspapers serving the town's 22,300 inhabitants. More to the point, there were twelve dry goods stores. Above one of them, at 1101 Sheridan street, lived the Feinsteins--but not for long.¹²

Perhaps it was the lure of the railroad line that brought Bernard Feinstein so far into the American interior. Or perhaps, as his grandson Jeremy suggested, "it was just an immigrant's mistake." Certainly--and this may have been Bernard's intention--they were a very long way from their families, and from the familiar *shtetl* culture of "Little Russia." There were fewer than a dozen other Jews in Richmond, and though a city directory listed his business as "dry goods"--a traditional Jewish trade throughout the south and Midwest--in reality Bernard still spent much of the year as an itinerant peddler.¹³

The Feinsteins bought their combined house and store in 1911. By June the following year, they'd sold out to Abraham

Harsh, a coal dealer and one of the few other Jews in town. But the Feinsteins stayed on in Richmond through two family milestones. On September 6, 1912 Marcus Feinstein (known through childhood as "Max") was born. The birth record lists his father's name as "Bernhardt." And in January, 1913 "Bernard" Feinstein and his wife became American citizens. Once these proceedings were complete, the family returned to the East.

What could a five-year-old boy make of such a trek? An adventure? An odyssey? A retreat? For Bernard, though it ended in disappointment, the move to Indiana was a decisive break with his past. The Feinsteins might be Jews without money, but there would be no return to the ghetto. His children would grow up to be Americans. For Katy, the end of their rural exile was an enormous relief. "My father went out peddling with a horse and buggy," said Louis Stone. "Mother used to tell this story about how terrified she was when he was away and she had to feed the horse. We had a barn behind the house, with one of those old-fashioned split doors. Well, she would run up to the door with some hay, open the top, throw in a handful, slam the door shut and run back to the house." For Isadore, if it left him with nothing else, the long train journey must have impressed him with the size of his country, its varied landscape and vast unsettled expanses. The lesson that his father was a failure he would have many opportunities to learn.

Only a year after their return from Indiana, the Feinsteins moved one more time. Bernard, who'd been struggling to support his growing family as a butcher in Camden, New Jersey, heard of an opportunity to take over a small dry goods store in nearby Haddonfield. "A Mr. Fowler sold the store to my father," Louis

Stone remembered. "Then Fowler opened up a new store across the street. They were our competition--caddy corner across the street." Luckily for the Feinsteins, the American economy was about to receive a huge boost from events half a world away.

III.

Haddonfield's history has been peaceful, if not uneventful since British redcoats and tattered Continentals marched through her streets.

— "Haddonfield: A Sketch of Its Early History" by Isadore Feinstein, 1931

Known variously as the Philadelphia Bargain Store, Ladies and Gents' Furnishings and Shoes, and the United Department Store, the Feinstein family's new home was on the busiest corner in Haddonfield. Four plate glass windows stretched for sixty feet along East Main Street, beckoning customers inside with an ever-changing display of cut-rate women's fashion, men's clothing, shoes, sewing patterns, bolts of fabric, and "notions." A heavy wooden barrel filled with pickles was hidden away on the back porch, but from the front, where a pair of hitching posts flanked a large water trough for the benefit of nearby farmers who rode their horse-drawn wagons into town on weekends to shop, there was little to set the Feinsteins apart from their neighbors.

Though Camden, with its clamorous shipyards and huge Campbell's Soup factory, was only five miles away--a five-cent ride on the trolley that ran down Haddon Avenue, along side the store, before turning onto Main Street--Haddonfield on the eve of the World War was a very quiet little town. Named for Elizabeth Haddon, a wealthy Quaker who began farming there in 1701,

Haddonfield remained primarily agricultural. A two minute journey outside town in any direction brought open vistas of wheat, corn, horses and cows.¹⁴

For a small boy, it was in many ways a paradise. "In the woods around ... where I grew up," remembered Isadore's brother Max, "there were favorite swimming holes. It was great fun to swing out over the water on a rope tied to a high tree branch.... There was choose-up baseball in the large field between the school and the Presbyterian Church that fronted on Main Street ... and pick-up football ... on a lot beside the Friends School on Haddon Avenue down past the cemetery.... The cemetery was just across the street from the rear of our store ... [and] when it snowed we sledded there or even skied on barrel staves."¹⁵

Even his bookish older brother enjoyed fishing in Evans Pond or wandering through the surrounding woods with a dog-eared copy of Keats, Shelley, or Emily Dickinson shoved into his back pocket. Home from his rambles, Isadore would curl up in the big green wicker rocking chair that stood at the rear of the shop. Often he could also be found in the dining room located behind the store, hunched over the piles of books that covered the whole of the round wooden table or staring through his thick round eyeglasses out the window and across Haddon Avenue to the firehouse, or perhaps at the two buttonwood trees in front of Milask's ice cream parlor. George Washington was said to have stood under those very trees, reviewing his troops. Behind the dining room was the kitchen, Katy Feinstein's fief. From here the smell of Jewish delicacies like *knishes*, *knaidlach* and *kreplach*, her special chicken with *kasha varnishkes*, or fruity fragrant

strudel and *hamantoshen* would go wafting up the dining room stairs to the rest of the house.¹⁶

For all its idyllic quality, though, the Feinsteins' life in Haddonfield was oddly insular. They were Jews. Bernard read a Yiddish newspaper; Katy still kept a kosher kitchen, which meant taking the trolley into Camden to a kosher butcher whenever she wanted to buy meat or poultry. Both parents spoke Yiddish at home. Indeed Katy, who was a vivacious, relatively cultivated woman in Yiddish, was barely literate in English. There were only a handful of other Jews in Haddonfield—too few for a *minyan*,^{*} let alone a synagogue. Not that Bernard would have gone. Instead, he and Katy spent practically every weekend in the family Maxwell driving the children to visit one or another of their numerous relatives scattered throughout the Philadelphia area. Many, like Izzy's favorite uncle, Ithamar "Shumer" Feinstein, still lived in the city.¹⁷ But the rich, contentious communal life of immigrant Jewry--the world of The World of Our Fathers--was a world young Isadore Feinstein barely knew.

Haddonfield itself didn't even have a Catholic church. Racially, Stone recalled later, it was practically "a southern town." And while most of the Quakers who still dominated Haddonfield probably viewed the Feinsteins as harmless exotics, all of the town's Jews lived behind a wall of complete social segregation. Izzy's brother Max desperately wanted to be accepted. "There were only three classmates who like me were Jewish, but they were not part of the 'in' crowd so I shunned them," he admitted in a draft memoir. "Nonetheless, the cruel, childish taunts of 'Kike' and 'Christ Killer' continued into the teens, and though I

might hang out with the drug-store crowd I was not invited to their parties. "

"They used to tease me, 'Is he a door or is he a window?'," recalls Isador Rosenthal, who went through the Haddonfield school system at the same time as the Feinstein boys. "They didn't know a Jew from Adam. Some thought Jews had horns. Every time there was a Jewish holiday that we observed, I had a note to the teacher," he remembered.¹⁸

Describing Isadore Feinstein as "a loner," a gentile high school classmate explained: "He never went to any of our parties." Was he invited? "Oh, no." A Jewish classmate remembers being barred from the YMCA, though he might indeed have felt out of place at the hilarious doings at YMCA Camp Ockanickon as described in the local paper: "Popular Confectioner in Familiar Impersonation Convulses Campers With Laughter"

It was the campers' first acquaintance with Mr. Hires, who entertained ... with his Jewish impersonation.... he looked exactly like a Jewish peddler would look if he wandered into camp with his neck-tie on."¹⁹

The Feinstein boys, Jewish peddler's sons, were also barred from the fortnightly dances at the Artisans' Hall. Indeed, most of the anti-Semitism they encountered in Haddonfield was on the level of social discrimination or ethnic stereotyping. But there were more virulent strains which the town's mask of placid contentment didn't completely conceal. All three Feinstein boys took the trolley into Camden for Hebrew lessons at Beth El. In the 1920s stickers appeared on the trolleys, as well as busses and buildings all over Camden proclaiming: `Every Loyal American

* The quorum of ten men required to hold a service.

Knows What KKK Stands For'. Certainly Bernard Feinstein knew; when the Ku Klux Klan marched down Main Street, he stood silently on the store's front steps staring at the hooded procession. (Bernard's gesture of defiance was not without risk. The next day his son Louis--born in 1917--greeted Haddonfield's conspicuously tall chief of police with a cheerful "Hi! I saw you in the parade yesterday.") Edward Cutler remembers an even more oblique response to local anti-Semitism. His mother sometimes sent genteel customers out of their dry goods store (also on Main Street) with a cheery: "Good bye--*brecha fis!*" (break a foot).²⁰

From a very early age, Isadore Feinstein knew he was somehow different. "I was lonesome. I was a kind of a freak," he recalled. Even as a grown man, he never entirely lost "the little boy's awe for those who could sing in school the line 'Land where my fathers died' without feeling awkward about it." By all accounts, school gave young Isadore a great many reasons to feel awkward. "I think we were cruel to Izzy because he was a loner," a classmate recalled. "He was very intellectual, but he never got down to our level, where we had fun."²¹

He also came from the wrong side of the tracks. The railroad running along Atlantic Avenue cut Haddonfield in half, with the most desirable homes on the West Side. The Feinsteins lived in "the commercial section" on the East Side. Shy, Jewish, bespectacled, physically clumsy and relatively poor, Isadore devised two strategies to help him survive at school. One was humor--particularly humor directed at authority figures. Several classmates remembered his barbed exchanges with teachers. A particular triumph was the day he convinced his classmates to devour limburger cheese--or, in one telling of the story, cloves of

raw garlic--and then closed all the classroom windows in order to torment their hapless teacher.²²

Far more often, though, Isadore would simply withdraw behind the covers of a book. A fascination with print was one of his earliest memories: "Before I learned how to read I would sit on the trolley car with a book in front of me and make believe I was reading and move my lips. And then one of the biggest thrills of my life was in those first-grade readers, with the lovely pastel illustrations showing a bird on the windowsill, and the words underneath it saying, plain as day, 'The bird sat on the windowsill,' and being able to figure it out was just tremendous."²³

Other boys collected toy soldiers, or marbles, or stamps. The pride of young Isadore's collection was "a facsimile edition in color of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell." Blake, Wordsworth and the other English Romantic poets were a source of immense pleasure his entire life, as were Emily Dickinson and Camden's own bard. "While I was in high school Walt Whitman was a great influence in my life. I really feel that from him I got a feeling of naturalness and purity about sex," he recalled. Thanks to his fluent Yiddish, which helped with the German, Heine's Buch der Lieder was another early favorite.

His family worried that Isadore "buried himself in books" with reading "almost his sole activity in childhood or early teens." His own recollections make it clear, however, that while escape--from the demands of his family, or the taunts of his schoolmates-- might have been a motive, what he found in the library was nothing less than liberation. Starting with a sentimental education, he read his way from omnivorous

curiosity to deeply held conviction. At first he looked primarily for vivid imagery and compelling rhythm. "I remember the thrill of reading Marlowe's Tamburlaine, with that wonderful line, 'Is it not passing brave to be a king and march in triumph through Persepolis?'," he said. His awakening powers of empathy soon steered him in new directions: "I can remember coming home from high school and lying on the couch at home over my father's store, eating pretzels and reading Don Quixote and bursting into tears at the moment of tragic lucidity when Don Quixote wavers and sees that he has been living in a world of illusion."²⁴

At the age of 12, his reading took another turn. Jack London's Martin Eden gave Isadore "my first glimpse of the modern world." Again and again in later life Stone would point to London's novel as "my introduction to radicalism" and "the book that first got me started" on the road to socialism. If so, it was an odd beginning. "You make believe that you believe in the survival of the strong and the rule of the strong. I believe. That is the difference," proclaims the book's eponymous hero. "I look to the state for nothing. I look only to the strong man, the man on horseback, to save the state from its own rotten futility." London himself was lifelong socialist, but Martin Eden is a portrait of the artist as a young fascist.²⁵

"The world belongs to the true noblemen, to the great blond beasts," says Martin Eden. Izzy Feinstein was no blond beast. Yet it is not hard to see how London's anguished young man spoke to--and for--his adolescent reader: "Who are you, Martin Eden? ... Who are you? What are you? Where do you belong?... You belong with the legions of toil, with all that is low,

and vulgar, and unbeautiful. You belong with the oxen and the drudges, in dirty surroundings among smells and stench.... And yet you dare to open the books, to listen to beautiful music, to learn to love beautiful paintings, to speak good English, to think thoughts that none of your own kind thinks.... Who are you? and what are you? damn you! And are you going to make good?"²⁶

To speak good English! For a boy whose earliest memories were of being teased for speaking in a foreign tongue, this must have been more intoxicating than any vision of the cooperative commonwealth. To think thoughts none of his own kind thinks. And headiest of all, the challenge, compounded of doubt and defiance: Are you going to make good?

To make good To speak good English. Malraux's dictum that "the life of culture depends less on those who inherit it than those who desire it" never found a more willing exponent. Already primed by his reading of Emerson and Thoreau, the boy picked up the gauntlet in a voracious program of self-cultivation. He ranged widely: from Heraclitus to Hart Crane, Milton to Moby Dick. He was also developing a taste for books that exposed the conflicts and conventions of everyday life. A cousin who visited the Feinsteins the summer before Isadore turned 13 remembered: "Iz took me fishing and gave me a copy of Upton Sinclair's The Jungle to read." Martin Eden led the boy to Herbert Spencer's First Principles and from there to the works of Darwin. Spencer made a particularly strong impression on his young reader, though Spencer's vision of inexorable social evolution was seemingly less persuasive than his atheism, his faith in progress, and the sheer confidence of his taxonomy. Progress and its enemies were themes that would occupy Stone for the rest of his

life, but his own emerging sense of politics owed much more to another item on his teenage reading list, Peter Kropotkin's The Conquest of Bread. "When you go into a public library," Kropotkin says, in an argument that must have resonated with his young reader, "the librarian does not ask you what services you have rendered to society before giving you the book, or the fifty books, which you require; he even comes to your assistance if you do not know how to manage the catalogue."²⁷

"I fell in love with Kropotkin," he recalled.²⁸ According to Kropotkin, "ours is neither the communism of Fourier and the phalansterians, nor of the German state socialists. It is anarchist communism, communism without government--the communism of the free."²⁹ In time, Kropotkin would lead the young radical on to Marx, Bukharin and Lenin. His developing analytical mind--the same faculty that found inspiration in Spencer's leaden prose--eagerly took up the tools of Marxist analysis and even, for a brief period, the far blunter implements of proletarian revolution and a Soviet-style planned economy.³⁰ That would be much later. His initial enthusiasm for Kropotkin--for, as he put it a half-century afterwards, the Russian prince's "wonderful vision of anarchistic communism, of a society without police, without coercion, based on persuasion and mutual aid"--came from the same source as his passion for Shelley and Keats. He was a Romantic long before he was a radical, and took up poetry years before he turned to pamphleteering. Only one of his poems was ever published: a sonnet in his high school yearbook. In it, the banner he raises is of empathy, not indignation:

*And then when all is past and darkness come
Men hearing the words that I have said
Shall say: "Here is another heart like ours*

*That spoke for those who spoke not and were dumb.*³¹

IV.

"I was a politically conscious schoolboy of nine," Stone once wrote, "when America entered the First World War. A young Irish Catholic friend and I ... had been the only opponents of intervention." Whether or not this picture of a pint-sized Eugene Debs is factually correct, there is no doubt the war contributed to Isadore's growing sense of isolation. Not over the conflict with the Central Powers, since he was, he recalled "caught up in the general enthusiasm which greeted the declaration of war, when frankfurters were patriotically renamed 'liberty sausages' and no decent American would play Bach or Beethoven." And his ostracism at school was already well-established. What was new was an awareness of tension in his own family--often with himself at the center.³²

The war years were good years for the United Department Store. Rationing imposed its own challenges--Mrs. Feinstein sent the boys from store to store in search of a little extra sugar for her baking. But the wartime measures--and the boom in the Camden shipyards--also sent a steady stream of customers to the store. Family fortunes didn't change over night, and Bernard was no spendthrift. Discarded sewing patterns, Max recalled, were still "consigned to our bathroom. We never saw rolls of toilet paper until we moved away from the store." The family still rented out one of the upstairs bedrooms to a dentist, a

Pennsylvania Dutchman named Orville Meland whose German helped broaden Isadore's Yiddish. As his business continued to grow, however, Bernard found himself relying more and more on his wife and sons. Soon Katy was spending so much time in the store the family hired a full-time maid, who slept in a windowless cubicle down the hall from the boys' room.³³

Unlike his brother Max, who delighted in helping behind the counter, sweeping and washing the wooden floor, and carefully "dressing" the display windows—"you crawled in, set up your front display, and slowly backed out, filling the space as you went"—Izzy was a sullen and unwilling salesman. Told to *gib actung*—to watch the customers and make sure nothing was stolen—he would often be found reading instead. The boy's unmistakable disdain for the shopkeeper's life frequently brought down his father's wrath upon his head. His mother nearly always came to Isadore's defense.

Katy Feinstein adored her eldest boy. On Friday nights, when Katy lit *Shabbat* candles and the family said the traditional sabbath prayers, Katy always made sure her first-born got the choicest parts of the chicken. "Izzy was Mom's favorite," Max remembered. Katy, who didn't share her husband's atheism, sent the boys into Camden for Hebrew lessons.* At first, Bernard also indulged his eldest. He even arranged for him to receive additional Hebrew tuition from his brother, Shumer. As a grown man, Stone fondly recalled "the memory of a warm home, the smell of cooking and books--there were always books aplenty at

* The rabbi who tutored the boys at Beth El, Solomon Grayzel, would later have his expert testimony cited in Abington v. Schempp, the Supreme Court decision declaring Bible reading and the Lord's Prayer in public schools to be unconstitutional.

Uncle Shumer's. There was loveable *Tanta* Elka coaxing you to eat more, and Uncle Shumer, framed always in a certain majesty, calm, dignified, patient—a veritable Jove of an uncle."

To an admiring small boy, his uncle was an ideal surrogate father: "full of the grandest stories, answering the hardest questions.... When God walked with the sons of men, He must have walked with such as my Uncle Shumer." Stone would never describe his own father in such heroic terms.³⁴

Bernard was certainly capable of exuberance. When the Armistice was announced ending the Great War, he ran across Haddon Avenue to the volunteer firehouse to toll out the news on the fire bell, cheerfully paying the \$5 fine for a false alarm. He was also interested in less momentous events, taking both the Camden Courier and the Yiddish paper Der Tag (The Day). "You could always tell the politics of a Jewish household in those days by which Jewish paper they subscribed to," Stone once explained. "If they were Communists they got the Freiheit; if they were socialists they got the Forvitz, the Forward; if they were religious they got the Morning Journal; if they were liberal they got the Tag We took the Tag." In his father's case, the choice of paper may have had less to do with politics than family loyalty; Max Sobolofsky, who edited the Tag until his death in 1920, was Bernard's first cousin—a fact which, significantly, he seems never to have mentioned to his fractious first-born.³⁵

Bernard could be generous as well. "I remember my father taking us to Philadelphia to see the Yiddish Art Theatre," Stone told an interviewer, relishing the memory of Romain Rolland's Wolves and Sholem Asch's God of Vengeance. Outward displays of affection were rare, but Bernard's second son, Max,

remembered being favored with "skates that were always the best to be had and a bicycle and an expensive leather jacket." Such gifts, he knew, were "the benefit of Pop's experience and problems with Izzy." Their younger brother Louis put the matter succinctly: "Izzy and his father did not get along."³⁶

The boy's reluctance to help out in the store, his pointed lack of interest in "the business," was one source of tension. Bernard and Katy's frequent quarrels may have been another. As he became more successful, Bernard began looking for new business opportunities, leaving the day-to-day running of the store in Katy's hands—a turn of events she bitterly resented. Most ordering was done from salesmen who visited the store on their rounds, but two or three times a month Katy would have to "fill in." Bundling baby Louis under her arm, she would set off by trolley to Camden, take the ferry to the foot of Market street in Philadelphia, then proceed by subway or another trolley to the wholesalers in Little Russia to replenish the store's stock of shoes, overalls, trousers, dresses, hats or yard goods. Each time she'd return exhausted from the effort. "She would cry that her feet were sore and her bunions throbbing," Louis remembered. "Yet there were customers to be waited on and, behind the store, cooking to be tended."

There is no evidence that Katy and her beloved Izzy explicitly encouraged one another's resentments. It would be years before the full extent of Katy's distress became known. That the boy chafed under his father's authority was obvious. Fortunately, that authority was frequently in abeyance. Every summer Katy took the boys away for a few weeks, either to a small lakeside inn nearby, or to Atlantic City, where they usually

stayed at the Majestic Hotel. It was there, under a table in the hotel parlor, that the 14-year-old Isadore came upon a stack of back issues of The Nation and The New Republic. Whether the credit for inspiration goes to Herbert Croly's "just far enough left of the liberal consensus to be stimulating" New Republic or Oswald Garrison Villard's marginally racier Nation--or neither--somehow the boy had found his vocation.³⁷ Here were Mark van Doren and Edmund Wilson, Lincoln Steffens, Ludwig Lewisohn, Walter Lippmann--all of them "making good," all of them writing "good English." And some of them were Jews.

Bernard's asthma also gave his son periodic breaks from paternal authority. The search for a healthier climate once sent Bernard on a cruise to Central America; another time he spent a few weeks recovering his breath amid the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Shortly after Isadore's 14th birthday, his father left on yet another of his convalescent journeys. The boy wasted no time. With the help of a few school friends, and the indulgence of a bemused local printer who "opined between meditative squirts of tobacco juice, that I would come to a bad end," The Progress was born.³⁸

Two names were listed in the first issue as "Owners and Editors": Isadore B. Feinstein and Gerhard Van Arkel. Tall, confident, popular, and descended from a famous general in the French and Indian Wars, "Garry" Van Arkel was in many ways the antithesis of his partner. Yet every morning the two of them would walk to school together--"the long and the short of it," their classmates said. Van Arkel was young Feinstein's closest--perhaps his only--childhood friend, and the two would remain friends for over 60 years. In Volume One Number One the

division of labor was roughly even, with Van Arkel contributing a note on recent German inventions and a serialized story about a bicycle racer. But any doubts about who was running the show are dispelled by the next month's issue.³⁹

The masthead of the March, 1922 issue of The Progress proclaims Isadore B. Feinstein to be "Editor-in-Chief, Business Manager, Advertising Manager," and superintendent of "The Scrap Head," the paper's humor section. Van Arkel has been demoted to "Assistant Editor, Literary Editor" while another crony, Francis Fitzpatrick (probably the other World War I dissenter), is listed as "Special Articles." Volume One Number Two also included three poems by Gwynneth Walker, a shy, bookish Welsh girl who, like the Editor-in-Chief, "never had a date in high school," and who, like both Feinstein and Fitzpatrick, lived on the unfashionable east side of town. Despite the increase in personnel (and pages, from 6 to 12) The Progress was less a *journal des refusees* than a one-man band. The layout, with its conservative type and format--the main front-page headline reads "EDITORIALS"--comes straight from the liberal weeklies. The content, as in the first issue, is perhaps most sympathetically described as idiosyncratic. One thing it wasn't, the Editor-in-Chief's later claims notwithstanding, was radical.

"I am," he declared in an article hailing the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, "neither a Democrat nor a Republican. This paper is a freelance in politics, but I must say to the disconcertment [sic] of some of my readers that while Wilson was the thinker, and ... Harding is the small-town provincial ... even he too is imbued with the same idealist enthusiasm that urged Wilson onward." Leaving aside the naive assessment of

Warren Harding, the young editorialist's portrait of Wilson contains not a hint of the rage and contempt radicals felt for the President who invaded Russia, imprisoned Debs and kept him in jail, and slipped the leash on Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer's Red Scare. Instead we have a martyr, "crucified on the cross of politics." Far from the tragic figure mourned in The Nation--"the one-time idol of democracy [who] stands today discredited and condemned"--farther still from the "blind and deaf Don Quixote" skewered by John Maynard Keynes in The New Republic for his dealings at Versailles, the young editorialist invokes Wilson as an icon of progress: "These men are the steps of progress up which civilization wends its way. Socrates, Aristotle, Copernicus, Descartes, Spencer, Darwin, all steps of progress. Let Wilson's name be added to this list of the scouts of civilization."⁴⁰

Over half a century later, Stone's admiration was undimmed. Wilson, he told a young interviewer, is "still one of my heroes. I know all of the bad things about him, but he still adds up as a great man, great president." One figure Stone would change his views about was Mohandas Gandhi. "The American Negro needs a Gandhi to lead him, and we need the American Negro to lead us," he wrote prophetically in 1955. He was less admiring in 1922, when, in the midst of the first Satyagraha campaign against British rule, the cocky teenager assured his readers "if there is any knifing to be done in India, Gandhi will do it." He was also rather less percipient, declaring "Gandhi will gain the gratitude of the ... Indian Moslems, who will be too busy quarrelling with the Arabian Moslems to fight the Hindus."⁴¹

Despite its shortcomings, the paper sold well. Possibly it was the Literary Department which attracted readers. Here, in addition to the syndicated stories the young editor ordered through the mail--which came in lead strips he cut apart with a hacksaw before taking them to the printer's--appeared such fictional works as "Love vs. Pugilism" by Isadore Feinstein. Once again the tone is self-assured, though now in the guise of a hard-boiled newshound: "At that time I happened to be a reporter on the New York Morning Journal. I was green, eager for a story. It was not a case of enthusiasm, it was a case of necessity. If I did not get a story I would surely be canned."

Or perhaps the people of Haddonfield were moved to pity (or amusement) by the sight of the bespectacled publisher furiously pedalling his bike through the town, trailed by his nine-year-old brother, the two of them struggling to carry heavy stacks of papers to the train station to be foisted upon commuters en route to Camden or Philadelphia. Every weekday morning that winter Izzy and Max were there at the station, selling papers. By the second issue the price had risen to three cents a copy; the editor also offered to pay contributors 25 cents for a column of material. By the third issue, there was even a notice optimistically offering a full year's subscription for 25 cents. Alas, it was not to be.

In Volume One Number Three, the editor saw progress everywhere triumphant: "William Jennings Bryan's new role as a modern Torquemada failed," the paper crowed, "when the Kentucky Legislature turned down the bill to prohibit the teaching of Darwinism, agnosticism, atheism and evolution in the public schools." Traditions were questioned: "Why should a party

stay in power when its only purpose is to stay in power? Parties are no longer the organ of a part of a people, they have become simply hereditary things like blue eyes and cancer." Shibboleths were sent packing: "It is about time for a few changes in our over-revered constitution," thundered the future First Amendment fanatic. "Why not give the President the powers of a premier?," the future scourge of Presidents proposed modestly. "Give him the power to dissolve Congress and ask for another election."

Though Van Arkel was still on the masthead, The Progress was now "owned and published by Isadore B. Feinstein." The responsibilities of sole proprietorship left him no time for fiction. A serial from the McClure syndicate filled the gap. The paper also left its editor with little time for his schoolwork. He received failing grades for the semester in English composition and Geometry, failing the latter subject altogether. His father, returned from his convalescence to find his eldest son had become a newspaperman who thought of the store as his newsroom (the third issue listed the store's phone number in the masthead), was livid. A huge ad urging "Buy at The United Department Stores and Get Your Money's Worth" made little impression on Bernard, who declared the paper closed. "The Big-Town Round Up"--the serial adventures of "the most likeable puncher who ever rode through sagebrush," promised in The May issue--would have to be postponed indefinitely.⁴²

The April issue was the last of Feinstein's Progress. Bernard's authority extended that far. But if he hoped to turn his son's attention back to school, he was to remain disappointed. In his Junior year the boy failed English, French and First Aid, and only passed Latin by the skin of his teeth. "I had four years of

high school Latin and I absolutely hated it. They were cramming it down my throat—here I was, a bookworm and a lover of poetry, hating Latin!" he recalled. In retrospect, he was clearly bored. Outside the classroom he'd read happily for hours; inside the classroom, he had a reputation as a hopeless oddball. Captain of the chess club in his sophomore year, by his senior year he had as little to do with his fellow students as possible. Even the senior trip to Washington D.C. held little pleasure for him. On a visit to the Library of Congress he tried to impress his classmates by wagering he could ask for a book the library didn't have. He won the bet with a work of Chinese philosophy—years later he realized he'd misspelled the author's name—but his pedantry didn't win him any friends. "He was so intellectual," one classmate recalled, "and we were interested in having a good time."⁴³

V.

One afternoon, around the time his father put an end to The Progress, Isadore was working behind the counter in the store when he got into an argument with a customer. Her name was Jill Stern and though she lived in an imposing brick house just down Main Street, she and her family rarely came into the shop. The Sterns preferred to place their orders by telephone, and their penchant for having a single spool of thread or a packet of needles delivered was something of a running joke among the Feinsteins. The Sterns were also considered faintly ridiculous for another reason: though they were Jews, they attended the local Quaker meeting and sent their children to the Friends' School.

Just how the dispute began is unknown, but soon Isadore was berating Mrs. Stern for being "an assimilationist" while she was taxing him with ignorance of Jewish history. Taken by the boy's spirit, and struck by his obvious intelligence, Jill Stern made her young antagonist an offer: "Come up to our house some time. We have a lot of books." Then maybe he wouldn't be so quick to make assumptions about other people's beliefs. Besides, he might learn something.⁴⁴

At first glance, Juliet Lit Stern—or "Big Jill," as she was known at home—made an unlikely teacher. Her uncles owned Lit's—the largest department store in Philadelphia. Her husband, J. David Stern, owned the Camden Courier. With her own two children she could be distant, peremptory, difficult. But she had reserves of patience as well. A few years earlier, when the family lived in Springfield, Illinois, her son Tommy had a young friend named Robert Fitzgerald. Jill Stern taught the future translator of Homer how to read. Now she turned her formidable energy to the education of Isadore Feinstein.

She started by loaning him books. But she also talked with him about his reading, argued with him, even gave him gifts. First Heinrich Greatz's massive History of the Jews, then other collections of literature and the history of art. Most importantly, she took him almost as seriously as he took himself. Her encouragement was rewarded by a kind of puppyish devotion. He wasn't in love with Mrs. Stern—she was too much older, and too matronly for that. And for all his brashness, he was still quite shy in some things. But he spent more and more time in the Stern's library—and less and less time behind the counter of his parents' store.⁴⁵

Though his absences were noted--and resented--by his younger brother, his parents did not object. His mother's indulgence he could always count on. And while his father remained bitter that his oldest son showed no desire to follow in his footsteps, for Bernard, too, the world beyond the United Department Store was beginning to beckon. If his son was besotted with books, Bernard chased a different grail: land. In the spring of 1923, in partnership with ice-cream parlor owner Isaac Milask, Bernard bought his first lot. By the end of the year he'd bought four more--some with his *landsmen* Milask, some on his own. The news that a bridge was to be built over the Delaware linking Camden and Philadelphia set off a South Jersey land boom as frenzied as the market in Miami frontage, and Bernard may have simply been too busy getting rich to keep Isadore penned behind the counter. By June Bernard had made enough money for a down payment on a lot in the prestigious Haddon Estates section of town--not for speculation, but as the site of his family's future home.⁴⁶

When the Public Press, the local weekly whose print shop had also produced The Progress, offered their former client a job as high school correspondent, this time his father had no objection. Soon he moved to the Post-Telegram, daily rival to the Courier, where they needed someone to cover the high-school teams. And so, like Ben Hecht, Damon Runyon and Ernest Hemingway, Isadore Feinstein began his professional newspaper career as a sportswriter.

Hopeless as an athlete, handicapped even as a fan, as a reporter he was a natural. On his first assignment, a basketball game, "I got there in the middle ... at the half." Bad practice for a

sportswriter, but then what police reporter ever arrives before the crime? "I began by asking, 'What's the object of the game? Show me what they do. What are the goals? Was there anything dramatic?'" Versed in the essentials, and with a quick 'fill' on the first half, "I wrote a very good story--very colorful." He was paid ten cents an inch, but the real payoff was being back in print.

Then, one Saturday night towards the end of his junior year, he had a visitor at the store: J. David Stern. Big Jill's husband had heard so much about this extraordinary young man he'd come to see for himself. Stern had produced his own mimeographed newspaper as a boy, and he may have recognized his younger self in the awkward yet oddly cocky Jewish teenager. He also probably noticed that the Feinsteins' store was just across the street from Haddonfield's fire station, police station and Town Hall--an ideal location for news gathering. "Would you like to be my Haddonfield correspondent?" he asked. Would he! From that moment, Bernard's influence on his son was at an end. From now on, it was Stern whose approval the young Feinstein sought, and Stern whom he would battle for his independence. The approval came almost immediately.

"The second day of the job, I didn't have any news ... and I ran into Mr. Pennypacker of the historical society." The society was trying to raise money to repair a plaque commemorating Elizabeth Haddon. Could the young reporter help? "I wrote a story about how an elderly gentleman who had been campaigning to raise money to fix up the plaque was horrified one night when he thought he saw the ghost of Elizabeth Haddon try to polish it up." Telling the story later in life, Stone claimed to have been afraid this fabrication would cost him his job. He also

claimed that the story ended up "atop page one with a two-column head and a byline"--a triumph made even more unlikely by the fact that in the 1920s the Courier hardly ever used bylines in news stories. Whether the grown-up newspaperman's account of his first "pipe job" is itself partly fictional matters less than his evident glee in the telling--and in his success. He may have been an apprentice, but he was no acolyte. A newsroom, he knew even at the age of 15, is not a church.⁴⁷

Nor was it a classroom, and for this, too, young Feinstein had reason to be grateful. His senior year was a series of humiliations. Though his grades had improved--he got "Excellent" marks in English and Ancient History--his overall average was only "Fair". His ambition to attend Harvard, printed next to his picture in the yearbook, was far out of reach. He graduated 49th in a class of 54. The birth in May of his sister, Judith, might have protected him from his parent's disappointment, but there was no buffer to soften his classmates' ridicule. "The sad part about his 'wisdom' is," The Shield noted mockingly, "that we Seniors find it too profound for our mental capacity to grasp." Thanks to open admissions for area high school graduates, he managed to gain a place at the University of Pennsylvania.

"Why do you want to go to college?" Stern asked him. "That's a waste of time for somebody like you. You ought to work for me." But he was already working for the Courier. And Stern, who liked to style himself a tough newsman, was, as his young protégé knew, a graduate of Penn and the University of Heidelberg. "Knowledge is power" was the motto the 16-year-old reporter chose for his page in The Shield. Now he wanted the

kind of knowledge he couldn't find in a newsroom. He decided to major in philosophy.⁴⁸

VI.

Though its football team did compete in the Ivy League, the University of Pennsylvania in 1924 had very little in common with institutions like A. Lawrence Lowell's Harvard or Columbia under Nicholas Murray Butler. Most of the 1250 members of the class of 1928 were commuters, and if Penn's policy of taking any local high school graduate prepared to pay the \$400 tuition meant that, unlike F. Scott Fitzgerald's Princetonians, few Pennsylvanians would be instantly recognizable from the way they stood at a country club bar, it also meant that rather more of them were Jews. At precisely the moment when, at Lowell's instigation, elite colleges like Harvard were imposing restrictive quotas to keep Jews out, Penn had perhaps the highest concentration of Jews in the Ivy League.

Concentration is the right word. The "A" houses--the fraternities which dominated campus social life--had little else in common with Harvard's patrician "finals clubs" or Princeton's elegant eating clubs, but they were firmly restricted to Gentiles. Jews were welcome to enroll at Penn, but any Jew seeking a place on the football team, or a position on The Daily Pennsylvanian, would be rebuffed. As a result, Jewish students tended to congregate in a few places: those with social inclinations--and money--joined "B" houses--the polite name for Penn's Jewish fraternities. The rest--whether conscious bohemians or simply outcaste--sought refuge in various arts groups.⁴⁹

As a freshman, Isadore Feinstein had neither money nor social ambition. There were members of his class who would achieve distinction, among them William Brennan, a future justice of the Supreme Court. Feinstein knew none of them. Instead, taken ill at the end of his first semester, he withdrew from the University without having completed a single course--or having made a single friend.

When he returned to the campus in September 1925, he threw himself into his studies, taking two advanced English courses--and receiving Distinguished marks in both--as well as French, History, and Philosophy. His inability to pass trigonometry, however, was a persistent reminder of his past difficulties. There were fresh social humiliations as well. In the spring of his sophomore year, he put his name down on the list of applicants to the Philomathean Society, a campus literary group. Candidates were required to give a talk on the author of their choice; Izzy's subject was Robinson Jeffers, whose first book of poems, Roan Stallion, had been published that fall.⁵⁰

He began in a halting voice. Short, chubby, with a round dimpled face behind thick glasses, his hair unkempt and shirt-tails hanging out, he was not an impressive speaker. Nor was Jeffers a conventional choice for this self-selected band of young aesthetes, though it is easy to see what drew this particular reader. Jeffers's ecstatic connection with nature, his bold appropriation of classical themes in poems like "The Tower Beyond Tragedy"--his firm assurance that:

*Sports and gallantries, the stage, the arts, the antics of dancers
The exuberant voices of music,
Have charm for children but lack nobility; it is bitter earnestness
That makes beauty*

were all in keeping with his young admirer's deepest beliefs. Though the verse was well beyond Izzy's competence, the sentiment expressed in "Woodrow Wilson (February, 1924)"--the conviction that "Your tragic quality/Required the delusion of some major purpose to produce it."--was not.

Intoxicated by the poet's sprung rhythms and clashing consonants, Izzy never noticed he was losing his audience. No record exists of his talk, no way to know whether he read to them from "Shine, Perishing Republic":

*While this America settles in the mould of its vulgarity, heavily thickening to empire,
And protest, only a bubble in the molten mass, pops and sighs out,
and the mass hardens...*

If he did, perhaps he drew some consolation from the poet's advice: "boys, be in nothing so moderate as in love of man, a clever servant, insufferable master," for when he finished his rambling presentation the tense silence was broken only by a single pair of hands applauding. These belonged to Seymour Blankfort, a tall, skinny, well-dressed New Yorker from a wealthy family who'd bought his own copy of Roan Stallion a few weeks earlier.⁵¹

While the candidate withdrew to College Hall, his fellow undergraduates voted by putting white or black balls into a box. All but three were black. Blankfort, one of the three, volunteered to break the news. "I told him that I admired his speech, that I was also a partisan of Jeffers, but that too many of the other members had not yet heard of the poet," he recalled.

What Blankfort didn't say is that he also suspected anti-Semitism might have been a factor. Although "there were a few Jewish members, among them my roommate Seymour Siegel--I worried lest Izzy's appearance might be held against him.... Moved by the look of disappointment on Izzy's face, and knowing that he was a commuter student from Camden, I invited him to use my room at the dorm any time he wanted to. We shook hands and he left."

Early the following Sunday, Blankfort "was awakened by a knock on the door." It was Izzy. "I scarcely recognized him in my half-sleep as he invited me have breakfast with him at the Horn and Hardart's on Broad Street...I was flattered that the man would come all the way from Camden to have breakfast with me."

Chatting on the way to the restaurant, Blankfort realized he'd found a kindred spirit. "Izzy was the fullest alive person I'd met up to then. He exclaimed over every bird call and the morning sky over the Schuylkill River; he talked of the great things he had been reading, Hardy's poetry as well as Jeffers', Livy, Horace--he loved Horace. And Gibbon's history." After breakfast, as they walked along the river, he showed Blankfort his method for expanding his Latin vocabulary. "In one pocket he had slips of paper with Latin on one side and the English translation on the other. As we walked he took the slips out, one by one, glanced at both sides and put the slips in the pocket on the other side of his jacket."⁵²

Feinstein, who'd been spending his days alone in the library, and his nights working at the Courier, gained more than just a friend who shared his interest in advanced poetry. Socially polished and intellectually confident, Sy Blankfort had made

himself the center of a circle of bright young men (and a few women) who were passionate about the theatre, about music, about politics, and poetry--and for whom passionate talk about all these things was the cord that bound them together.

Aside from Blankfort and his roommate, and their fellow New Yorkers Sidney Cohn and Shepherd Traube, there were the Philadelphians Walter Hart, Samuel Lipshutz, Chester Rabinowitz, and now, Isadore Feinstein. All of them were Jews. Cohn was studying law; Lipshutz, who changed his name to Grafton, would soon sell his first essay to The American Mercury--the bible of undergraduate sophistication. Traube and Hart were committed to the theatre. Blankfort, interested in everything, also acted as a kind of older brother to the group's mascot, Nathalie Bodanskaya, a street urchin from the lower East Side whose singing in the Henry Street settlement had won her a scholarship to the Curtis Institute to study opera. Brought into the group by Blankfort, Izzy soon became its acknowledged intellectual star.

Partly, his authority came from his reading, particularly when the talk turned to politics. "He was a confirmed Socialist," Blankfort recalled, "who had read Hegel and Marx; naturally he despised Hoover and was hopeful about the Soviet Union...." Mildred Traube, who came into the group as Sidney Cohn's girlfriend and stayed to marry Shepherd Traube, remembers Izzy "was so well informed about everything." But the force of his personality was equally important.

"What impressed me most," said Blankfort, "was his great spirit and vast reading; he had an independent and stubborn point of view about things." Newspaper work also added to his cachet. The rest of the group might be learning about the world

through books and in the classroom; Izzy was attending night school at the university of the streets--or at least the copy desk. Blankfort wrote plays at Penn, Traube directed and Hart acted--but Izzy was reviewing Shaw's "Captain Brassbound's Conversion" as drama critic for The Camden Courier. "The play, already grown old-fashioned and of little interest in its theme... is yet as pleasing and mirth provoking a comedy as that skillful craftsman Shaw could create."⁵³

In fact, the cultivated air of sophistication was mostly facade. Accompanying Sidney Cohn on a trip to New York, he rode the subway for the first time--all the way to the end of the line and back again--then reported, "Hey, you can go all day long for just a nickel!" Back in Camden, he panned "Six Characters in Search of an Author"--"Luigi Pirandello has taken the good old-fashioned blood and thunder melodrama, covered its nakedness with the cloak of a time-worn problem and decorated it with some scraps of little force and no originality"--then boasted about it in a letter to Blankfort. Written in the summer of 1926, the letter shows a young man trying very hard to impress a friend:

"Went to a grand booze party Sunday night with Jack, Sid and brunette and met a nymphomaniac restauranteure (female of course in case you don't know what an N. is) a police chief, a doctor from Iowa and his bride and had a hell of a good time."

His assignments at the Courier--and its sister paper the Morning Post--were mundane: general assignment, rewrite, Camden city hall. Aside from his stints on the drama desk, his biggest "plum" was the opening of the Camden Bridge: "President Coolidge arrived shortly after 3:30 P.M., stepped out of his automobile while Mrs. Coolidge remained inside, shovelled six

spadefuls of dirt around a Vermont maple sapling on the plaza, smiled, climbed back into his car, and left Camden at 3:55 P.M. No one present heard the president utter a single word during the brief ceremony...." Yet he was having the time of his life.

"I get up at six every morning to go to work and get home around six thirty and believe me I'm too damned tired to do much studying," he wrote to Blankfort. Instead, he was becoming a person of influence: "If you're in Paris or if you get a chance for a good news story, write it and send it to me and I'll get you space rates on it." A man on easy terms with famous writers: "Saw [Benjamin] De Casseres in New York ... we chatted till 1:30. Told me of going to see Jeffers in California and met another young poet Sam Loveman." But he hadn't forgotten his friends: "chance I will be Dramatic Editor of Camden Evening Post next season, if so you will have shot at dramatic criticism. Walter Hart I've seen several times.... Plan him for staff if I get job."⁵⁴

Though he admired a couple of members of Penn's philosophy department, they must have seemed cloistered indeed in comparison with de Casseres, an essayist, critic, and member of Alfred Steiglitz's "Photo-Secession" movement who'd run for mayor of New York in 1915 on the "Smash It" ticket advocating legalized prostitution and gambling and the sale of liquor 24 hours a day. "Long live Socialists, Anarchists, Nihilists, Communists, Diabolists, Impressionists, and anybody anywhere who is in favor of something somehow somewhere sometime," de Casseres had written--a fair imitation of a bohemian credo.⁵⁵

For young Feinstein, bohemianism was a pose. But it was a pose he worked at. "My brother ... used to wear his hair long and these four-in-hand ties with a very big knot," Louis Stone

recalled. "This caused some consternation with my father. Especially because he didn't get those ties from my father's store. He went to Wanamaker's [in Philadelphia], and my father felt Izzy was saying the store wasn't good enough for him."

To his generation of college students, wide ties were a kind of badge of non-conformity--as long hair, shaved hair, torn jeans or nose rings would be for later generations. Non-conformity to what? That was still an open question. It was, wrote Izzy's contemporary Malcolm Cowley, "a period of transition from values already fixed to values that had to be created. Its members ... were seceding from the old and yet could adhere to nothing new; they groped their way toward another scheme of life, as yet undefined; in the midst of their doubts and uneasy gestures of defiance they felt homesick for the certainties of childhood." If their allegiances were still mostly unformed, their aversions were more pronounced. They were avid "debunkers"--a word that entered the language in 1923.

"Civilisation is barbarism clothed and housed," wrote Isadore Feinstein in his sole contribution to the Junto, Penn's literary magazine (S. Blankfort, editor). "Virtue is fashionable vice," he announced. "Truth is a lie grown respectable." Respectability was just what he didn't want.⁵⁶

Describing to Blankfort his adventures with "a sweet little brunette who works on the paper, has a deuced lot of sound sense, lives utterly out of my world--beauty, dizziness, etc.--has a lovely body, is hot as hell," he concluded, "and I'm going to drop her soon for fear the thing's getting too serious. I'd love to have her as a mistress but she's not the kind who was made for it (not

enough intellect, independence) born to be a wife and mother." Which was another item he could do without. Or so he thought.

VII.

If Philadelphia's bohemians and bourgeoisie had any common ground, it was the stretch of Broad Street outside the Academy of Music. There every Saturday afternoon during the concert season the line would form for 50 cent gallery seats. Dishevelled college students, proper housewives, cultured clerks and wide-eyed worshippers of the Philadelphia Orchestra's charismatic conductor Leopold Stokowski--or "Stokey," as he was affectionately known among the initiates--gathered each week for a period of enforced fraternization. In the fall of his third year at Penn, Isadore Feinstein found himself on the line with a classmate waiting for two girls he'd never met.

"We were supposed to be meeting someone else," remembered Helen Goldberg. Though Izzy was a last-minute substitute, he made an immediate impression on Helen's friend, Esther Roisman. "I could tell by the expression on her face she was taken with him," she said. "He made quite a fuss over her, and asked her to go out the next night."⁵⁷

Esther Roisman was 18, the oldest daughter of a moderately prosperous West Philadelphia businessman. "My father was president of the Home Preserving Pickling Company," said Esther's sister Jean, "and that means he had a truck driver and a secretary and two girls who would fill the jars with pickles--and ketchup. We were competing with Heinz." A dark-haired, dark-eyed beauty whose mother had died when she was 11, Esther had

lots of beaux. "Young men would pick her up in big cars," said Jean, "and they'd go into the city to parties. And suddenly she was going with this funny looking guy with very thick glasses, and carrying a ton of books."

Thanks to his summer of newspaper work, Izzy owned a Tin Lizzie. "The kind you had to crank," said Jean, who was not impressed. Neither was Mr. Roisman. "Her father criticized his appearance," Helen remembered. "He didn't look like anything," recalled Eleanor Milgram, another school friend of Esther's. "He was very small and skinny and he wore very thick glasses. He was very unimpressive. Her father just didn't like him. He would not permit him to come to the house ... so they would meet at her friends' homes."⁵⁸

What did Esther see in him? A picture taken a few years later by her brother, photographer Charles Roisman, shows a man not entirely bereft of physical charm. With his full mouth, intense gaze, wavy hair, cigarette smoke curling elegantly upwards past a wide, thoughtful brow, Izzy looks more like a young poet than a newspaperman. That may indeed have been his appeal. Other young men sent her flowers. He sent her verses:

*I who kiss you cannot tell
People of your honeyed mouth;
Northern birds a secret keep
Their winter's refuge in the south.*

*Nor can I tell it in the wood
For there the bees might overhear
And leave their own flower-loves unkissed
To feed upon my dear.*

Some of his efforts were silly: "*Ah don' need no sugar, since ah met mah sweet./ Ah don' even need molasses foh mah buckwheat.*" Some were more serious: "*I am a dark place and you the light have driven out darkness/I am a sad room and you a glad song have come through the window/have driven out sadness./...I am the beggared sky and you a spendthrift goddess have thrown me a handful of silver stars...*" All of them would take him closer to the kind of commitment he'd scorned only a few months earlier.⁵⁹

"Just finished Shaw's preface to Getting Married. Read it before you marry," he'd advised Blankfort the previous summer. "Wow of a lot of sense!" Behind the jazz age diction lay a jazz age sensibility: pleasure-seeking, self-conscious, disillusioned. There wasn't, after all, such a huge gap--at least in intent--between Isadore Feinstein's carefully wrought paradoxes ("Civilisation is barbarism clothed and housed") and Ernest Hemingway's declaration: "I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice...." To the novelist, who'd paid for his illusions in a wartime field hospital, sham sentiment was "obscene." The young newsman had come by his own detachment far less expensively, but he, too, wanted an end to pretence. Hence his enthusiasm for the Irish iconoclast. "What they call love," Shaw writes, "is an appetite which, like all other appetites, is destroyed for the moment by its gratification ... [and] no profession made under its influence should bind anybody."⁶⁰

Romantic or rationalist? Anarchist or aesthete? In his reviews--and in his letters to Blankfort--his tone is cool, his excitement tempered by irony. Perfect pitch for a newsman, but less than adequate for lovemaking. His poems to Esther show

another side: vulnerable, passionate, engaged. "This is just a bit like plunging into the dark," he writes in a letter accompanying two poems. "Sometimes I think: maybe by Saturday you'll have gotten over your liking for me and not care much about seeing me again. Can I phone you Thursday night?" Shaw's self-assured lover is nowhere in sight.

Even his taste in poetry accommodated contradictory ideals. He'd risk ostracism for a rule-breaker like Robinson Jeffers, or spend his early morning hours in the library wrestling with Thomas Hardy—"gnarled as oak trees, one grapples them with the mind," he wrote in praise of Hardy's verse—but whenever Sidney Cohn broke into a recitation of Swinburne's "Garden of Proserpine," Izzy joined in happily: ⁶¹

*From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be
That no life lives forever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.*

Isadore Feinstein was not the first young man to find himself at odds with himself. Reporter, student, lover, cynic, poet, critic, free-thinking Jew—mostly he kept his multitudes contained. But it took effort, and sometimes the strain was too much. In 1926 he was sent to cover a meeting of the Camden Rotary Club. "There was a visiting professor speaking," he recalled years later. "He'd been to Italy and he was talking about the wonders of Fascism and how it made the trains run on time.

And I was so angry I got up from the press table and denounced him.... 'Why don't you tell the other side of the story'--about the murder of [Giacomo] Matteotti." The professor complained to the Courier's business manager, but thanks in part to J. David Stern's own anti-Fascism the young reporter kept his job. Still, a line had been crossed. A year later he'd cross the line again--and this time he'd walk right out of the newsroom.⁶²

He wanted an assignment and he didn't get it. Put like that, the whole episode could be dismissed as a petulant gesture. In the summer of 1927 a flu epidemic had left the Courier extremely short handed. So when Izzy asked if he could go to Boston to cover the executions of Sacco and Vanzetti, the city editor turned him down. The refusal was not a forgone conclusion. Stern's Courier was the only paper in the Philadelphia area to favor the condemned radicals. But to the 19-year-old reporter, this was no ordinary assignment. One way or another, he was going to Boston. "I quit the paper ... and walked out of the city room with a \$5 bill and an extra pair of socks to hitch-hike my way," he recalled.⁶³

Like his debut as a sportswriter, Isadore Feinstein's entry onto the stage of radical politics occurred *in medias res*. Indeed, the failed robbery of a Bridgewater, Massachusetts shoe company for which Bartolomeo Vanzetti was first convicted took place on Isadore's twelfth birthday. He was still barely into his teens when the immigrant fishmonger Vanzetti and his friend the shoemaker Nicola Sacco were convicted of murdering the guard and paymaster during a holdup of another shoe company in South Braintree. Both men were anarchists, a fact which might have brought them to his notice, but there is no mention of the case in

The Progress. For that matter, there is no mention of Sacco and Vanzetti in any of his few surviving letters, poems or journalism from the period.

This is not unusual. Until the Massachusetts Supreme Court refused their appeal in May 1926 there was very little interest in Sacco and Vanzetti outside of Boston's Italian community. The New Republic, the journal most consistently sympathetic to the condemned men, ran a single story on the case in 1924, none at all in 1925, and only one after that until May (after which the magazine ran ten more reports on Sacco and Vanzetti before the end of the year). Even Gardner Jackson, the young Boston Globe reporter who became director of publicity for the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee, didn't join the fight until the summer of 1926. The vain struggle to save the two men, said Jackson, "subsequently became the major directional influence in my life."⁶⁴

It was August 1927 when Isadore Feinstein walked off his job. That, too, was not so unusual. The executions were scheduled for August 10. In Colorado, hundreds of miners quit in protest; in Rochester, New York, 16,000 workers answered the call for a general strike; in New York City between 75,000 and 400,000 people stayed home from work on August 9. That same day police resorted to tear gas to quell rioting in Chicago, and fought pitched battles with thousands of protesters marching on City Hall in New York and the American embassy in London. By the time Izzy reached New York there was rumor of a reprieve; the stay was officially granted shortly before midnight August 10.⁶⁵

There are conflicting versions of Isadore Feinstein's efforts to be present at the Boston vigil.⁶⁶ But there is no mistaking the lasting significance of the young reporter's outraged sympathy. In the final issue of I.F. Stone's Weekly (as in numerous previous interviews) he cites the episode as his first association with organized protest. Decades after the executions Gardner Jackson could still remember "those early morning hours--the cool air, a sense of complete desolation." Feinstein was not Jackson; his involvement in the campaign to save Sacco and Vanzetti was much more peripheral--at most the matter of a few weeks. And yet we can see a definite turning point. In May, he'd sent a letter to Esther listing eight "Reasons for going to college." It was a tender polemic; he even mailed her applications. "People who can manage go to college," he declared. By November, he was a drop-out himself. Soon afterwards the former Shavian bachelor was engaged to be married.⁶⁷

Clearly there is no linear connection between these events. But it seems equally clear that Isadore Feinstein returned from New England a changed man. Before he'd been both idealist and cynic, no more serious about politics than he'd been about his weekend jaunts to Atlantic City. Passionate, yes. But not committed. Afterwards, he--and a whole generation of young idealists--knew that in America, political dissent could have fatal consequences. More than that, he knew something a subsequent generation of young radicals would have to learn for themselves in Kent, Ohio and Jackson, Mississippi: namely that the Establishment was prepared to commit murder to preserve its hold on power.

Back in Philadelphia, his friend Sy Blankfort poured his grief and anger into a poem. "A Final Appeal" was published in America Arraigned, a collection of verse protesting the verdict. Though in distinguished company--Edna St. Vincent Millay and Witter Bynner were fellow contributors--Blankfort was not much of a poet:

*Winds of the world give answer,
Answer in sweeping song.
Winds of the world, we ask you,
How Long? How Long? ⁶⁸*

Possibly the outrage was still too fresh. A year later, in Malcolm Cowley's "For St. Bartholomew's Day," the tone is still frantic, blind with rage. Already, though, the grief has started to congeal into a cold, hard, angry defiance:

*March on, O dago Christs, whilst we
march on to spread your name abroad
like ashes in the winds of God.*

It is this defiance--this sense of a commitment undertaken with full knowledge of the possible risks--that marked a generation of American radicals. "The effects of the Sacco-Vanzetti case," Cowley wrote in the 1930s, "continued to operate in a subterranean style, and after a few years they appeared once more on the surface."⁶⁹ Too young to know the Arcadian innocence of their Greenwich Village predecessors, these "pre-depression radicals"⁷⁰ were neither dreamers nor economic determinists--at least not for long. The crucible of the coming depression would shape Isadore Feinstein along with the rest of them. But only to a point.

For his generation, neither poetry nor "planning" nor even "the proletariat" would ever be at the center of their politics.

Their subject was power--brutal yet essential. For the best of this generation, the ambiguity would always be there. But they had few illusions about the fate of the powerless. "They have clubbed us off the streets," writes John Dos Passos in U.S.A. "They are stronger." In the contrapuntal rhythms of Dos Passos's staccato prose those desperate weeks in Boston become a kind of Passion:

*our work is over the scribbled phrases the nights typing
releases the smell of the printshop the sharp reek of newsprinted
leaflets the rush for Western Union stringing words into wires the
search for stinging words to make you feel who are your oppressors
America*

*America our nation has been beaten by strangers who have
turned our language inside out who have taken the clean words our
fathers spoke and made them slimy and foul*

*their hired men sit on the judge's bench they sit back with their
feet on the tables under the dome of the State House they are
ignorant of our beliefs they have the dollars the guns the armed
forces the powerplants*

*they have built the electricchair and hired the executioner to
throw the switch*

all right we are two nations

Dos Passos finishes on a note of despair: "we stand defeated America." ⁷¹ For Isadore Feinstein, "the search for stinging words" was just beginning.

Chapter Two

Publisher's Apprentice

The Depression came early to Philadelphia.

Softly, on stockinged feet, a pinched figure entered the city, whispering of layoffs and lockouts, bread lines and bankruptcy. At first, in the jazz-age clamor of Philadelphia's 1,100 bars, amid the short-skirted, flat-chested glamour of the city's defiantly wet downtown, the Depression was easy to overlook.

The policemen knew. In 1926, with the graft from Prohibition still flowing strong--strong enough that, to the reporters who hung around City Hall, the question of the day was: "How rich is a rich policeman?" and the answer, "Any cop with a six-figure bank account"--4000 families were evicted, mostly for defaulting on first mortgages.¹ Two years later, 9000 families in the "City of Homes" had seen their belongings piled on the sidewalk. In 1929, when most of the country was still convinced the Wall Street crash was just a market correction, Philadelphia's finest officiated at 12,000 evictions.²

The mill workers knew, too. Textiles were Philadelphia's biggest industry, but by 1927 demand was so slow that one job would be finished before the next order came in.³ Fashion was partly to blame. It just didn't take as much material to clothe a flapper; the fad for short skirts meant that the market for cotton

socks sagged, too. And while the fashion for hardwood floors might have been good news in the Pacific Northwest, demand for Philadelphia broadlooms began to unravel.⁴ As owners struggled to keep costs down in the face of competition from southern producers unhindered by the need to pay a union wage, Philadelphia's weavers were told to stay home one day a week.⁵ Then two days. Then three. Even the makers of seamless stockings, as essential for the *soignée* young woman as beaded bags and cigarettes, felt the effects of falling prices. Lights were going out all along Allegheny and Richmond Avenues as mill owners simply locked their gates and waited for better times. Fortune described an "invisible city-wide collapse that began in 1925."⁶ In April, 1929 more than 10 percent of Philadelphia's workers were already unemployed. And prosperity was not around the corner.⁷

Did Isadore Feinstein know what was coming? He'd spent the weeks after the execution trying to get a job on a New England farm. But the beginning of the school year found him back in Philadelphia. At Penn, he managed to persuade the university to allow him to continue on general probation. The real difficulty lay in persuading himself that a college degree was worth the effort.

In his letter to Esther the previous May he'd hinted at a certain ambivalence, even while encouraging her to apply. "Your fear that going to college may teach you more than is compatible with happiness is groundless," he assured her, "college is not that good." The same letter shows a disdain for credentials--"An ass plus an A.B. remains an ass"--but it is the disdain of a man for whom the credential remains within reach. He started his junior

year taking courses in Philosophy, Economics, Latin, German and the dreaded Mathematics.⁸

He also had a new job. When "I came back to Philadelphia, [I] went around to the Inquirer--the Jersey editor was a Napoleonic little guy with glasses on a string. I said 'Could you use a good man?' He bristled and said, 'I could use half a dozen,' and I said, 'Well, here's one.' So he hired me."⁹ He still spent his mornings in the library. "I would leave school and go over to Camden to the office and do rewrites from 1:30 to about 5, hop the bus back to Philadelphia, sit on the copy desk and edit and write headlines for the Jersey edition until about 11 o'clock at night."¹⁰

On November 22 he left school for good. "It was just too much. I was making about 40 bucks a week--this was in 1927, and 40 bucks a week was a lot of money in those days."¹¹ His transcript says simply: "Withdrew (Financial)." In later years, Stone preferred to stress the lure of the newsroom: "I thought I might teach philosophy but the atmosphere of a college faculty repelled me; the few islands of greatness seemed to be washed by pettiness and mediocrity. The smell of a newsroom was more attractive."¹²

He could certainly have picked a more fragrant newsroom. Though it had not quite reached the nadir it would under the Annenbergs, in 1927 the Inquirer was still a pretty awful newspaper. Its days as chief cheerleader for the Philadelphia Police Red Squad were yet to come. Nor was the night rewrite desk of the paper's suburban edition a prime locale for Front Page-style human drama. But as a perch from which to observe the exercise in mass delusion that would constitute stand-pat

Republicanism's response to the deepening Depression, the Inquirer was ideal. And in a city where, seven years and one union contract later, the minimum salary for a reporter was still only \$20 a week, \$40 a week was indeed a lot of money.¹³

Though he tended to emphasize his impatience with "the spinster atmosphere of a college faculty," it was the money that gave 19-year-old Isadore Feinstein--if not the courage of his conviction at least the wherewithal to follow his predilections.¹⁴ His father was still busily buying property, and in any case had neither the interest nor the authority to keep his oldest son in school. But it must have been a considerable boost to the young reporter's confidence to find himself so comfortably on his feet after walking out of David Stern's newsroom in August.

In the spring of 1928 an incident occurred which might have been calculated to dispel any lingering doubts about his decision to leave the academy. A young Penn Philosophy instructor, Solomon Auerbach, made a speech comparing the American and Soviet educational systems. After a viva voce by four senior members of his department, Auerbach was told his contract would not be renewed. "It is incompatible," explained chairman Edgar Singer, "for a teacher to express his views on public issues and at the same time retain the critical state of mind necessary for research and teaching." Michael Blankfort was so outraged he put a black-edged death notice for "Free Speech" on the opening page of the Junto. "What was most depressing," Blankfort recalled, "was Professor Singer's position. A group of us were his admiring students, among them . . . I.F. Stone. The fine reasonableness of [Singer's] views as well as their breadth, the clarity with which he spoke and wrote of Bruno, Vico

and the moderns, and the liberalism with which he weighed the great questions of justice and evil won our hearts as well as our minds.... We felt betrayed."¹⁵

That same issue of the Junto featured Isador (sic) Feinstein's "Paradoxical Meanderings of an Eclectic Plagiarist Obviously Suffering from Metaphysical Inebriety," a fairly crude effort whose interest lies not in the young writer's still unsuccessful attempt to hone an aphoristic style, but in being his last piece of prose juvenilia. He wrote love poems for Esther. He appears to have sent some poems to the New Masses.¹⁶ In prose, however, he was now strictly professional. By the summer of 1928 Isidor Feinstein (his byline) was back at the Camden Courier with a regular slot in the paper's critical rotation. Theatre, film, vaudeville, even the passing circus ("Pepito ... is clownishness raised to an art") drew his attention.¹⁷

For a man who would one day have to fill four pages a week with his own opinions, it was an invaluable apprenticeship. Like any journalist, a reviewer has to be able to get down what he sees, vividly and succinctly: "She sings 'mammy songs' in the manner of an auctioneer and shouts 'kiss' like a college cheer leader."¹⁸ But unlike a legman out covering a fire, the critic has to make sense of his own responses: "To those of us who had begun to feel that the movies were good for only . . . kisses between a dark sheik and a blonde vampire . . . [or] Cowboys and Indians . . . [Fritz Lang's] Siegfried is a revelation."¹⁹ And in an era when it was "somehow discreditable for a reporter to show any sign of education and culture," when, in Mencken's phrase, a newspaperman is considered "laudable when his intellectual baggage most closely approaches that of a bootlegger," the review

pages were largely exempt from such strictures.²⁰ The Courier was a middle-brow broadsheet, hence young Feinstein's warning to readers considering an evening at Checkov's The Sea Gull: "Being Russian, it is a difficult play." But he went on say "it is a play that must arouse sorrow, pity, wonder and understanding."²¹ In a rave for Frank Capra's Submarine, he finds the underwater sequences "as good as anything in Potemkin, as fine as anything the movies have done."²²

To read through his reviews from the Courier is to see a young man exhibiting more ease with himself and his culture than he actually feels, but, of necessity, slowly growing accustomed to his borrowed authority. From the very first, there is the note of confident assertion: "Like certain persons who believe clothes make the man, Max Reinhardt seems to think that lighting makes the play."²³ As a novice, the pans may have come easier, but he can praise as well: "O'Neill has put Babbit behind the footlights," he writes of Marco Millions, hailing the play's "poetic quality."²⁴ Stefan Zweig's Volpone is "better than Ben Jonson." The reviewer is still trying on different voices: Zweig's Mosca is "a man in whom servitude and the deceits imposed by his master have bred a well-dissimulated bitterness."²⁵ When Farquhar wrote The Beaux Stratagem, the young critic quips, "Nobody said: 'Gee, kid, you're the pip,' and no girl answered after a blasé jab at a wad of gum to hide her flutters: 'Yeah? Say, who ya givin' the needles?'"²⁶

But if his critical manner slipped from Olympian to demotic, he was clearly having a hell of a good time: "For the rustic Camdenite from, say, the bucolic fastnesses of the Third and Eighth wards and who has been reading about Philadelphia's

graft probes, vice probes, gang probes, police probes and even probe probes, the picture at the Fox this week [Me, Gangster] might well have been named Home Life in Philadelphia."²⁷ Being well-paid for working on his chops was pleasant enough; he also enjoyed his growing influence. Michael Blankfort got to interview a Follies showgirl for the Courier, while Walter Hart, appearing in a play reviewed by their friend Feinstein, protested that "Iz, not knowing much about acting thought I was wonderful and . . . was foolish enough to write as much in his newspaper."²⁸ He was fortunate even in his enemies, and could boast of being banned from Philadelphia's Erlanger Theatre by Florenz Ziegfeld himself.²⁹

On many of his first nights, he would pick up two house tickets at the box office, one for himself and one for Esther. Her family were slowly becoming resigned to the impetuous young man with thick glasses. One evening in 1928 the pair drove off to a different destination: a Socialist rally. The principal speaker was the Party's new standard-bearer, Norman Thomas. Thomas's efforts during the 1926 Passaic textile strike made him the hero of a famous New Jersey free-speech fight; he was an accomplished, inspiring orator. But for Esther, the climax of the meeting came when her escort rose to speak.³⁰

II.

When Isidor Feinstein joined their ranks, the Socialist Party was midway on a transit from obscurity to oblivion. Sixteen years earlier, with Eugene V. Debs heading the ticket, 879,000

Americans had voted Socialist; the party's rolls listed an all-time high of 118,000 members.

Debs did not win the election, of course. But the Socialists did manage to add the mayoralties of Butte, Montana, Berkeley, California and Flint, Michigan to their longstanding control of Reading, Pennsylvania and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The thousand-odd Socialists elected in 1912 included state legislators, city aldermen, and one member of congress, Victor Berger of Wisconsin. Before the first World War tore the party apart, J.A. Wayland's Appeal to Reason broadcast the Socialist message to more than 700,000 readers every week. In New York, the Jewish Daily Forward, with its 150,000 circulation, was the flagship of the party's foreign-language press. Across the country there were five socialist dailies in English and eight in other languages; 262 English and 36 foreign-language weeklies, and twelve monthlies. But by 1928 it had all gone.³¹

There is no need for a lengthy reprise of the lugubrious saga of factional battles, personality conflict and genuine political courage that is the history of American Socialism. Suffice it to say that when Isidor Feinstein joined the Camden local, there were less than 8,000 members "on the books" in the entire country--and nearly half of these were in foreign language federations. New Jersey was so starved for recruits that the comrades elected their youngest member to the Executive Committee of the state party before he was even old enough to vote.³²

Riven by the war, and then decimated by the Red Scare, the Socialist Party in 1928 was further crippled by divisions between the Old Guard, whose faith in "the inevitability of gradualism"

made it suspicious of any activity, and a more militant, younger generation centered around the charismatic Norman Thomas.³³

Indeed it was Thomas's presidential campaign that first drew the young newspaperman into the party. "I worked for Norman Thomas on the 1928 campaign. I had a very great admiration for Thomas because he knew an awful lot about America" Stone recalled that he particularly "admired [Thomas's] capacity to deal with American problems in Socialist terms, but in language and specifics that made sense to ordinary Americans."³⁴

"He knew an awful lot about America." As a wager on which track the locomotive of history would arrive, his decision to join the Socialists was spectacularly ill-advised. But as a vehicle for his own entry into American political life, the Socialist Party was in many ways an inspired choice. Under Norman Thomas the Socialists were embarked on a struggle whose goals were, at the time, scarcely less radical than those of the Communist Party, but whose language and approach owed far more to the Populists and other strands of indigenous American radicalism than to the lessons of Bolshevism.

It is important to be precise here. Despite his meteoric rise in the New Jersey hierarchy, Isidor Feinstein did not stay in the Socialist Party long enough to have been decisively formed by--let alone to make an impact on--the party's ideological orientation. He was, however, exposed to what might be called the party's "movement culture,"³⁵ which at least among the Thomas supporters was one of earnest engagement on the left, with little appetite for sectarian sniping. (The Old Guard were more suspicious--and also more inclined to slavish devotion to

the American Federation of Labor). As Thomas himself admitted, in the 1920s the Socialists would probably "have voted to join Lenin's new Communist International party had he not tried to dictate the rejection of our own leaders."³⁶

This premature Popular-Frontism was worlds apart from the political cockfighting—on street corners in Williamsburg or the Bronx, across the tables of the City College cafeteria—that shaped so many New York intellectuals. But then Camden wasn't New York. It wasn't even Philadelphia. "You see in a small town there are only a few radicals," Stone recalled, "and you're all friends whether you're an anarchist, a communist, a socialist or whatever, and you regard the other people all as comrades."³⁷

In his lifelong journey through the American left, he had still not reached the perigee of his relations with American Communism. Yet in the decades that followed, the fact that he began as a Socialist—rather than as, say, a Trotskyist or even a Lovestoneite—was to have a decisive influence on his own sense of the political landscape. In the 1960s Stone and Thomas would rekindle a personal friendship that had been considerably affected by the Cold War, but whatever the differences between the two men, certain articles of the Socialist creed remained with Stone for the rest of his life. The first was an affirmation: "the United States . . . was a stronghold of Utopian socialism even before Marx."³⁸ In a movement often derided as foreign, the Socialists' easy confidence in their native ground, was, for the son of immigrants, a source of vital sustenance. It allowed Isidor Feinstein to feel as entitled as anyone to Floyd Dell's realization "that it is, astonishingly enough, we who are American: that Debs and Haywood are as American as Franklin and Lincoln, and that

the Loyal Legions are no more American than the Ku-Klux-Klan."³⁹

His baptism into the leas of American Socialism also gave the young radical a conviction that, while others on the left may be (and often were) misguided, a fervent insistence on ideological purity was no way to make a revolution. Not that revolution was, in 1928, high on his list of priorities. Certainly no higher than good talk, good company, his own ambition and his deepening romance with Esther. As it happened, there was one place in Philadelphia where a young socialist could indulge a fondness for easygoing comradeship, literature, professional recognition, political discussion and even young love--all at the same time.

III.

It may well have been the Socialist connection that first brought Isidor Feinstein to the Leofs' big "white brownstone" at 322 South 16th Street. Dr. Morris Vladimir Leof--known to all of Philadelphia's intelligentsia simply as "Poppa", except for his common-law-wife Jenny who called him "M.V."--was the head of the city's Socialist Institute. An apprentice cigar-maker who put himself through medical school by selling bananas, Poppa Leof held a regular Sunday night salon for radicals of any stripe.⁴⁰

But it may also have been the theatre that drew Izzy and Esther to "322". There were nights when virtually the whole of the Russian Inn, a restaurant on Locust street near the Academy of Music popular with musicians and theatre people, moved en masse to the Leof's after closing time. Madelin Leof, Poppa's daughter, was a close friend of a young actress named Jo

Blitzstein, whose brother Marc had been writing music for Jasper Deeter's experimental Hedgerow Theatre out in suburban Rose Valley. Deeter had employed practically all of Izzy's circle from Penn--Blankfort and Shepherd Traube backstage, Walter Hart in several major roles--and was the beneficiary of numerous rave reviews in the Courier. In May 1928 Maddie Leof stunned Philadelphia when she married, not Marc Blitzstein, her contemporary in age, but his father Sam, who promptly moved into 322.⁴¹

"Here," says one account of the period, "gathered the young intelligentsia in rebellion against parents who were illiterate and ran chicken stores and fruit stands."⁴² Not all of those in attendance were young. "Everybody who came to Philadelphia who was anybody came to the Leof's," said Samuel Grafton, at the time an editorial writer for the Courier's sister paper, the Philadelphia Record.⁴³ "Clifford Odets read his plays sitting on the floor at 3 o'clock in the morning with all of us falling asleep. Scholem Asch was there. Stella Adler came. All the people there were either artists or friends of artists--that kind of people. And Esther and Izzy were there--a lot," recalled Jean Boudin, who was herself introduced to 322 by her sister.⁴⁴

Just because they were sociable didn't mean the Leof-Blitzsteins weren't serious about their radicalism. The first integrated party in Philadelphia was held at 322. And John Frederick Lewis, the patrician owner of the Academy of Music, so admired Pappa Leof that he loaned him the building from time to time for benefit concerts. If the heady mix of politics and culture that would emerge in Waiting for Lefty and The Cradle Will Rock owed much to the atmosphere of 322, the house also served as an

important way station for political refugees anxious to alert Americans to the dangers of fascism. It was probably at 322 that Isidor Feinstein first encountered Gaetano Salvemini, the Italian historian and journalist who made a speaking tour of the U.S. in 1927--an event that had a crucial influence on his fellow newspaperman's response to Mussolini.⁴⁵

"In the twenties, despite the fact that we had a lot of Italians in Camden, the Courier was antifascist," Stone recalled, crediting his acquaintance with Salvemini and other exiles as a factor in the paper's resolve. Though it has been largely forgotten, Mussolini had admirers in some unexpected places. As late as 1933 an association of American Jewish publishers named the Fascist leader as one of the world's twelve "greatest Christian champions" of the Jews.⁴⁶

The apprentice newsman's acceptance as an equal by the regulars at 322 must have strengthened his confidence in his own judgement. Bohemians they might have been, but in philistine Philadelphia the denizens of 322 were the cream of the city's intellectuals, and his association with them may also have eased his acceptance by the Roismans. Esther's older brother, Charles, preferring photography to law, had already embarked on a lifelong involvement with the jazz scene in New York. Certainly the Roismans had become reconciled to the inevitability of marriage, and on July 7, 1929 Esther and her young man stood together under a chuppah at Beth El synagogue in Philadelphia and pronounced the seven blessings of the traditional Jewish wedding service.

The bride wore a white satin gown and a tulle veil, and carried a sheaf of calla lilies. The groom wore a tuxedo, with a

white carnation in his lapel.⁴⁷ Jean Boudin, who was her sister's maid of honor, recalled that the couple were given \$1000 as a wedding present from the bride's family. "I remember she bought these red crystal glasses that were \$15 apiece." If her sister's extravagance impressed itself in her memory of the time--the stock market crash was less than four months away--so did another aspect of the wedding festivities: "We had his family over, and I particularly remember the mother was very jolly and attractive."⁴⁸

IV.

The Depression reached Camden the same way as everything else--over the bridge from Philadelphia. In the frenzy of anticipation before the Camden Bridge opened to traffic in 1926, choice building lots were changing hands for thousands of dollars a front foot. A local promoter, J. Robley Tucker, hired the electric news zipper at Times Square in New York to spread the message: "Greater Camden, The City of Opportunity." Hotels, office buildings and factories were flung up on sheer speculation, and the county road gangs widening and repaving the old White Horse Pike brought a horde of small property developers in their wake.

"In the 1920s, every butcher, baker, and candlestick maker got into the real estate business," said Louis Stone. "My father built six stores in Haddonfield, ten stores and a theatre in Clementon, and he bought land all along the White Horse Pike." While Izzy spent his spare moments writing speeches and memoranda for Norman Thomas, Bernard Feinstein's faith in speculative capitalism remained unshakeable. When his partner

Milask, perhaps heeding the signs of impending collapse, decided to withdraw from the Camden property market, Bernard simply bought him out.⁴⁹

Bernard Feinstein didn't know. In theory, the Camden Bridge was going to turn the city into a bedroom suburb of Philadelphia, magically transforming grim urban lots into glittering castles for the commuting clerks of the metropolis. But by the late 1920s Philadelphia's economy was far too frail to regenerate itself, let alone Camden. And those commuters who did live across the Delaware preferred to do so in newly-built suburbs, far from the stink of Camden's docks. Especially since, thanks to the very bridge that was supposed to be the city's salvation, they could now go straight through Camden directly to downtown Philadelphia without the need to stop or shop. Shrewd investors got out of Camden even before the bridge opened. Bernard, who may have been counting on the Wall Street boom to turn things around, was still buying in 1929.

For a reporter in Camden, there were plenty of signs. The shipyards which were the city's main employers laid off thousands of workers. Camden's hospitals, in a building boom of their own, dedicated new facilities for maternity and child care; at the same time "one out of every ten children placed in the city's day care centers known as baby farms died from the unsanitary conditions."⁵⁰ Martha Gellhorn, who visited Camden at the behest of Federal relief administrator Harry Hopkins, found thousands of people stranded without jobs or the hope of ever getting a job. The city's workforce relied on Campbell Soup, RCA Victor and New York Ship and by the late 1920s even Campbell's was letting men go.⁵¹

But Isidor Feinstein wasn't primarily a reporter. "When I knew I was getting married I went to the managing editor and I said I'm getting married, and unless I get a five dollar raise I'm going to quit. So he gave me a five dollar raise."⁵² He also got a new job: promotion manager. The advertisements he wrote ran in the Courier every day, but his byline seldom appeared. Even when he returned to the news side, he wrote about transportation and local government, not poverty and despair. And he kept up his reviews. Under Isidor Feinstein's byline, tragedy in 1930 meant "Richard III," not rising inventories, Smoot-Hawley or unemployment.⁵³

George Seldes, looking back from 1933, described the period between the Crash and the election of 1932 as "two parts and an interlude; first comes the effort to do nothing, then the effort to do everything."⁵⁴ Even so, it is difficult to shake the surprise that comes from realizing that in the months after Black Tuesday Isidor Feinstein's major contributions to public discourse concerned the relative merits of plays on the Philadelphia stage, with the odd movie or book review thrown in. As a critic he was becoming more urbane: "those quintessential wiggings of the brows, that sudden lifting of the chin, the delighted mischievous little laugh at her own joke, the way of speaking that ripples like a permanent wave that go to make up that theatric spectacle: Ethel Barrymore. Miss Barrymore would, of course, use the same brow wiggling, etc., were she playing Eliza on the ice...."⁵⁵ But it would be stretching things to say that a two paragraph plug for a stage version of New Masses editor Michael Gold's proletarian picaresque, Jews Without Money, shows a radical intelligence at work. Nor does his remark that Robert

Wilder's Sweet Chariot "expresses the American colored man's hurt at being unwelcome in the only country he feels is home, his protest of injustice and slight" reveal a particularly acute grasp of what the novice critic calls "the Negro problem."⁵⁶

He had become a competent reviewer, hailing Lynne Fontanne's "passionate, careful" Elizabeth and Alfred Lunt's "fiery" Essex in Maxwell's Anderson's play. He'd even developed an eye for good acting, lavishly praising the young Helen Hayes and a "lovely and appealing" ingenue named Bette Davis, while finding Lee Strasberg's manner "a little startling."⁵⁷ But his reviews showed scant enthusiasm for engaging with larger questions. When George Seldes saw Shaw's Apple Cart he saw a parable of capitalist excess: Shaw's villain, "an imaginary institution, Breakages, Ltd., . . . had the monopoly of junk and it was the duty of manufacturers to make cars and shoes and fountain pens and tables and pianos which must rapidly fall to pieces; the whole purpose of industry was to create ultimate rubbish; to make a safe or a book which resisted destruction was a crime against the social order." Attending the same production, Isidor Feinstein saw "merely a polished restatement of contemporary commonplace" from "England's bearded parlor revolutionary."⁵⁸

A similar compulsion to demonstrate his own superiority kept him from treating the films he reviewed as anything other than celluloid theatre. He saluted George S. Kaufman's play Once in a Lifetime not only for its "three acts and seven scenes of the most excruciatingly funny, devastating, downright gorgeous satire we ever hope to see," but as "a slow and deliberate dismemberment of the talkie industry" and a definitive

demonstration of film's inferiority.⁵⁹ This was the era of Little Caesar and Public Enemy, a time, according to Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. "When the Movies Really Counted." In his essay "The Gangster as Tragic Hero," critic Robert Warshow reveals a sea change in American attitudes to success underlying the Depression's most popular genre. The gangster, says Warshow, "is what we want to be and what we are afraid we may become"; his rise and fall an indictment of rugged individualism.⁶⁰

Though the signs of the times were there to be read, in 1930, according to Seldes, "misery, joblessness, and discontent had not yet come to the pitch of affecting the whole nation; they affected only the miserable, the jobless, and the discontented."⁶¹ Comfortably ensconced on the Courier's review page, Isidor Feinstein may well have resisted the gangster film's bleak certainty that, in Warshow's phrase, "there is really only one possibility--failure." With his stint as promotion manager confirming his anointment as David Stern's fair-haired protégé, the young journalist had only his socialist convictions to divert attention from his own glittering career to the human wreckage piling up around him. Until the night the Depression came after his mother.

Katy Feinstein had been distressed for months. It was bad enough when her husband's property business went well, leaving her responsible for running the store. Then, just as her adored eldest son moved out of the family home, Bernard's investments started to turn sour. First the speculative lots went. Then the rental properties. Then the new house--"a beautiful house, just finished, which we never moved into," said Louis Stone. It would be several months before they would lose the store, but late one

night in 1930--"just before I was supposed to be Bar Mitzvah"--Louis Stone was awakened by his mother's cries: "My mother came and told me she'd taken poison. Lysol. I was an old Boy Scout and I remembered something to do. I pushed her to vomit. And then of course I woke my father and he took her to the hospital, and what happened then I don't know. But I remember that my sister and I sat there in the middle of the night looking out the window and wondering whether we would ever see mother again."⁶²

Katy Feinstein was taken to Kirkbride's Hospital, a sunny, relatively cheerful asylum on the outskirts of Philadelphia. She returned home after a few weeks, but she would never be completely well again. With Bernard still struggling to fend off bankruptcy the task of ferrying Katy to and from the hospital fell on her youngest son, Louis. His older brother, Max, also came home from college at Chapel Hill to lend a hand.* Katy's favorite son, the one she'd always defended from his father's temper, visited "occasionally. . . not very often," remembered Louis, who was quick to add that his brother had "just gotten married" and had "sent money to help keep the family."⁶³

Viewed from the outside, I.F. Stone's career as an apprentice journalist is the story of an almost effortless rise. It is also a story drastically out of tune with the temper of his times. In one way, that dissonance was real: he succeeded at every newspaper job he turned his hand to, from general assignment drudgery to rewrite to reviews, and would soon be given more

* Max, who'd been editor of his high school yearbook, went into business to produce Haddonfield's first city directory. In addition to the usual columns of names, addresses and telephone numbers, the 1930 volume featured an introduction by his older brother.

freedom than any other daily editorial writer in America. All at a time when the ranks of the unemployed grew month by month to a massive army of despair.

Yet his own father would soon be a conscript in that army. And while I.F. Stone never mentioned his mother's illness to any of the dozens of interviewers who came to profile him in later life, his response to the Depression could hardly have been unaffected by the knowledge that his own mother was unhinged by it. Whether he felt guilt, or anger, or marked it down as yet another of his father's failings--or perhaps a combination of all of these--is forever obscured by his own silence on the matter. For a man who, in the course of his lifetime, wrote millions of words, that very silence suggests the depth of his response.

V.

"We were all what Teddy Roosevelt stigmatized as muckrake
journalists"

--I.F. Stone, 1982

In The Brass Check, his 1919 exposé of the venality of American journalism, Upton Sinclair asks us to spare some compassion for the understandably misinformed O. Henry "who, being an American, got his ideas about life from the newspapers." In Sinclair's view American newspapers were corrupt, trivial instruments of mass delusion, factually unreliable and politically dishonest, subject to the whims of greedy publishers and fearful advertising managers. Doubtless they were. But for Isidor Feinstein the newsroom was more than just a refuge from his

parents' despair--more, even, than the scene of his real higher education. The newspaper was his route into the world.

There is a way this is true for every young reporter. Ben Hecht, who wrote the screenplays for Underworld (1927) and Scarface (1932), started out as a "picture chaser" in Chicago. "The picture chaser," he wrote, "was a shady but vital figure. It was his duty to unearth, snatch, or wangle cabinet photographs of the recently and violently dead for his paper." Despite such unpromising beginnings--Hecht also recalled a colleague "who was taking a correspondence course in embalming (hoping thus to rise in the world)"--he soon found himself transfigured into a big-city reporter, "a casual figure, full of anonymous power."⁶⁴

The Camden Courier was considerably more genteel than the Chicago tabloids where Hecht served his apprenticeship--and which he immortalized in The Front Page (1931). Still, while the young Feinstein may have never shared a spittoon with Hildy Johnson, he did share the Courier's drama desk with Pierre de Rohan--a man who'd been run out of the state of Connecticut following a conviction for bigamy.⁶⁵ And if, on the Courier, he remained a "skinny, thin-lipped black-haired youth [who] always seemed to be nervous, one of those nailbiting types . . . [who] boasted of his loose tie, of his uncut and uncombed hair," he had one advantage that the fictional Walter Burns and Sinclair's all-too-real hardened cases emphatically did not.⁶⁶ He worked for J. David Stern, a publisher who relished a good fight, and happily described himself as "a maverick." To his young protégé, Stern was "a newspaper man who felt an obligation to the underprivileged and against injustice and against the arrogance

of great wealth and concentrated economic power."⁶⁷ He was, in a word, a muckraker.

Whether the figure of Bunyan's man with a muckrake was first applied to a certain kind of investigative journalism by President Theodore Roosevelt (who is generally given the credit) or by Atlantic editor Ellery Sedgewick is still a matter of controversy.⁶⁸ What is certain is that the term was not intended as a compliment. Roosevelt's outrage was prompted by what was perhaps the high point of muckraking's first flowering: the publication in the March, 1906 issue of Cosmopolitan of The Treason of the Senate by David Graham Phillips. The movement's beginnings are also shrouded in controversy. In terms of impact, Lincoln Steffens's "Tweed Days in St. Louis" (1902) is as good a point as any to mark the emergence of a new kind of journalism, just as the demise of Hampton's, silenced by "the interests" in 1911, marks a kind of terminus, though it can be argued that Sinclair's The Brass Check is as much an extension of the tendency as it is a post-mortem. In between flourished a journalism which, if not completely novel in either target or technique, still managed to illuminate the nature of American life--and more particularly, the exercise of power in America--with a clarity that electrified the public, encouraged engagement, and enraged the powerful from the saloons of St. Louis to the boardrooms of Standard Oil. No wonder Roosevelt was irritated.

What was muckraking? In part, it was a method: "in its most general sense the investigation and exposure of wrongdoing."⁶⁹ Henry Demarest Lloyd described a journalism which "has been quarried out of official records, and . . . is a venture in realism." In his pioneering Wealth Against Commonwealth, Lloyd laid out

the main lines of attack: "Decisions of courts and of special tribunals like the Interstate Commerce Commission, verdicts of juries in civil and criminal cases, reports of committees of the State Legislatures and of Congress, oath-sworn testimony given in legal proceedings and in official inquiries . . . such are the sources of information."⁷⁰ Yet it is not mere historical pedantry which prevents us from calling Lloyd a muckraker.

Muckraking was also an attitude, a faith that if only a writer could, as Upton Sinclair described his aim, "make the people believe what 'everybody knows'--then he will be recognized in future as a benefactor of his race."⁷¹ How were the people to be convinced? They were to be given what Ray Stannard Baker termed the "unpalatable facts." If "proof was piled upon proof, certainty was added to certainty," said Baker, "even the prosperous and naturally conservative jury of the whole people [would be] thoroughly convinced."⁷² It is a faith at least as old as the Gospel of St. John--"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"--and as rooted in American soil as Jefferson's University of Virginia, whose library is adorned with the verse in Greek over the portico. Journalists from Mark Twain to H.L. Mencken have been prominent dissenters from this credo, but Henry Demarest Lloyd was a believer.

Nor does the difficulty lie in Lloyd's subject: the sins of the Standard Oil Company. Ida Tarbell's History of the Standard Oil Company is one of muckraking's enduring monuments, and Tarbell herself says her thoughts were "crystallized into something like a pattern" by Lloyd.⁷³ Besides, though certain topics are commonly associated with muckraking--corruption in government, food safety, predatory corporate practices--among

the acknowledged classics of the genre are examinations of child labor, the conditions among women sweatshop workers, and Ray Stannard Baker's disturbing dispatches "Following the Colour Line."

Lloyd was certainly ahead of his time. But it is context rather than chronology which is the missing essential. Lloyd was a lone activist; the muckrakers were "the leading edge of a political movement."⁷⁴ Though they were later to be scorned by some Progressives as sentimentalists of democracy, whatever Progressivism achieved beyond the election of Woodrow Wilson--from pure food and drug laws to the graduated income tax--would have been unthinkable without the muckrakers.⁷⁵

The relationship between political movements and the journalism that both sustains and is sustained by such movements is exceedingly complex. And, as always in American history, our view of insurgent movements is often occluded by what Lawrence Goodwyn calls "the condescension toward the past" we unconsciously tend to bring to any protest which appears to have failed. Yet, as Goodwyn points out, "movements of mass democratic protest . . . represent a political, an organizational, and above all, a cultural achievement of the first magnitude." Goodwyn is writing about the Populists, yet his analysis of "the evolving stages" whereby "intimidated people" generate the "psychological authority and practical means" to challenge "culturally sanctioned authority" illuminates a recurring theme in our national life. Besides, it was the Populist critique of the economy which gave the facts so painstakingly assembled by the muckrakers their significance. And it was this same critique of the economy, shorn of some its more simple-

minded nostrums, which was to reappear with such force during the 1930s in, among other venues, the editorial pages of J. David Stern's newspapers.⁷⁶

VI.

By his own admission, J. David Stern liked to stir things up. So when his friend Albert Greenfield approached him in 1928 and offered to finance the acquisition of the Wanamaker family's moribund Philadelphia Record, Stern was delighted.

The paper itself was no great prize. Once the city's leading newspaper, its circulation had declined steadily from nearly 200,000 at the turn of the century to barely half that--in a period when the dominant Bulletin's sales had risen to well over half a million. But Stern, who liked to make money almost as much as he liked to make trouble, knew how to use exposés and provocative editorials to boost circulation. He also had two assets even more useful than his superb news judgement. One was his wife's family. Then, as now, the department stores whose patronage is a newspaper's lifeblood made their advertising decisions in a herd. Stern's confidence that, short of calling for an outright boycott--or divorcing Jill--nothing he did would lose him Lit Brothers' business allowed him to give his natural boldness free exercise. If his second advantage--his association with Albert Greenfield--meant he sometimes had to rein in his indignation, it also gave him access to the innermost vaults of Philadelphia's power structure.

A banker and real-estate developer, Greenfield had served on the City Council. At the time, like most elected officials in Philadelphia, he was a Republican. Indeed when William Vare, the

city's Republican boss, decided in 1926 that he wanted to cap his career with election to the United States senate, Greenfield gave his old friend \$125,000 of his own money, and raised most of the rest of his war chest himself. In the primary (the only election that mattered in Pennsylvania), Vare faced Gifford Pinchot, a Theodore Roosevelt-style Progressive, and George Wharton Pepper, an ornament of the Union League club whose campaign was bankrolled by the Mellon family. Of the state's 67 counties, Vare lost all but two—but his 228,000 vote margin in Philadelphia alone was enough to win the primary and guarantee his election in November.⁷⁷ Unfortunately for Vare, the Senate refused to allow him to take his seat, citing his excessive campaign spending (in fact no higher than Pepper's) but perhaps even more offended by his machine politician's lack of deference.⁷⁸

In 1928, Greenfield was a delegate to the Republican National Convention. Then Albert Greenfield decided to change horses. The Republican party had welcomed him, but he was an upstart and a Jew, and when, in September of 1930, the collapse in the city's property market led to a run on Greenfield's bank, Philadelphia's WASP establishment, who'd banded together to prop up a number of their own earlier in the year, offered Greenfield moral support but little else. By December he was bankrupt.

Greenfield's campaign to rebuild his fortunes rested on two pillars. He'd managed to hold on to some of his interests in department stores, and, through his City Stores company, soon acquired control of Bonwit, Teller in New York, the Maison Blanche in New Orleans, B. Lowenstein in Memphis and Kaufman, Straus in Louisville. He also became chairman of Lit Brothers.

Politically, Greenfield turned his back on the Quakers and Episcopalians who'd let Vare run the city for them (and had allowed his bank to go under), and made common cause with the rising Irish Catholics determined to breathe life into Philadelphia's all-but-defunct Democratic party.⁷⁹

For the first three decades of the twentieth century the "O'Donnell Democrats" had effectively been a wholly-owned subsidiary of Vare's machine, trading complete political docility for a fixed share of patronage and spoils. Vare often picked the candidates for the Democratic seats on the City Council; he even paid the rent on their party headquarters. Statewide the situation was scarcely better. Between 1893 and 1931 the Democrats lost 95 of 96 state elections; in 1928 a Democratic candidate for governor, making a realistic appraisal of his chances, withdrew from the race to campaign instead for election as Grand Exalted Ruler of the Elks.⁸⁰

Greenfield's chief political ally was a prosperous Irish builder, John B. Kelly, who at the time was a local celebrity thanks to his prowess as an Olympic oarsman (in years to come "Handsome Jack," as he was known, would achieve greater fame as the father of his even handsomer daughter, Grace). The pair's wealth, enormous range of contacts and considerable political acumen soon gained them control of the party machinery. To reach the voters, though, they would need help. They would need a newspaper--ideally, a crusading newspaper. J. David Stern's office at the Record became their war room.⁸¹

The campaign was still in its early stages when Stern brought Isidor Feinstein over from Camden in September 1931. Like a AAA ballplayer sent to the major leagues, Stern's protégé

had to earn his position. In Camden he'd been a utility player. Now he wanted to write editorials. He'd already done a few as a substitute.* Now he wanted a spot in the starting lineup. First, though, he needed to relearn the city from the streets up to City Hall. Stern put him on general assignment, working nights.⁸²

By the end of 1931 nearly everybody in Philadelphia knew there was a Depression. The city that called itself "the workshop of the world" now had over 15 percent of the workforce unable to find jobs. A federal survey of nineteen major cities showed more severe unemployment only in Cleveland and Detroit. The number of evictions in 1931 jumped to 18,000--fifty per cent above the previous year's total. In his first two weeks at the Record, Isidor Feinstein wrote three stories about local banks closing--one of them an account of a mass meeting of 10,000 depositors.⁸³

In years to come, historians would debate whether revolt or resignation was the more significant response to such desperate times.⁸⁴ Without the luxury of such reflection, Philadelphians formed their own judgements. Labor organizer A.J. Muste, whose militance had cost him his base at the Brookwood Labor College, joined forces with Emil Rieve of the fully-fashioned hosiery workers union, making Philadelphia a stronghold of Muste's Conference for Progressive Labor Action. The Communist Party's Trade Union Unity League also made a big effort in Philadelphia--

* In one, slipped into the paper while the regular editorialist was still recovering from his New Year's excesses, we can hear the beginnings of a distinctive voice (and a topic that would continue to engage Stone half a century on): "WILL THESE 8 NEW DEATHS END OUR HYPOCRISY ON NICARAGUA? Eight more Americans slain in Nicaragua. Is this war? Nothing of the sort. Merely a peace-time campaign against bandits. At least, the State

with markedly less success. The Marine Workers Industrial Union called a city-wide dock strike--but forgot to tell the workers until the morning of the strike.⁸⁵ On March 6, 1930--"International Unemployment Day"--only 150 demonstrators answered the party's call for a "Red Thursday" show of force at City Hall Plaza.

Despite such fiascos, city authorities remained jittery. In November 1931 a friend wrote to J. Hampton Moore, the mayor-elect, informing him that the Pennsylvania National Guard was already drilling to "meet the possible mob rule that might take place during the hard times expected this winter," and urging that the city's police force be similarly prepared.⁸⁶ Moore took up the suggestion; for good measure he also banned demonstrations on City Hall Plaza, where on December 11, 1931 a crowd of 18,000 men and women had successfully demanded the cancellation of an increase in property taxes--in a march instigated by the editorial pages of the Record.

With his gaze firmly fixed on the city's bond rating, Mayor Moore cut municipal workers' salaries by 23 per cent, and fired half the employees of the Department of Public Works.⁸⁷ Relief was unnecessary. "There is no starvation in Philadelphia," the mayor declared. The Nation responded with "Mass Misery in Philadelphia," one of a series of articles by Baltimore Sun editor Mauritz Hallgren assaying the impact of unemployment. Hallgren quotes a reporter for the Record: "Behind the lace curtains ... lies the picture he [Moore] didn't see. Gaunt children, sunken eyes, ten-year-olds nineteen pounds under weight. Children in rags, without sufficient clothes to permit their attendance at school.

Department calls them bandits; certain Nicaraguans call them patriots. You can take your choice." Courier Post, January 3, 1931.

Children without shoes Starvation in Philadelphia today is an accumulative starvation; starvation through undernourishment; slow starvation from insufficient food."⁸⁸

After three weeks covering horse shows, church conferences, bank failures, Prohibition, a visiting Italian premier and a speech at the Elks lodge, Isidor Feinstein was "dying to do editorials. And I knew there was no editorial writer on Saturdays. So one Saturday morning I woke up at 4 o'clock, went in to town, bought the morning papers, nobody was around, and by 9 o'clock I had written an editorial and put it on Stern's desk."

"He came in at 9 and found it there. He was very mad at me. First of all because he liked to write his own editorials on Saturday—he liked to write editorials, too. He didn't want me muscling in. He was very nasty about it. I was all shaken up. I thought, 'You son-of-a-bitch! I'm going to keep pestering you, you bastard, until you make me editorial writer.' I didn't know what he was going to do, and I went to work in the newsroom on my usual rewrite and reporting, and next morning when I came in, on Sunday (every day they would magnify one editorial, put it in large type and put it in the window) there was my editorial, so I was really thrilled."⁸⁹

On the front page of the Record for October 15, 1931 is an editorial: "Tell the Truth About the Banks." Like all of the paper's editorials, it is unsigned. But the editorial's tone, subject matter, and the fact that it appeared two days after Isidor Feinstein's final assignment as a reporter suggest that his apprenticeship was over. He had a platform. Now he needed to find his voice.

VII.

As Philadelphia entered the winter of 1931, the city's Director of Public Safety took the precaution of banning Socialists from the premises of any textile mill. Asked to justify the exclusion, he replied: "Well, you know how it is--you start talking Socialism and go from that to a lot of things."⁹⁰ Isidor Feinstein had been talking Socialism for some time. But in the months to come, as the mass misery in Philadelphia--and the rest of the country--grew steadily worse, he found himself wondering whether socialism was enough.

At first, whatever doubts he had were kept to himself. As the newest member of Stern's editorial stable, he was busy writing on a wide range of topics, from the enforcement of Prohibition to the military buildup in the Far East. By the end of 1932, however, three issues would come to dominate his thinking: the disastrous failure of private relief efforts in Philadelphia, the 1932 presidential election, and the spread of fascism.

Since the nineteenth century Philadelphia had relied on private philanthropy to feed and house the city's poor. Philadelphians took justifiable pride in the relative generosity of provision--including the country's first large-scale school breakfast program, feeding 8,000 children every weekday and 4,500 on Saturdays and Sundays. Should altruism fail, the Record's new editorial writer was ready with "Let the Rich Who Don't Give For Pity Give For Social Insurance," a timely reminder that "Revolutions are made on empty stomachs."⁹¹ When private fundraising ultimately proved unable to keep pace with the

Depression, the city's elite appointed a Committee for Unemployment Relief, headed by Horatio Gates Lloyd, a partner in the Drexel merchant bank, to distribute whatever state aid became available. In 1931 the state legislature authorized the city to borrow \$3 million to aid the jobless. The money lasted a year. A further \$5 million from the combined campaign of the Catholic, Jewish and Protestant charities was gone in three months. With the number of applicants continuing to grow at the rate of 2,000 families a week, in April 1932 the Pennsylvania Supreme Court upheld the legality of using state funds for relief. Philadelphia's share, \$2.5 million in direct aid, lasted just two months.

On June 20, 1932, when the money finally ran out, an editorial on the front page of the Record declared: "The Lloyd committee is through. For fifty-seven thousand families to whom the committee has meant life itself, STARVATION is 'just around the corner.' The Committee for two years has fought the wolf away from the doorsteps of Philadelphia's worthy poor. It has tapped and exhausted every available source of succor. And now its funds are gone." For ten agonizing weeks the 57,000 families were left to shift for themselves. At the end, even Horatio Gates Lloyd joined calls for direct federal relief.⁹²

Any hopes for a sympathetic response from Washington were dashed the following month, when Patrick J. Hurley, Hoover's Secretary of War, sent federal troops under the command of General Douglas MacArthur to evict some 15,000 veterans of the World War who were camped on the Anacostia flats following congressional defeat of a bill for early payment of the veterans' bonus. If the Hoover administration answered the

veterans' entreaties with tanks, bayonets and tear gas, how likely was it to rush to the aid of ordinary men and women?⁹³

Clearly there would have to be a change in Washington before Philadelphians could expect relief. But what kind of change? In an editorial entitled "The Red Bogeyman Again," the Record ridiculed Hoover's claim that "Red agitators" were in charge of the Bonus Army: "Blaming it on the Communists enables the Hoover Administration to pose as the Nation's Savior From Bolshevism." But the paper went on to note that such talk "also enables American Communist leaders to coax more funds from Moscow by leaping into the limelight as a Fearful Menace to American Capitalism, forcing a frightened President to call out the army, leading an enormous mob on the seat of Government and preparing to turn Washington into another Leningrad."⁹⁴

The Record's lofty disdain for American Communists received a shock three weeks later, when Mayor Moore's refusal to meet with representatives of the party-led Unemployed Councils sparked "the Battle of Reyburn [City Hall] Plaza" between demonstrators and the police.⁹⁵ In October the Communists--still barred from City Hall--staged a rally at the Philadelphia Arena which drew 7,000 people. "Red Rally in Arena Dwarfs G.O.P. Show," reported the Record, pointing out that the audience for a Republican rally at the same venue a few days earlier numbered under 3,000.⁹⁶

As tribune of a resurgent Democratic party, the Record was delighted by any evidence of Republican disintegration. J. David Stern's tolerance for Communists, however, stopped well short of enthusiasm. So long as the party remained both marginal and respectable, the Record could be counted on to defend it. "No

Red Menace in Phila.," proclaimed a typical Record headline, adding the reassurance that "Communists Here Number 9000, But Are Careful to Keep Within Law."⁹⁷ Despite the frequent provocations of Mayor Moore's police, the party retained its law-abiding demeanor. But as the presidential election drew nearer, its relegation to the sidelines of American life began to seem less certain.

The American Communist Party deserves only part of the credit for this turn in its fortunes. A series of purges had reduced its numbers from some 15,000 in 1923 to about half that in 1930.⁹⁸ Those who remained were burdened with the Comintern's proclamation of the "Third Period" since the Bolshevik revolution--the final collapse of capitalism which would usher in proletarian rule. With the assumption of power imminent, communists were enjoined to even greater degrees of ideological vigilance, particularly against "social fascists." The theory was ornate, but in practice a "social fascist" was anyone who, by advocating any reform short of revolution--indeed any reform short of the party's vision of revolution--was effectively working "to keep intact the structure of capitalism and the capitalist state."⁹⁹

Just when the Depression seemed to confirm the validity of their analysis, American communists were put in the position of being unable to take "yes" for an answer. And yet Americans were moving to the left. Izzy's friend Michael Blankfort followed what was becoming a well-travelled path. Blankfort went to the Soviet Union immediately after his graduation from Penn. Three months later he returned to begin graduate work in psychology at Princeton, but soon dropped out to devote himself to a new

kind of political theatre. In 1931 he produced and directed "Merry Go Round," a scathing satire of New York City politics written by a pair of young Yale graduates named Albert Maltz and George Sklar. By this time Blankfort was living in Greenwich Village, where his intelligence, poise, radical commitment and family money soon brought him to the attention of V.F. Calverton.¹⁰⁰

There is no better illustration of the perversity of Communist party policy in the early 1930s than the career of V.F. Calverton. Born George Goetz, he took the name Calverton in the wake of the Palmer raids to protect his job as a Baltimore schoolteacher. In the mid-1920s Calverton's attempts to Americanize Marx won him plaudits from Socialists and Communists. For a time he even managed to write a column for the Socialist New Leader while remaining a regular contributor to the Daily Worker. Attacked as a Trotskyist in 1928, and a "social fascist" in 1931, Calverton repeatedly pledged his fealty to the party line. Indeed his magazine, The Modern Quarterly, carried Earl Browder's name on the masthead until 1931. Calverton endorsed William Z. Foster for President in 1932 even though the Communist candidate had personally attacked him in his book Toward Soviet America.¹⁰¹

Michael Blankfort joined The Modern Quarterly in the autumn of 1932 as literary editor: "I became a greedy hanger-on to Calverton's circle of friends on Morton Street. A burly man with an addiction to curved pipes and Brooklyn Bridge sweepings of tobacco, he was a lapsed semi-pro baseball player. . . with an all-embracing passion for what he'd read and a passion to become a new Renaissance man all by himself. He was insatiable

in his hunger for approval, and would make friends with anyone who was willing, whether or not they agreed with his politics, literary criticism or social theories."¹⁰²

To Alfred Kazin, Calverton's deficiency in pessimism of the intellect--Kazin calls him "a remarkably unsubtle Marxist critic even for the times"--was more than compensated for by an unshakeable optimism of the will: "George really did believe that all the 'modern' disciplines, sociology and psychology and anthropology, would connect with Marxism to carry all of man to his destiny. The Stalinist critics of the mid-Thirties spoke of necessity, but George's favorite word was 'liberation.'" Kazin, who like Blankfort was taken up by Calverton at the beginning of his career, describes a "round, kindly, swarthy, eager man" who "could be as concerned about a new writer's struggles, as hopeful and friendly about the slightest piece I wrote for the magazine, as an admiring relative."¹⁰³

Of course Blankfort was encouraged to bring his friends to Calverton's weekly soirees. In a way, these gatherings were even more important than his magazine. Communist intellectuals like Joseph Freeman, Granville Hicks and Michael Gold would no longer write for Modern Quarterly, but they were still happy to come to Morton Street, where, under the benevolent gaze of Calverton's lover Nina Melville, they frequently found themselves in the company of Max Eastman, Sidney Hook, Bertram Wolfe and other sworn foes of Stalinism. It was as close as postwar Manhattan ever came to the broad-church bohemian radicalism of 322, and when Isidor Feinstein tagged along with Blankfort on a visit to New York late in 1932 he felt right at home.

Calverton took to the young newsman, and immediately set about recruiting him for the magazine, which was on the verge of going monthly. He was well aware that Feinstein could be of use as more than just a contributor--indeed, his new friend had promised to write an editorial promoting the Modern Monthly as soon as the first issue appeared. Calverton tactfully left those arrangements in the hands of his new advertising manager, Sidney Cohn--another member of the Penn circle. Instead he invited "Iz" to "start on one of those two articles we discussed the other night."¹⁰⁴

He didn't have to ask twice. It may have been David Stern's vehement support for Franklin Delano Roosevelt (his new editorialist voted for Norman Thomas). It may have been Stern's regular denunciations of "dictators of the left and right." Or it may simply have been that having taken him this far, Stern's paternalistic interest in his career had begun to chafe. For by the time of Calverton's invitation, he had already begun to look beyond the Record for outlets where he could write to suit his own views, in his own voice.

His editorial cohort at the Record, Sam Grafton, had been writing for the American Mercury even before he graduated from Penn. For their generation of college men, H.L. Mencken's cynical *hauteur* represented the acme of intellectual sophistication; publication in his magazine was a rite of passage. And Mencken would have every reason to welcome a writer on what the Mercury itself had recently proclaimed "a newspaper man's newspaper." Indeed, the magazine's celebration of the Record repeatedly stressed the crucial role played by the editorial page in producing a paper that "delights the literates of the town."

"The Record's formula for attracting and holding attention is so simple that the layman must wonder why it is not tried oftener. It consists, first, in taking a definite editorial stand on one side or the other of every debatable subject covered in its news columns. . . ."105 The article never mentioned his name, but as Stone was to remember with gratitude many years later, Mencken "was a great editor, he never bought names." What he did buy was "A Gentleman in Politics," a profile of Pennsylvania governor Gifford Pinchot, "a Great Liberal in a Tight Corner," by one Isidor Feinstein.¹⁰⁶

Though his efforts to prevent the despoliation of public lands during the Taft administration made Gifford Pinchot a hero to many, Isidor Feinstein was never among his admirers. As a reporter on the Camden Courier he'd first interviewed Pinchot during the 1926 Senate campaign, dismissing him in a letter to Blankfort as "the old Roosevelt progressive type--dead, dead, dead." Pinchot's conduct in office provided little basis for a more favorable view: "His lances are still aimed, with convenient harmlessness, at Entrenched Wealth, the Plutocracy, and other decrepit hobgoblins of the Bull Moose era. A large portrait of Roosevelt I is said to hang in his study . . . like that of Karl Marx over the worktable of Stalin."¹⁰⁷

As a work of political reportage, the article was more than competent, linking Pinchot's reluctance to let the state fund relief payments to his lingering hopes for a seat in the U.S. Senate--and his cultivation of the distinctly un-Rooseveltian Republican boss Joe Grundy. But in its rhetoric--Pinchot "is America's outstanding example of a type beatified by lady civics teachers and adoring Anglophiles"--it was not just good imitation Mencken. It was

superior imitation Mencken. The state supreme court's decision authorizing relief payments, wrote Feinstein:

"seems to have broken the great Liberal's heart He still weeps copiously over the unemployed and Pennsylvania's inability to help them--while boasting in the New Republic, of the State's magnificent highway programme, that 'it is quite within the means of so rich a State as Pennsylvania.' In a recent message on relief, he found that 'the Commonwealth has a clear and sacred duty to do what it can and all it can to help its own people.' But he also discovered that to touch the fat highway fund would 'break the implied contract of the State with the users of the highways.' The 'implied contract,' obviously, outweighs the 'sacred duty.'

"Gifford will pave his way to the Senate yet, even if he has to put macadam on every cowpath in the State to do it."¹⁰⁸

Nowadays it is Mencken's fate to be widely venerated while remaining mostly unread. But in the first half of this century his was the dominant voice in American journalism. Even today, a columnist making sport with a politician will often find that, though the words may be new, the tune is Mencken's. That Isidor Feinstein should work in the same key barely signifies. What does matter is the speed with which he abandoned it, and what he abandoned it for. A month after Isidor Feinstein made his first (and last) appearance in the American Mercury the incoming administration of Franklin Roosevelt was appraised in the pages of the Modern Monthly: "it was felt that he [FDR] was for the common people, that he would feed the hungry, that he would show Wall Street where it got off. Wall Street got off very well." The author's name was Abelard Stone.

Why the pseudonym? The headline gave one clue:

"Roosevelt Moves Toward Fascism." Such a dark view of the

newly-inaugurated president's intentions was hardly the party line at J. David Stern's Record, which as the American Mercury noted "could probably set up a strong claim to being the first Roosevelt-for-President paper in the country." A further explanation for the young writer's disguise can be found two paragraphs into his argument: "The historian, looking back from the vantage point of the future, will see two roads open and one closed to the American people on March 4, 1933. *The road to a Soviet America, the one way out that could make a real difference to the working classes, was closed....*"¹⁰⁹

VIII.

The short unhappy life of Abelard Stone, communist polemicist, lasted just four months. "Roosevelt Moves Toward Fascism" was followed by an acerbic, radical commentary on the latest congressional investigation into J.P. Morgan & Co. which argued that "only a workers party and a Communist party can achieve a fundamental change and destroy the financial oligarchy." In August, a house ad promised Abelard Stone on The Industrial Recovery Act in a forthcoming issue, but it was not to be.

This was, in every respect, a bizarre episode. Even the apparent endorsement of the communist line--with its deliberate echo of Foster's slogan "Towards a Soviet America"--was odd. The 1932 Presidential election marked a high point in relations between intellectuals and the Communist Party. In Culture and the Crisis, a pamphlet issued by the League of Professional Groups for Foster and Ford, Matthew Josephson and James Rorty

argued that the Democratic Party headed by Franklin Roosevelt "is the logical alternative of the Republican Party, just as Tweedledum is the logical alternative of Tweedledee--for the same job." After the election, Abelard Stone would conclude that the country "fumed at Tweedledum and looked with hope to Tweedledee." Josephson (who would soon become a friend of the Feinsteins) called the Socialist Party "the third party of Capitalism"--a view endorsed by Malcolm Cowley, John Dos Passos, Sidney Hook, Edmund Wilson and Lincoln Steffens.¹¹⁰ It was Dos Passos who remarked that to support the Socialists in the present crisis was like drinking near beer. Yet in 1932 Isidor Feinstein--like John Dewey, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Oswald Garrison Villard--still preferred near beer.

The timing was extremely odd. In January 1933 the Communist party launched a particularly vicious attack on Calverton, who only a year earlier had criticized the "stupidity . . . mm/dd/yy. of making various outsiders, especially those close to the party, scapegoats for inner factional fights." Calverton's continuing sympathy for Leon Trotsky made him odious to the Comintern; his willingness to challenge the American party hierarchy finally rendered him intolerable. "The Marxism of V.F. Calverton" was the longest article The New Masses ever published. The two authors, both former students of Calverton's from the Baltimore public school, accused their old teacher of crimes ranging from plagiarism to being a "maturing fascist," an "open collaborator of the ruling class" and a "sex racketeer."¹¹¹ That Calverton remained open to communist arguments after such an assault is testimony to either his tolerance or his desperation. But for Abelard Stone to choose the Modern Monthly

as the venue for his endorsement of the view that finance capital "must . . . inevitably stand behind the throne of the Republican and Democratic parties, behind the Socialists if they come to power, behind any party that proposes to work within the framework of capitalism" verges on the perverse.¹¹²

But then what are we to make of "Abelard Stone"? Peter Abelard, medieval scholastic, partisan of rational inquiry, who fell in love with Heloise, seduced her, secretly married her after their son was born, and was castrated by her father--joined with Stone, a mutilation of Feinstein. Guilt over the use of a pseudonym? But name changes were a Feinstein (Tsvilikhovsky) tradition. A sentimental gesture toward Esther? Their first child, Celia Mary, was born the previous September (upon hearing the news, Michael Blankfort sent a telegram: "Welcome to the grandmother of the American revolution!"). Or was it perhaps a private joke, a wink at the dialecticians of Union Square, a gesture of personal resistance as oblique as his choosing what in the Party's eyes was a Trotskyist rag to recite his catechism?

His friend Blankfort was moving ever closer to the Party. In August 1933 he resigned from the Modern Monthly. "It does not redound to my credit as a revolutionary, although it may to me as a friend," he wrote Calverton, "that I did not leave the magazine when I most disagreed with it; the Trotsky episode. I did not leave because my loyalty was greater than my conviction." Blankfort's wife was a Party member; so were his new friends Maltz and Sklar. And if Blankfort himself never formally joined, by that autumn his "loyalties" and his convictions were no longer in conflict. "With George Calverton and his circle," explained Blankfort, "I would be an acolyte in the shadow of the

brilliance of older men. . . . With [Maltz and Sklar], I was an equal, a fellow pioneer. . . ."113

Abelard Stone also disappears from the Modern Monthly at about this time. Like Blankfort, Isidor Feinstein was still moving to the left. But it would be a mistake to see them following the same road. In the end, Abelard Stone was retired for the same reasons that called him into being: the young writer's continuing search both for his own voice and for a place where that voice could make itself heard. Politically, he left the magazine for the same reason he first sought a place on its pages: the rise of fascism.

Until at least November 1932, he was a Socialist. Six months later, he apparently saw little to choose between Norman Thomas and either Herbert Hoover or "the Hyde Park radicalism of Mr. Roosevelt." What happened to change his mind? On January 22, 1933, Isidor Feinstein reviewed a pair of books analyzing recent events in Germany for the Record. Both are treated favorably, but the author of one of them, Oswald Garrison Villard (a Socialist comrade), comes in for special praise: "Villard, in a passionate and fact-crammed book . . ."; "Villard after a brilliant analysis of Hitlerism concludes that should the German Nazi leader come to power 'the loss to Germany would be incalculable'" The reviewer ends on a reassuring note: "Fortunately neither Villard nor [the second author, Chicago Daily News correspondent Edgar] Mowrer think highly of Hitler's chances at dictatorship. . . . And both believe Hitler's decline and his party's breakup inevitable should he assume power and be called upon to make good on his inconsistent and impossible crazy quilt of a program."114

Adolf Hitler was sworn in as Chancellor of Germany eight days later. The Record was still hopeful: "Position without power may weaken Hitler" who, in the editorialist's view is but a tool of "the Junkers and industrialists." Or "the Nazis may be emboldened to attempt full seizure of power, an attempt that would almost certainly plunge Germany into civil war. Or the trades unions, Social Democratic, Centrist and Communist, may join before it is too late"115 But by April the situation was very different.

Abelard Stone's debut was a critique of the same two books reviewed by Isidor Feinstein in the Record. Though many phrases recur, and though both books "may be recommended to those seeking a rehash of the facts about the German Republic," this time the "liberal limitations of" Villard and the nature of Mowrer's job (i.e. as a newspaper reporter) "keep either of them from getting very far from the regulation liberal explanation." David Stern's liberalism, like that of Oswald Garrison Villard, had its limits, and clearly those constraints--the limits of his job on the Record--made a pseudonym prudent. But the deeper source of radical energy--and radical anger--that gave voice to Abelard Stone can perhaps best be seen when he turns on his formerly brilliant comrade:

Mr. Villard almost admits what is now so clear--the betrayal of the German working classes by the Social Democrats--when he says of their conduct in the revolution--

'So from being too destructive, the leaders were not destructive enough. . . . They might well have taken leaves out of the Russian book *without, however, resorting to the cruel and bloody ruthlessness of the Soviets. . . .*'

The italics, as they say, are mine but the explanation of just how capitalists and landowners were to be eliminated without 'the cruel and bloody ruthlessness of the Soviets' must be left to Mr. Villard.¹¹⁶

The text was Social-Democratic betrayal at the dawn of Weimar (curiously, Hitler's name is never mentioned) but the subtext is unmistakable: it was the Socialists who, blinded by their hostility to Communism, failed to act to prevent the Nazis from coming to power. His scorn for "Germany's fake Socialists" is even more emphatic in a Record editorial, also from April 1933, accusing the Social Democrats of being "ready to 'play nice' if Hitler will permit them an occasional dip into the government feed-bag."¹¹⁷ When Heywood Broun, whose syndicated column balanced Walter Lippmann across the Record's editorial page, resigned from the Socialists he advised his readers: "in getting out of the Socialist Party one should leave by the door to the left." His former comrade Villard, wrote Abelard Stone, showed a "lack of realism." It was a common fault among liberals, who, "when deception is too transparent, usually help out by deceiving themselves, or reading Walter Lippmann."¹¹⁸ Isidor Feinstein was taking the door to the left.

There was no Damascene conversion--just an apparent hardening of options. The view that Roosevelt's first moves were harbingers of fascism, though heretical to David Stern, was fairly common among the American left. Norman Thomas and Reinhold Niebuhr both voiced similar reservations. History would prove them wrong, just as, in hindsight, Hitler's rise to power can't really be explained by Socialist betrayal. But if you believed these

things in the summer of 1933, the conclusion was clear enough.¹¹⁹

And yet Isidor Feinstein never joined the Communist Party, even though his position on a number of issues was so close to the party line as to be indistinguishable. By allowing him complete freedom, V.F. Calverton brought "Iz" closer to the party than he would ever be again. But in rejecting Calverton as a renegade, the Communists also lost Abelard Stone. Another road opened for Isidor Feinstein. Within three years he would be an intimate in the highest councils of the New Deal. His own brother, Max, joined the Communist Party. Isidor Feinstein moved to New York.

Chapter Three

Manhattan Transfer

A straphanger who picked up the New York Evening Post on the way home from work on Monday, December 11, 1933 held a very different newspaper from the stolid, lethargic tabloid he'd have been sold the previous Friday. Over the weekend the paper had grown into a broadsheet with a new masthead, a new owner, and a new attitude. The most prominent item on Page One was a letter, on White House stationery: "My dear Dave: I want you to know how glad I was to hear that you had bought the New York Evening Post."

Franklin Roosevelt had ample cause for gratitude. Since the end of Joseph Pulitzer's World (swallowed by the Scripps-Howard Telegram in 1931), the nation's largest city had not a single liberal newspaper.* With losses in excess of a million dollars a year, the Post wasn't exactly a financially compelling proposition.¹ But J. David Stern and his friend Albert Greenfield, now a rising power-broker in the Democratic party, saw a political opening. "I am 100 percent behind President Roosevelt," Stern pledged.

* Though Joseph Medill Patterson's Daily News was at this point still technically a supporter of the New Deal, Patterson's choleric populism was already showing signs of the News's impending swing to the right.

When Isidor Feinstein heard that Stern had bought the Post, he didn't hesitate. "Izzy high-tailed it up there without telling anybody," recalled Sam Grafton, whose more orderly transfer to New York took place six months later.² The 25-year-old hopped a train to New York and presented himself at the Post's West Street offices as the paper's new editorial writer the day before Stern's first issue went to press. His chutzpah was rewarded with an assignment to write the front page editorial explaining the paper's new policy.

Fortified by a quick persusal of Allan Nevins's recently-published history of the paper, he reminded readers that in its 132 year history the Post hadn't hesitated "to throw in its lot with insurgent Barnburners, Locofocoes, and Mugwumps" and other radicals. The new management, he promised, intended to continue the tradition of a "fighting, independent, liberal newspaper." But the editorial also hinted at a divergence with his boss, when it made the paper's allegiance to Franklin Roosevelt subject to terms and conditions: "The POST will support The New Deal as long as that New Deal offers hope of alleviating maldistribution of wealth, which is our fundamental ill, and of restoring economic health and social justice."³

In time this difference of emphasis between Stern, the gung-ho New Dealer, and his more skeptical young editorial writer would widen into an unhealable breach. In 1933, however, Isidor Feinstein was still Stern's favorite. With three papers to run, the publisher was happy to let this energetic young man take charge of the Post's editorials, happy to endorse his efforts to restore the glory days when "fighting editors and fighting owners gave

power to its editorial page.”⁴ It would be several years before Stern noticed that his protégé had put editors before owners.

If the newly-minted New Yorker’s syntax hinted at insubordination, his conscious thoughts were on mastering his job. “I was just thrilled to death to be in the big city at last,” he recalled. He was also terrified: “I’d walk along under the Ninth Avenue El to the paper and I’d start to vomit like a pregnant woman from excitement.”⁵

Isidor Feinstein’s eagerness to get to New York wasn’t just professional. In 1932 the United Bargain Store finally closed its doors. Too proud to claim bankruptcy, Bernard Feinstein picked up his pack and went door-to-door selling silk stockings until all his creditors were paid off.⁶ In 1933 Bernard moved his family to the Logan section of west Philadelphia. The loss of the store pushed Katy into a manic period.

“What she would do is she would buy yard goods and she would make aprons,” said Lou Stone of his mother’s attempt to contribute to the family’s precarious finances. “She was a very good seamstress. She’d do all kinds of things with a sewing machine. But what happened when she became manic, she wouldn’t work with care. She’d make an apron, and it wouldn’t match up with the pattern. She’d make a whole heap of these aprons, and she’d try to sell them door-to-door. She was hard to control.”⁷

When Katy went into the hospital this time she was taken not to the cheerful Kirkbride’s, but to Norristown State Hospital, a grim overcrowded institution where patients were often left unsupervised.⁸ With Bernard and Katy now living nearby, the pressure on their eldest son grew more intense. Squeezed

between filial duty and the demands of his career, already chafing under the strictures of Stern's editorial policy, for Isidor Feinstein the opportunity to move to New York was not just an opening, it was a lifeline.

II.

“The rumor of a great city goes out beyond its borders....” When Isidor Feinstein installed himself at 75 West Street, New York was still poised on the brink of becoming the “world city” celebrated by the anonymous bards of the Federal Writers’ Project.⁹ The infrastructure was in place: Robert Moses’s gleaming parkways bringing workers and pleasure-seekers into the metropolis, or outward to the beaches of Long Island, were newly opened. So were the Amalgamated Houses on Grand Street, the Century, the San Remo and the Majestic on Central Park West, and the Manhattan office towers whose names alone—the Chrysler Building, the R. C. A. Building, the Empire State Building—seem to evoke the heroism of urban life.¹⁰

New York’s transfiguration had been underway for some time. “After the war,” wrote Dos Passos, “New York ... Nobody can keep away from it.”¹¹ Between 1910 and 1930 the city’s population doubled—a floodtide of immigrants and arrivistes who turned New York from a city to the city, the Big Apple of the jazzman’s eye, a mecca for talent and ambition, an entrepot of ideas, a cosmopolis.¹² Manhattan was already moving in the twenties: there was a renaissance up in Harlem, and plenty of money to be made on Wall Street. But in the twenties, New York still had competition. Not just London, still arguably the world’s

financial center, or Paris, capital of the nineteenth century and, for the second decade of the twentieth, home to the most important voices in American literature. In the twenties Chicago, birthplace of the Dial and the Little Review, home to Poetry, still had pretensions to cultural preeminence.

New York's undisputed primacy would only be forged on the anvil of economic calamity. The twenties provided the raw material, but it was the Depression, with its unprecedented demands, shifting alliances, and desperate experimentation, which made the city. And it was the city—pragmatic, confident, cosmopolitan—which turned a small-town newspaperman into a big-city reporter.

If New Yorkers in the twenties were beginning to entertain advanced ideas in music, literature, theatre and painting, the city's politics were still a jungle of patronage and corruption where the Tammany Tiger, symbol of Manhattan's Democratic machine, roared unchallenged. Under Mayor Jimmy Walker, the brilliantined, tuxedo-clad front man for Tammany who as a young man peddled songs in Tin Pan Alley, New Yorkers had a government described as "high, wide, and handsome."¹³ But in March 1931 Governor Roosevelt appointed Samuel Seabury to investigate charges of corruption. Judge Seabury's revelations forced Walker to resign in September 1932. When Isidor Feinstein arrived on the scene New Yorkers had just elected Fiorello La Guardia—a half Italian, half Jewish Republican Socialist congressman from East Harlem—to City Hall.

A veteran of the campaign to save Sacco and Vanzetti, former lawyer for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, La Guardia, with his mixed parentage, membership in the Episcopal

Church and the Masons, was in Robert Caro's splendid phrase, "practically a balanced ticket all by himself." Pugnacious, passionate, able to rouse a crowd in seven languages—appearing before a legislative committee on rent controls, La Guardia announced: "I come not to praise the landlord but to bury him"—the Little Flower offered the Post's new editorialist his first chance to shine.¹⁴

"There was a Tammany Hall hack coming up for reappointment, and La Guardia had just been elected," Stone recalled, adding that the mayor "was one of my heroes--one of Stern's heroes, too. Stern called an editorial conference.... Of course, I was the youngest guy there. And I was the only guy there that wasn't a New Yorker. But I knew the conference was coming, so after work the night before I went to the library and got out all the clippings on this fellow. The next day Stern called on me last as the junior member, and I proceeded to give a thorough review of the man's career, point out all the issues, and Stern was so proud that this kid he'd brought up from Philadelphia knew more than anyone else on the paper." The resulting editorial--confident, well-informed, and full of reservations about the reappointment of Transportation Board chairman John Delaney--pleased the publisher so much he put it on the front page.¹⁵

All of Stern's papers shared editorials (as well as national advertising—which was why the Post became a broadsheet). But for his first six months in New York, Izzy was on his own: "I [practically] wrote the whole goddamned editorial page.... And edited the mailbag and letters to the editor and the side stuff." His colleagues didn't like being shown up by "the kid," but Izzy

had no choice. He had to become an expert on New York and its problems, he had to acquire this expertise quickly, and, if he was to be respected, he had to do it without asking a lot of questions in the newsroom. Once again he'd arrived in the middle of the game. Luckily for Isidor Feinstein, this time, he could consult a program.

"I'd done publicity for Norman Thomas. And Norman Thomas did a wonderful book on New York at about that time." Published in 1932, What's the Matter with New York is indeed an extraordinary book. "Among the intelligentsia," says Thomas and his co-author Paul Blanshard, "it is smart to be cynical concerning all forms of democracy and especially local democracy. A man who discusses intelligently the color line in South Africa and the freedom of India will consider a street-car franchise in Brooklyn beneath his mental range...."

To correct this prejudice, the two Socialists marshal an astonishing range of arguments. "In Russia under the leadership of a remarkable group of intellectuals, the city proletariat has not only overthrown the old order in the city but has carried to a bewildered and often reluctant countryside a coercive gospel of socialist salvation. So the city which to the shepherd and peasant has always been the symbol and home of a predatory culture appears in a new role as the pioneer of a system that challenges old acquisitive standards."¹⁶ Here was a novel use for the prestige of the Russian Revolution: not to encourage submission to the Comintern, but as evidence that the city, in Populist and Progressive mythology generally depicted as Sodom, can also function as the cradle of revolt.

From the realpolitik acknowledgement that “only a party machine can defeat a party machine” (which must have been music to David Stern’s ears) to their classic muckraker’s analysis of the city’s subway finances, Thomas and Blanshard offered raw material for a dozen crusades and hundreds of editorials. Zoning rackets, sweetheart contracts, city franchises, pier rights, insurance commissions, interest-free bank accounts—the whole gaudy array of what Tammany founder George Washington Plunkitt called “good honest graft” was anatomized and explained. For a young man suddenly obliged to consider Brooklyn streetcar franchises very much within his purview, the book was a godsend. The authors’ verdict on the new President, “a nice person who once graduated from Harvard, has a good radio voice, and is as sincere as old party politics will permit,” while in retrospect as wide of the mark as their admiration for the Soviets’ “coercive gospel of socialist salvation,” must at the time have only enhanced their credibility with the young editorialist.¹⁷

Thomas was already a Post ally on one of David Stern’s more dramatic policy shifts: the boycott of German-made goods. In May 1933, before Stern bought the paper, the Post (like every other New York daily) opposed the anti-Nazi boycott. Terming the strategy “a bad weapon,” an editorial warned: “All boycotts ‘hurt business’.... This action by American Jews may well tend to drag America into a form of opposition to Germany that it might not care to take.” Norman Thomas refused to let the boycott be dismissed as a “Jewish” matter, leading hundreds of demonstrators to Macy’s carrying placards which read: ‘Macy’s Buys German Goods, We Want No Fascism Here’.¹⁸

Certainly when the Mayor-elect, announcing his first six appointments, named Paul Blanshard as Commissioner of Accounts, the Post cheered: "LaGuardia is living up to his promises."¹⁹ That same day the paper's editorial writer, taking a leaf from Thomas and Blanshard, described the outgoing Mayor's pension arrangements as "a new form of graft."²⁰ The explosion of mayoral wrath that resulted was gleefully recounted on the next day's front page:

"The Mayor read. Then saw red. Then telephoned personally.... He didn't like the editorial, and he didn't like editorial writers, either. 'That editorial was libellous and somebody should go to jail for it,' he said in the loudest of Mayoral voices. 'The man who wrote it should be thrown off the paper.'

"As it happened, it was the author of the editorial whom the Mayor was addressing. The author, a quiet man of 110 pounds, received the dictum with all the deference due exalted office, suppressing, out of high respect, his natural tendency to argue the point."²¹ After less than a week in the job, he already had the mayor of New York calling for his head. Isidor Feinstein had arrived.

III.

Michael Blankfort had arrived, too. While his best friend courted controversy at the Post, Blankfort was fomenting revolution in Greenwich Village. Backed by a \$2000 check from John Hammond, the producer of Benny Goodman, Billie Holiday and Count Basie, in December the Theatre Union opened its first

production, Peace on Earth. Written by Albert Maltz and George Sklar, the anti-war drama was directed by Blankfort. "We hoped to make radicals out of the audiences, and further than that we hoped to make communist sympathizers out of the radicals," he recalled.²²

Of course, many of those in attendance opening night at Eva Le Gallienne's Civic Repertory Theatre were already converted. One was Charles Shipman. Like Maltz and Sklar, Shipman was a Communist. In fact under his Party name, Manuel Gomez, he'd been one of the founders of the Mexican Communist Party. An American-born Jew, Shipman was also a talented actor, and in a break from his work for the Comintern joined the Theatre Union, again under the name Gomez—this time to avoid scandalizing his bosses at The Wall Street Journal, where Shipman wrote a stock market column.²³

It was probably Blankfort who introduced the two newspapermen. A few weeks after Peace on Earth opened—"received by the labor press and audience with enthusiasm but by the Broadway critics with anguish"²⁴—Shipman had a visitor at the Journal: "Izzy came to my office with his managing editor [Ernest Gruening], whom I had heard of, but never met, and ... promptly offered me the Post's financial editorship."²⁵

By the time Shipman arrived at the Post, Gruening, a former editor of the Nation, had left. "I reported directly to Stern, who ran the paper himself. Instead of a conventional financial section covering stocks and bonds, he wanted pieces about everyday money matters and economic problems, written from an FDR point of view. Then, without warning, he presented me with a

bold new masthead for my section: ‘The New Deal in Business.’” Shipman resigned.²⁶ But his friendship with the man who recruited him remained unaffected.

This was not unusual. Though theoretically the party was at the height of the “Third Period”—a time when good Communists were supposed to be vigorous in denunciation of any leftist outside the Party—Isidor Feinstein was not in the Party, and was therefore not bound by Party discipline. “I always tried to keep away from ugly, blind, suicidal infighting on the left,” he recalled decades later.²⁷ He moved comfortably in Party circles, and had “family and friends” in the Party, but “the idea of being subject to party discipline and told what to do, or what to think, or what to write was absolutely repugnant to me.”²⁸

A one-man united front, he brought the tolerant comradeship of “322”—the Leof-Blitzstein household—with him to New York. “I tried to befriend everyone. I had socialists, communists, Trotskyists, Lovestoneites* and liberals for friends. My door was open”²⁹ Just before he’d left Philadelphia, he’d joined the Newspaper Guild. “Heywood Broun came down and organized us.” In the fledgling Guild, too, liberals and leftists of all stripes managed to work together. But he soon found that New York was not Philadelphia: “The radicals were distracted by the most ugly nasty sectarian quarrels. They would hate each other and fight even within the parties—the different parties—for lousy little \$50 a week jobs.” As for the Communist Party U.S.A., his enthusiasm for a “Soviet America” was fast becoming a thing of the past: “You know, it wasn’t just Stalin. There were a lot of little

* Followers of Jay Lovestone, former general secretary of the CPUSA.

Stalins in the Party. I don't want to mention anybody's name, but there were some pretty horrible people, and they acted like little Stalins right in New York.”³⁰

He'd been in New York just three months when Izzy found himself on the sidelines of a conflict which strained his determination to avoid sectarian bitterness—and underlined the terrible consequences of a Left divided against itself. The setting was Madison Square Garden, but, as in his departure from the Socialist Party, the background was German. Since 1932 Austria had been ruled by the Christian Socialist Englebert Dollfuss. Despite numerous offers of cooperation from the Austrian Social Democrats, who proposed an anti-Nazi front, Dollfuss made common cause with the Fascist Heimwehr (Home Guard) and, in February 1934, moved to crush the Social Democrats, who had themselves previously moved against Austria's Communists. The following day the Post ran an editorial faulting Dollfuss, and calling for “a broad united front ... to save Austria from the Nazis.”³¹ New York's labor unions organized a rally against Dollfuss at Madison Square Garden on February 16, but what was intended as a show of labor unity and solidarity soon degenerated into a melee when Communist hecklers accused the Austrian Socialists of “disarming and deserting” the workers. As New York's united front against Fascism turned into a free-for-all, one speaker could be heard above the fisticuffs. Frank Crosswaith, an African-American Socialist, shouted that the Communists were pigs “who will always remain pigs because it is in the nature of Communists to be pigs.”³²

The Post editorial was equally forthright: “Communists staged a disgraceful spectacle in breaking up the Austrian protest

meeting at Madison Square Garden.... Had some other organization used the same tactics to break up a united anti-Fascist meeting in the same way, the Communists would have found no epithet too vile for such 'traitorous' conduct."³³ David Stern's protégé would probably have agreed with Martin Plaetti, former president of the German Federation of Clothing Workers. "It was precisely such spectacles as that staged here today," the editorial quoted Plaetti, "that led to the triumph of Hitlerism in Germany." But he would not have agreed with the editorial's assertion that "only Nazi hoodlums could have equaled ... the Communists." The editorial was not written by Isidor Feinstein, but by his boss.

By 1934 Isidor Feinstein was becoming obsessed by the German left's failure to unite against the Nazi threat. The CP USA's plunge down the same sectarian road pained him as much as David Stern's persistent Red-baiting. But in the fights he cared about most—the battle against hunger, exploitation, and the spread of Fascism at home and in Europe—Communists and liberals were both potential allies. "You might, at one and the same time, laugh at the Daily Worker and their stuff on Stalin and Russia, [but] here in America, they were comrades."³⁴

"Millions of Americans," a Post editorial declared, "want reforms more basic, measures more liberal than those which the New Deal has so far developed." Officially, the Communist Party was still deaf to this "thunder on the left."³⁵ Officially, the party was still committed to "the United Front from below"—in Izzy's words "a fake United Front ... which meant destroy the leadership. It was really an effort to take over their rivals."³⁶ But

many American radicals—both in and out of the Communist Party—were not deaf to the thunder on the left.

IV.

For American radicals, the long, hot summer of 1934 was the best of times. The outburst of reforming energy which began with Franklin Roosevelt's inauguration seemed to have run its course. "The first wild wave of hope under the New Deal had receded," wrote Alfred Kazin.³⁷ Six million workers had been unemployed for more than a year; two and a half million had been out of work for over two years.³⁸ But as the tide of liberalism receded, the seeds of revolt began to put up shoots.

In Toledo, the workers at Electric Auto-Lite went out on strike after management refused to recognize the union—a right the workers had been guaranteed under Section 7A of the National Industrial Recovery Act. The company turned to the courts for an injunction to stop the picketing, and the National Guard was called in. But A.J. Muste's Lucas County Unemployed League defied the injunction, and after hand-to-hand fighting broke out the city's Central Labor Council called a general strike.³⁹

That July, when San Francisco police tried to break up a strike of West Coast ports called by International Longshoreman's Association leader Harry Bridges, a general strike paralyzed the city for three days. And in Minneapolis the International Brotherhood of Teamsters local, led by the Trotskyist Dunne brothers, shut down the city with a general strike despite the opposition of national Teamster officials and in the face of brutal

police violence. In one skirmish, two workers were killed and sixty-seven wounded. Many of the casualties were shot in the back.⁴⁰

All three of these strikes achieved their immediate goals. Indeed, whatever the limitations of Roosevelt's reforms, workers throughout the country seemed to take the New Deal's promises to heart, even when their leaders did not. This was particularly true of the right to organize.⁴¹ By the end of 1934 one and a half million workers had been involved in some 1800 strikes—most over the issue of union recognition.⁴² Not all were successful. In the North Carolina Piedmont, 300,000 members of the United Textile Workers walked out in September, but the union was still unable to gain a firm foothold.⁴³ For the men and women involved in these struggles, though, there were gains beyond any tally of wins or losses. For them, the waves of strikes racking the country were the birth pangs of a movement.⁴⁴

Before Minneapolis, the writer Meridel Le Sueur had "never been in a strike I felt my feet join in that strange shuffle of thousands of bodies moving with direction, of thousands of feet, and my own breath. As if an electric charge had passed through me, my hair stood on end. I was marching."⁴⁵

This movement did not yet have a name. It never would have a coherent ideology. But it did have what might be called an ethic of solidarity. Thus Meridel Le Sueur, a Communist, would undergo her political baptism in a strike led by Trotskyists—and would, later that same year, join the staff of the Minnesota Labor School, sponsored by the Minneapolis local of Socialist stalwart David Dubinsky's International Ladies Garment Worker's Union.⁴⁶ The prospectus for *Arise*, a magazine put out

by the Socialist Rebel Arts group in 1934, lists Trotskyist poet John Brooks Wheelwright, Communist cartoonist Art Young, and radical lyricist E.Y. “Yip” Harburg along with SP functionaries James Oneal and Sol Levitas.

In campaigns against lynching in the South, and in efforts to organize farmworkers on the West coast, rank and file radicals of all persuasions discovered an ability—in some cases even an eagerness—to work together long before their leaders ceased official hostilities. This was especially true of college students. At 11 o’clock in the morning on April 13, 1934, hundreds of thousands of students across the country put down their books and walked out of classes in a “Student Strike Against War.” Called by both the Communist-led National Student League and the Socialist Student League for Industrial Democracy, the strike was probably the most significant national indication of premature Popular Frontism.⁴⁷

But there were local outbreaks as well. At the finale of a Young People’s Concert in Philadelphia, Leopold Stokowski led the audience in singing “The Internationale.”⁴⁸ Renegade socialist Upton Sinclair’s End Poverty in California (EPIC) campaign, while rejected by the leaders of both the Democratic and Communist parties, drew enough grass roots support to win the state’s Democratic gubernatorial primary. Like Franklin Roosevelt, David Stern rejected Sinclair’s efforts to steer the Democrats leftwards. “Liberalism seeks the middle of the road,” scolded the Post. A month earlier, the paper had called for a speedy end to San Francisco’s general strike, warning that “its spread would be a national calamity.”⁴⁹ Meanwhile, in New York, a similar coalition of communists (small-c and capital-C), socialists, and assorted

agitators was engaged in a battle with Fiorello La Guardia's police commissioner. This time, though, the Post weighed in on the side of the radicals.

Hostilities began on May 26, 1934. The location was relief headquarters in Manhattan. A delegation from the United Action Committee, an organization of white-collar workers on relief, demanded a meeting with the city's Deputy Welfare Commissioner to press for restoration of work-relief pay cuts, more public works jobs, and the opening of more relief bureaus. Instead the demonstrators were met by a platoon of riot police, who waded in with clubs and fists. Several protestors were arrested and charged with incitement to riot. The following day, when a group was being arraigned, "at a signal from the magistrate, police hidden in rooms adjoining the court cleared it of spectators and staged an attack so brutal that two reporters intervened."⁵⁰ The reporters were from the Daily News and the Daily Worker, and while both papers reported the facts, the News editorial page derided talk of police brutality: "So long as the Red minority keeps trying to force its will on the majority by violence, the police will have to use necessary force, mixed with their usual good judgement of course, to block the Reds."⁵¹ The Post, however, made the incident into a cause célèbre.

Handicapped by the lack of a reporter on the scene, the Post had other assets, chief among them the wide acquaintance of its new editorial writer. Isidor Feinstein had already criticized Major-General John F. O'Ryan for his men's frequent application of the nightstick to the skulls of New York's hungry and jobless, on one occasion defending a Communist relief worker—a slim, feisty woman—who'd been arrested for attacking a policeman

after she'd tried to prevent a beating.⁵² "Because I was not sectarian," he recalled, "I was able to line up liberals, radicals, Trotskyites, Communists, Lovestoneites, etc., in a joint campaign to get rid of O'Ryan."

Throughout the summer the Post editorial page kept up a steady barrage against the commissioner. O'Ryan's defenders -- including La Guardia--pointed to the presence of Communists among the United Action Committee leadership to justify the claim that the police had been provoked. The Mayor, who'd described the UAC demonstrators as "yellow dogs" in May, began to reconsider after the commissioner's men beat up an Amalgamated Clothing Workers picket line. "O'Ryan Must Go" thundered the Post.⁵³

The coup de grâce, though administered by Isidor Feinstein, came not in a Post editorial but on Page One: "I broke a story that really hurt him. I dug up the fact--there was a book by Elizabeth Dilling called The Red Network. I discovered that the [Police Department Alien and Criminal Squad, known as the] Red Squad was using that as its handbook, and one of the Reds listed in La Guardia's Red Squad handbook was Fiorello H. La Guardia! We put that right on the front page, quoting the Red rogues gallery picture of this dangerous radical."⁵⁴ O'Ryan resigned soon afterwards, and La Guardia, declaring "economic issues cannot be settled with a nightstick," banned police from carrying clubs during daylight hours.⁵⁵

Isidor Feinstein's triumphant campaign against police brutality was significant for a number of reasons. The coalition of organized labor, Communists, radical intellectuals and middle-class civil libertarians would serve as a model for Popular Front

organizing in New York. The campaign's orchestration of mainstream press outcry and street protest would become a hallmark of Popular Front tactics (as would the AUC's mix of Communists in some leadership positions but a largely non-Communist rank and file). The wider application of these tactics depended on a change in political direction that, for the Communist Party, could only come from Moscow. But the lesson of what could be accomplished by a diverse but united left was not lost on Isidor Feinstein. In the meantime, a dispatch from the front line, titled "How to Make a Riot," launched the young author onto the pages of the New Republic. The magazine's "Contributors" column credited him with making "the editorial page of [the Post] one of the high spots of New York journalism."

Success attracted celebrity. The Feinsteins' apartment on Central Park West became a gathering place for premature Popular Fronters of varying degrees of commitment. Some, like former Communist vice-presidential candidate Benjamin Gitlow and freelance radical publicist Benjamin Stolberg, would be detained only briefly before resuming their journeys to the far right. Others, like Alabama Senator Hugo Black, Nation editor Max Lerner or New Republic editor Malcolm Cowley, were in for the longer haul.⁵⁶ And though Isidor Feinstein was energetically scaling the heights of political journalism, neither his hospitality nor his attention was restricted to those in a position to help his career. Arnold Beichman had just graduated from college when he was given a tryout at the Post. As editor of the Columbia Spectator, Beichman had been one of the leaders in the "Student Strike Against War."

“Izzy tried me out on the editorial page,” Beichman recalled, “and the very first one I wrote—Boom!--he took it right that day. Izzy was so taken with me, he took me to dinner with his wife, and afterwards, he took me to meet Michael Blankfort, which was awesome to me, because he was a playwright, and had written for the New Masses.”⁵⁷

“We lived like kings,” said Samuel Grafton, who joined the Post in June 1934. “I was making \$125 a week. We had an 8-room apartment on Central Park West that cost \$75 a month. We had a Japanese butler, he cost \$50 a month. I had a car. In those days you could park outside a Broadway theatre, see a show.”⁵⁸ The Feinsteins had other obligations. “When we lost our business ... lost everything, Izzy came to our rescue,” Louis Stone remembered. “There was a period when he was paying our rent.” Even so the Feinsteins managed a full-time maid and, when Esther became pregnant again in early 1935, a woman to help look after the children.

Central Park West was a long way from the welfare office, or the San Francisco docks, or the streets of Minneapolis. But the cost in human misery of capitalism’s boom and bust cycles was never, for Isidor Feinstein, a mere abstraction. It is easy, in retrospect, to ridicule the mix of culture and politics that was being born in New York in the early 1930s as naïve (about Stalin), sentimental (about the working class) and sadly inattentive to the virtues of high culture (as opposed to the ersatz verities of Earl Robinson oratorios or Pete Seeger’s Almanac Singers). Richard Rovere described the “cultural tone” of the thirties as “deplorable because it was metallic and strident. Communist culture was not aristocratic; it was cheap and vulgar

and corny.”⁵⁹ It was a tone mercilessly satirized by Michael Blankfort in his first novel, when the hero, a former fellow-traveling screenwriter, is reminded of a poem he’d published in the New Masses:

*This is our joy, that we are part of you.
This is our song, the one you sing.
This is our task, the freeing of you.
This is our life, your life.*

"It's pretty bad, isn't it? What did I call it?," the screenwriter asks. The answer sums up Blankfort's retrospective disillusionment: "To Sacco and Vanzetti, to Tom Mooney, to Angelo Herndon."⁶⁰

Yet the temptation to dismiss the culture of the Popular Front as one long hootenanny needs to be resisted. Not just because it belittles considerable achievement, from the music of Marc Blitzstein to the reportage of Martha Gellhorn to the poetry of Langston Hughes. And not just because it rides roughshod over what it meant to the vast majority of Americans who, perhaps for the first time, saw their own lives represented with all the verve and sophistication of a Duke Ellington or the passion and pathos of a John Garfield. Caricatured as crude, Soviet-inspired, and relentlessly middle-brow, Popular Front Culture could be all those things. But it could also be subtle, daring, and as American as cherry pie—or "Strange Fruit." It was a culture that arose out of the interweaving of political activism, cultural experimentation, and desperate circumstance. For Isidor Feinstein, as for many others, that interweaving was not just a stance, or a "tone" --it was a personal necessity.

V.

Close readers of the New York Post editorial page during the years 1934 and 1935 might well have noticed a kind of split personality. In national politics the paper was solidly Democratic; locally, the Post backed Republican La Guardia. But given the warm relationship between FDR and the mayor, that contradiction was more apparent than real. Pro-labor, anti-Hearst, tolerant on race—on all these issues the Post spoke with a consistent voice. Like most publishers, J. David Stern rode his hobby horse. “He was hipped on money,” recalled Sam Grafton. “If you could change the currency from the gold standard it would solve everything. He was a print-money man. We catered to him from time to time and wrote editorials about it.” Catering to Stern’s hostility to the nascent alliance between Communists and the rest of the left was more difficult.

To Stern, the CP couldn’t do anything right. Did the Party’s International Labor Defense successfully mobilize thousands of people around the world to protest against the legal lynching of the Scottsboro Boys? As far as Stern was concerned, no credit was due “the silly cavorting of Red demonstrators”; nor was anything accomplished by “the spirit of class warfare.”⁶¹ Does the Comintern come out in favor of religious freedom for all anti-fascists? “Too Dumb to Be Dangerous, ” says the Post, calling the move “as meaningless as a Nazi pledge to respect the religious beliefs of Nazis.”⁶² Both Stern and his longtime lieutenant, editor Harry T. Saylor, were vociferous in their disdain for “parlor pinks and Communist sympathizers.”⁶³ Stalin, the Soviet Union, and the

CPUSA were, in Stern's view, all synonymous, and all as evil as Hitler or the Nazis.

Yet the same editorial page that printed Stern's "Communism and Fascism are new labels, but the founders of this country knew them under other forms" also warned, "They talk Americanism but they mean Fascism"--one of many Post denunciations of Massachusetts Congressman John McCormack's new Special Committee on Un-American Activities.⁶⁴ "Special privilege in America has always had its bogeymen," the Post noted. "In the first years of the Republic they were 'Jacobins.' Today the bogeymen are 'Communists.' Anyone who wants to organize labor, or shield the consumer, or protect civil liberties, or strengthen regulation, or end financial excesses is called a 'Communist.'" ⁶⁵

If David Stern himself could have written the Post's ringing declaration that "the Constitution protects Communists and Fascists as well as Republicans and Democrats," only Isidor Feinstein would insist on acknowledging: "the Communist and Socialist Parties are the only ones interested in organizing the unemployed and workers on relief.... The result is that our relief-worker organizations are largely controlled by one or another of the fifty-seven varieties of radicals: right, center, left and R.P.C. Socialists, official Communists, Right Opposition Communists, Left Opposition Communists, Lovestoneites, Trotzkyites, American Workers Party, I.W.W., etc.... *It must also be recognized that such organizations do a lot of good.*" ⁶⁶

But if the Post's divergence on Communism reflected a genuine ambivalence about any measures beyond middle-of-the-road liberalism, the Party's line on radical cooperation was

scarcely more coherent. The Scottsboro campaign, for example, though it would draw support from all strands of left-thinking opinion, began as a classic Third Period struggle designed to expose the bankruptcy of liberal or reform efforts (like the NAACP). Officially the Party was still hostile to Franklin Roosevelt and deeply suspicious of the New Deal—a view echoed by many commentators outside the Party, from Norman Thomas and Reinhold Neibuhr to Max Lerner, who in 1935 wrote that “the logic of the New Deal” was increasingly becoming “the naked fist of the capitalist state.”⁶⁷ That didn’t prevent individual Party members like Nathaniel Weyl or Lee Pressman from coming to Washington and working very hard to make the New Deal succeed.⁶⁸

Well before the rise of Hitler, some American Communists favored a more collaborative policy. Even as orthodox an apparatchik as Michael Gold, New Masses scourge of social fascism in literature, came back from Moscow in 1930 to urge “it was of vital importance to enlist all friendly intellectuals into the ranks of the revolution. Every door must be opened wide to the fellow-travelers.”⁶⁹ After 1933, with the consequences of sectarianism played out every day on the streets of Berlin and Vienna, many radicals, including Isidor Feinstein, walked through those doors. For intellectuals, especially Jewish intellectuals, “the myth of Soviet philo-semitism gave Communists a special panache.”⁷⁰ The spread of Fascism was important to the rank and file as well. As Mark Naison argues, “it did not take much persuasion to make a Jewish printer or a Croatian steelworker hate Hitler, or a black school teacher denounce Mussolini, or an

Austrian refugee actor raise funds for victims of the Dolfuss regime.”⁷¹

But there were plenty of reasons much closer to home for a more pragmatic line. Communists trying to organize tenant farmers found themselves walking the same fields—and facing the same terror—as Socialist organizers. From the textile mills of the Carolina piedmont to the factory farms of the San Joaquin valley, radicals breathed the same tear gas, felt the same clubs on their backs, and feared the same guardsmen’s bullets, regardless of party affiliation. Irving Howe, no cheerleader for the Popular Front, observed: “There was a genuine urgency behind the clamor for a united front. Consider the feelings of socialists in Arkansas and Tennessee, who were trying, at the risk of their lives, to organize sharecroppers: didn't it make sense to work with anyone sharing their immediate objectives, no matter which idiotic theories Stalin advanced and his New York followers repeated? Or the socialists unionizing the automobile plants in Michigan: could they refuse out of hand to cooperate with communists who were also trying to organize the industry?”⁷²

On the ninth floor of party headquarters in Union Square, Stalin’s followers in New York would advance any number of idiotic theories in the years to come. But they would also lead fights against discrimination in public housing, organize resistance to evictions from the Bronx to the Lower East Side, back a “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” campaign in Harlem, provide the troops for demonstrations against cuts in relief, and lend manpower and organizational savvy to Fiorello La Guardia’s attempt to break Tammany Hall’s stranglehold over the city. The party’s growing reputation for streetwise pragmatism paid off. In

1933, the May Day parade was so big, Malcolm Cowley remembered, “it had to be divided into two sections, one starting from near the Battery and marching north, the other from midtown and marching south, with the two sections converging in Union Square.” In 1934 the Communists got more votes in Manhattan than the Socialists.⁷³

Ironically it was V.F. Calverton’s Modern Monthly which laid the theoretical groundwork for a rapprochement on the left. In the same June 1933 issue which featured Abelard Stone’s hankering after a Soviet America, Trotskyist theoretician B.J. Field called for a “united front for immediate ends” in which he urged leftists to “March separately, Strike unitedly.”⁷⁴ As Calverton’s excommunication attests, the Party was not yet ready to respond to such overtures. And though in June 1934, facing the prospect of a right-wing government in France, the Comintern ordered the PCF to unite with the Socialists “at any price,” the implications of such a move hadn’t yet filtered down to Union Square.⁷⁵

A movement was finding its feet, but the Party still refused to join the party. At the climax of Clifford Odets’s play Waiting for Lefty, audiences around the country rose up shouting “Strike! Strike! Strike!” By the spring of 1935 Lefty had been performed in 50 cities and been banned in Boston, New Haven and Newark; Isidor Feinstein thought the play deserved the Pulitzer Prize.⁷⁶ Though Odets was, at the time, a card-carrying Communist, the Party’s cultural commissars panned his play. In June 1935 critic Kenneth Burke, another Modern Monthly contributor (who, like Calverton, had no appetite for apostasy), gave a speech to the American Writers’ Congress on “Revolutionary Symbolism in

America,” proposing that the left base its rhetoric on “the People” rather than “the Worker.” Burke’s modest proposal—more a tactical suggestion than a profound disagreement—brought swift condemnation from Party apparatchiks. Yet before the year was out, Burke’s “populist” heresy would become orthodoxy.⁷⁷

The Communist Party didn’t officially embrace a “united front against fascism and war” until July of 1935. In a speech before the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International in Moscow, Georgi Dimitroff, famed for his defiance as a defendant in the Reichstag Fire trial, announced the end of the party’s confrontationist stance. The Post, which had saluted Dimitroff’s “courage and cleverness” in 1933, was as ambivalent as ever.⁷⁸ Isidore Feinstein expressed relief that events in Germany had “taught the Left a lesson [and] ... led Moscow to modify its policy, to subordinate revolutionary aims, and to offer cooperation to ‘capitalist’ nations and ‘capitalist’ parties for the sake of a firm stand against war and Fascism.” But David Stern, though opposed to Fascism, was more concerned about war. Wary of the Popular Front on political grounds, Stern was also opposed to any alliance which threatened to draw the United States into a European war. When Mussolini’s legions bombed Ethiopia, the Post’s indignation was somewhat muted: “It’s too bad about the Ethiopians, but they’ll have to take care of themselves.”⁷⁹

The Party’s change in direction initially had little effect on the situation at the Post. The new Soviet Constitution, with its Bill of Rights promising freedom of speech and conscience as well as the right to employment and to a secure old age, drew a cautious welcome from Isidor Feinstein, who hailed the “good impression

made by the new Soviet Constitution and recent moves in the direction of more democratic government.” But to his boss, the Soviets’ “pretense at Democracy-- almost as far-fetched as Hitler's pretense that he derives his authority from a popular referendum”--was just so much “borsch.”⁸⁰

Stern was more favorably impressed by the CP's newfound admiration for the New Deal. Dimitroff himself laid down the new line: “the most reactionary circles of American finance capital, which are attacking Roosevelt” are the prime movers behind “the fascist movement in the United States.” Anyone who continues to view the New Deal as a step towards fascism, said Dimitroff, was guilty of a “stereotyped approach.”⁸¹

The CPUSA hierarchy was quick to adapt to the call for cooperation on the left—and to a view of the New Deal which put it to the right of the Socialist Party--just as it would be quick to return to sectarianism when Moscow changed its tune. But it is important to recognize that even if the Party's Popular Front policies were, as Irving Howe charged, “conceived in bad faith and executed with bad faith,” they enabled a degree of political effectiveness and cultural participation that Howe himself, writing fifty years later, called “the most promising approach of the American left, [the] one that apparently came closest to recognising native realities.”⁸² It is even more important to recognize that while the Popular Front may have come as news to Union Square, it merely gave official sanction to practices which, from Harlem to Harlan County to Hollywood, were already well-established at the grass roots.⁸³

Yet if the movement which became known as the Popular Front was hardly called into being by Party fiat, Moscow's

benediction was not without significant consequences. Within the Party, as Maurice Isserman and others have argued, leader Earl Browder's declaration that "Communism is Twentieth Century Americanism" provided "a bridge by which the children of immigrants could adapt themselves to the culture of the New World without renouncing the ideals that had sustained their parents."⁸⁴ Party membership rose from less than 15,000 in June 1933 to around 75,000 in 1938. In 1935 alone, over 19,000 new recruits filled out Party cards—a figure which would rise to 25,000 in 1936, the first full year of the official Popular Front.⁸⁵

With Franklin Roosevelt as Fellow-Traveler Number One, Isidor Feinstein found the atmosphere at the Post more hospitable. The change did not happen overnight. In September 1935, the Post greeted a "united front to halt Mussolini" consisting of Great Britain and France "with her allies Soviet Russia, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Rumania."⁸⁶ Six weeks later, Russia made another list—this time of countries in thrall to "the Totalitarian God." Only Hitler, said the Post, "has managed to outdo the Bolsheviks in brutality."⁸⁷ But if David Stern's distrust of the Soviet Union remained, his hostility to the CPUSA—now enlisted as dedicated cadre in the New Deal—seemed somewhat diminished. Though still loudly pro-capitalist, the Post now reserved its ire for reactionaries like Hearst, or "chunk-headed Tories and turncoat liberals."⁸⁸ The decline in sniping on his left flank allowed the paper's chief editorial writer to concentrate on his latest crusade: corruption in the American labor movement.

VI.

In September 1935 Isidor Feinstein made his debut in the Nation with a two-part series on racketeering in the American Federation of Labor. Starting from the premise that “powerful and militant unions are made all the more necessary ... by the growing menace of fascism,” he proceeded to give a vivid account of “the crushing of democracy in the trade unions by racketeers and the labor politicians who support them.” The first article detailed the methods employed by Teamster delegate Arthur “Tootsie” Herbert and his brother Charles, delegate of Local 440 of the Official Orthodox Poultry Slaughterers of America, to maintain control over the New York poultry market. In a classic piece of muckraking based on public records and a Post investigation, Feinstein traced the high cost of chicken in New York city markets first to a gangster monopoly enforced by murder and bombing, then to corrupt unions, and finally to “a criminal network that reaches high up into the Tammany organization.”⁸⁹

The language was colorful—“a veil was cast over Mr. ‘Tootsie’ Herbert’s first steps on the ladder to success by the removal of his record and fingerprints from the Police Department”—but the moral was plain: “the A. F. of L. leadership is usually lined up on the side of the racketeers, for those who oppose the racketeers are always stigmatized as ‘reds’ no matter how pale their actual political convictions or affiliations may be.” In his second installment, he described union elections “that make Tammany look genteel.” This time the roll of dishonor ranged from the gangster-led painters union and the equally

corrupt Electrical Workers to metalworkers, dockworkers, and movie projectionists. Contrasting the swift “expulsion of ‘radical’ or ‘Communist’ groups within the ranks” to A.F. of L. leader William Green’s indulgent treatment of even convicted racketeers, the articles added up to a blistering indictment whose only heroes were Sidney Hillman of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Harry Bridges of the International Longshoreman’s Association, and Louis Weinstock, an insurgent in the painters union.⁹⁰

In the late 1930s the federal government would begin a decades-long fight to deport Bridges as a Communist, and in the 1940s Weinstock would become a pillar of the Russian War Relief, but, as the presence of the anti-Communist Hillman should make clear, to view “Racketeering in the A.F. of L.” as a Communist-inspired venture misses the point.* Isidor Feinstein’s efforts as a muckraker in the house of labor were a harbinger of changes that would turn the American labor movement upside down. After decades of exclusive, crafts-dominated “business unionism” there were forces within the A.F. of L. which were pushing hard for change. Encouraged by the obvious breakdown in the capitalist order, yet frustrated by the inability of existing labor organizations to meet the challenge posed by the depression, these forces had been growing in strength since the summer of 1934.⁹¹

The Communist Party represented only a fraction of labor’s insurgent ranks, but it was a crucial fraction, running like a red thread not only through Isidor Feinstein’s cast of characters but

* For one thing, the *Nation*’s “Labor and Industry” editor, Margaret Marshall (later to become the magazine’s literary editor), was a staunch anti-Stalinist.

through the whole of what would soon become the Congress of Industrial Organizations—indeed, through the whole of the Popular Front. The CPUSA's embrace of the Popular Front, and its speedy abandonment of the disastrous dual-union policy embodied in the Trade Union Unity League, brought thousands of experienced, militant union activists back into the mainstream of American labor. In steel, rubber, and the automobile industry, these veterans acted as catalysts for a massive surge in organizing. But (with a few possible exceptions such as Harry Bridges) the leaders of this surge were men like Hillman, or the socialist Reuther brothers, or the fiercely anti-Communist David Dubinsky.⁹² Fiercest of them all was John L. Lewis, indomitable head of the United Mine Workers.

Back in the 1920s and early 1930s Lewis had fought his own battles with the Communist-led National Miners Union for dominance in the coalfields of Kentucky and Pennsylvania. The autocratic Lewis emerged victorious, but by 1934 times were so hard in towns like Centralia or Shamokin Pennsylvania that only a thriving trade in "bootleg coal"—stolen from company-owned mines by unemployed miners—kept U.M.W. members from starvation.⁹³ Though patently illegal, the bootleg coal industry (in 1934 alone bootleggers took more than 4.5 million tons of coal, worth over \$40,000,000) was tolerated by newly-elected Democratic Pennsylvania governor George Earle—a circumstance less than surprising in light of the fact that, ranked in order of their respective contributions to Earle's victory, Lewis would probably come right behind J. David Stern and Albert Greenfield.⁹⁴ Lewis's lieutenant, U.M.W. secretary-treasurer Tom Kennedy, was elected Lieutenant-Governor.

If any single incident can symbolize Lewis's role in the transformation of the American labor movement, it was his confrontation with the barons of the A.F. of L. at the federation's convention in Atlantic City in October 1935. A lifelong Republican, Lewis was suspicious of Democrats (small-d or capital-D). But his decision to use the New Deal as an organizing tool—"The President wants you to join a union" U.M.W. placards urged—had brought 90 per cent of the nation's soft coal production under U.M.W. auspices. Now Lewis put his considerable bulk squarely behind a resolution calling for a massive organizing campaign in steel, autos, meatpacking and other mass-production industries. Traditional A.F. of L. practice in the case of new industries was to organize workers into "federal" locals, which would then be dissolved as workers were parceled out to the various crafts unions. Assessing the effects of this policy, the Lewis-backed resolution noted "that after fifty-five years of activity and effort we have enrolled ... approximately three and one half million members of the thirty-nine millions of organizable workers is a fact that speaks for itself." Given the A.F. of L.'s structure, the resolution was doomed, but during the debate William Hutcheson, president of the Carpenters Union, called Lewis a "bastard." Lewis knocked Hutcheson to the floor with his fists.⁹⁵

Isidor Feinstein's exposure of corruption in the A.F. of L. hierarchy to the readers of the Nation and the New York Post was a series of small blows in the same fight. The abuses he documented demanded radical action. On November 9, 1935, Lewis, Hillman, Dubinsky and the leaders of five other unions announced the formation of the Committee on Industrial

Organization. Though technically under A.F. of L. sponsorship, the C.I.O. (very much guided by Lewis) set its own course, and determined on an immediate organizing campaign on an industrial (as opposed to crafts) basis. Lewis, who suddenly had a pressing need for trained, committed organizers, evidently remembered his old adversaries with respect, if not affection. (Besides, Lewis knew that Party members were used to following orders.) Communists flooded into the CIO at both the local and national level. In the national office, Len De Caux edited the CIO News and Lee Pressman, recently fired from his job at the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, became general counsel of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee. (Pressman was introduced to Lewis by his friend journalist Gardner "Pat" Jackson.)⁹⁶ At least sixty SWOC organizers were party members; the drive to unionize the auto industry also relied on Communists like Wyndham Mortimer and Roy Travis.⁹⁷

In later years all parties to this bargain would have reasons to deny it: the Communists out of fear for their jobs, or their unions, Lewis and his fellow CIO leaders as a means of distancing themselves from organizers who'd become political liabilities, and, perhaps most vehemently, anti-Communist liberals who may have wanted to defend the labor movement from guilt by association. At the time, however, Lewis made no bones about the terms of the arrangement. "Who gets the bird," he asked in reply to concerns about his new associates, "the dogs--or the hunter?"⁹⁸

Most of the time Fiorello La Guardia was similarly insouciant. Never as dependant on the CP as Lewis, the mayor was nonetheless prepared to recognize the Party's utility. His protégé and former campaign manager, Congressman Vito

Marcantonio, would never have made it to Washington without the Party's troops to knock on doors and pass out palmcards. La Guardia and the Communists also had enemies in common, such as East Coast Longshoremen's leader Joseph Ryan, one of the chief villains of Isidor Feinstein's series, who "sent Jimmy Walker a message to come back to New York."⁹⁹

Given La Guardia's total disdain for loyalty to any political party, his relationship with the Communists was bound to be stormy. When one such tempest came over the Party's agitation for increases in relief, Isidor Feinstein returned to The New Republic to accuse the city of "Spying on the Jobless." Once again based on a Post campaign—and quoting "a suppressed document, photostats of which are in possession of The New York Post"—the article offers "a glimpse of the terror that is slowly being built up against the unemployed." This time Feinstein's targets are La Guardia and Welfare Commissioner William Hodson, "a social worker of long experience and rather liberal reputation." Exposing the existence of a "Red list" of radicals to be dropped from city relief projects, his overheated rhetoric suggests an effort to persuade himself as much as his readers that this really adds up to "Tsarist methods."¹⁰⁰ What it does show is that, forced to choose between "responsible" liberals and radical "agitators"—in Commissioner Hodson's words "people who refuse to be gentlemen"—Isidor Feinstein cast his lot with the agitators.

VI.

Thomas Gardiner Corcoran also had a soft spot for agitators. Son of a Pawtucket, Rhode Island lawyer, Corcoran

blazed his way from Brown University to Harvard Law School, where his quick mind and felicity of expression soon brought him to the attention of Felix Frankfurter. The first Jew on the faculty of the law school, Frankfurter's eloquent and courageous effort to save Sacco and Vanzetti earned him the admiration of a generation of students--and the hatred of many of his colleagues. Probably the most important talent-spotter for the New Deal—he'd been a friend and advisor to Franklin Roosevelt since the President's days as Assistant Secretary of the Navy—Frankfurter sent so many bright young men to Washington they were known as Felix's Happy Hot Dogs. But for his special favorites, the most incandescent intellects, there was an appointment even more prized than the plum jobs at the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, or the Departments of State or Agriculture or the Interior, which were certainly within his gift. When Thomas Corcoran came to Washington as law clerk and secretary to Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes he entered the company of Felix's anointed ones.

It was a brotherhood that required a talent for flattery. ("When Felix walked in the door, there wasn't any question who was boss," recalled Joseph Rauh, a junior member of the order.)¹⁰¹ It was a brotherhood that conferred a sense that rules were for other people. (When Holmes died in 1935, his will directed that his *Commonplace Book*, in which Holmes had written the titles of the 3,475 books he had read, be burnt. Corcoran, who was at Holmes's bedside, smuggled out the heavy black volume and had it sent by courier to the Harvard law library.)¹⁰² It was a brotherhood that valued intellectual toughness. (Frankfurter was "cocky, abrasive, and outspoken,"

said Alger Hiss, another Holmes clerk—as was his brother Donald.)¹⁰³ And from the outside, it was a brotherhood that could look very much like a conspiracy.

Raymond Moley, one of the original Brains Trust who soon soured on the New Deal, thought Corcoran was “committed to the ‘class-struggle’ view of history.” Moley used to quote Corcoran: “Fighting with a businessman is like fighting with a Polack. You can give no quarter.”¹⁰⁴ But Moley, supplanted in FDR’s favor by the brilliant, accordian-playing Irishman (Corcoran was so lace-curtain he didn’t drink, taking up the accordian to provide a cover for his abstinence at Washington parties), was hardly a reliable judge.¹⁰⁵ Neither was the Republican congressman who, furious at being outmaneuvered by Corcoran, denounced “the scarlet fever boys from the little red house in Georgetown.”¹⁰⁶ The impatient Corcoran was no Communist. It was just that, like John L. Lewis, he needed people who could get things done, and when, in the spring of 1936 Isidor Feinstein wandered into his office on K Street, Corcoran soon found a use for the short, rumped, tousle-headed newsman.

Isidor Feinstein wanted a favor. Officially attached to the RFC, Corcoran was known as the President’s “fixer”—a tag which, though it unfairly slighted his role in drafting such key bills as the Public Utilities Holding Company Act and the Securities and Exchange Act, accurately reflected his influence. The *New Yorker* wanted Corcoran to do something about Florida Governor David Sholtz, who’d refused to prevent violence against union organizers in the citrus fields. Claiming that Sholtz had ties to gamblers—“his take is reputed to be close to a million dollars a year”—and the Klan, he asked Corcoran’s help to “open up the

situation.”¹⁰⁷ This he did not get. Sholtz, though a reactionary, was a Democrat, and “Tommy the Cork” was not yet up to attacking members of the President’s own party.

Izzy had probably come at Frankfurter’s urging—as the Post’s legal specialist he’d written to Frankfurter in praise of his writings on labor injunctions, the beginning of a warm correspondence.¹⁰⁸ Though he wouldn’t help with Sholtz, Corcoran was sympathetic. And there was something about the reporter’s furious energy, his combination of indignation and generosity, that Corcoran liked very much. Ben Cohen, Corcoran’s shy, studious, melancholy alter-ego, liked Izzy, too. Another Jewish peddler’s son, Cohen had spent his childhood in Muncie, Indiana before a brilliant career at the University of Chicago brought him to Harvard and, inevitably, to the attention of Professor Frankfurter.¹⁰⁹ As was his habit, Corcoran began by flattering his new friend, soliciting his views on administration policies. A stream of Post editorials started arriving in the next day’s mail.

Before long Corcoran was peppering “Dear Iz” with suggestions for new editorials, helpful to the President’s goals. “Dear Tom” was not disappointed. The writer who once aped Mencken and thought Roosevelt a “slick salesman” now found Mencken “a querulous Tory” whose attack on the president “doesn’t come off.”¹¹⁰ His next assignment was to find a job at the Post for yet another of Frankfurter’s young men, Samuel Beer, a returning Rhodes Scholar who’d just finished a stint at the Resettlement Administration courtesy of Lee Pressman (another Happy Hot Dog). “Corcoran knew Izzy quite well,” Beer recalled.

“Izzy got me a job as a police reporter. That summer he was reading Virgil—on his vacation!”¹¹¹

Like many New Dealers, Beer worked double shifts: after his day job in Resettlement, he'd do political chores for Corcoran, editing pamphlets, drafting speeches. “I never saw Corcoran with fewer than two telephones at one time. He had a suite of rooms at the old Powhatan Hotel, where he always kept the blinds down. And he had two secretaries: Peggy, who worked for him during the day at his official job, and a male secretary who helped him at night with political stuff,” said Beer.

“I usually saw him at night. I'd bring something in, he'd rework it right away and send it over to the White House.”¹¹² On a Saturday night in June, 1936 Beer listened as 100,000 people cheered their throats raw in Philadelphia's Franklin Field in response to a speech he'd helped draft. Roosevelt's pledge to end the rule of “economic royalists,” and his declaration that just as 1776 had been necessary to wipe out “political tyranny,” so in 1936 the enemy was “economic tyranny,” seemed to signal an opening to the left.¹¹³ At the very least, there was an opening for Isidor Feinstein, now a firm convert to the virtues of “peaceful, even halfway, reform and revolution.”¹¹⁴

Franklin Roosevelt's landslide re-election victory in 1936 was seen both as a vindication of the New Deal and as a signal to proceed with what the New Republic termed “the greatest revolution in our political history.” With the oblique endorsement of the Communist Party, whose confusing slogan “Defeat Landon at All Costs—Vote for Earl Browder” at least had the virtue of putting first things first, the left—except for the Socialists, ever faithful to Norman Thomas—united behind the

President. In New York, the Popular Front even had its own line on the ballot; endorsed by Lewis, Hillman and Dubinsky as well as La Guardia and Louis Weinstock, the American Labor Party rolled up 282,000 votes for Roosevelt. As the Post observed, it had been “the dirtiest campaign since Civil War days” with Hearst papers across the country demanding that voters repudiate “the Red New Deal with a Soviet seal.” Instead it was Hearst’s red-baiting that had been decisively rejected. “I can see no interpretation of the returns,” wrote Heywood Broun in the Nation, “which does not suggest that the people of America want the President to proceed along progressive or liberal lines.”¹¹⁵

With Democrats now firmly in control of both houses of congress, there was only one obstacle to the forward march of the New Deal: the Supreme Court. There had been signs of trouble since 1934, when the Court overturned the Railroad Retirement Act setting pensions for railway workers. Then in May, 1935 the justices unanimously ruled the National Industrial Recovery Act unconstitutional in a case involving a Brooklyn kosher chicken wholesaler. Though freeing Roosevelt from a program that had become a political liability, the Court’s narrow interpretation of what constituted interstate commerce threatened the whole edifice of New Deal regulation. “The big issue is this,” Roosevelt told reporters, “Does this decision mean the United States government has no control over any economic program?” In January 1936, the President’s fears seemed realised when the Court struck down the the Agricultural Adjustment Act, ruling the New Deal’s entire agricultural reform program unconstitutional.¹¹⁶

Both Corcoran and Cohen had been heavily involved in drafting a law that tried to advance New Deal aims at the state level, but when in June 1936 the Supreme Court, on a 5-4 vote, held the New York State Minimum Wage Law unconstitutional, a battle became unavoidable. The election returns were barely in when Corcoran gave “Dear Izzie” his most important assignment: to write a book which would strip the Supreme Court of its mystique, a muckraking essay laying bare the history of special interest and specious reasoning that turned the Bill of Rights into a charter for economic exploitation. For the first—and last—time in his life, Isidor Feinstein would ride into battle not as a paladin of the powerless, nor as a gadfly, but as an insider, a confidential agent of the “party within a party” that served the President’s purposes.¹¹⁷

Given the run of Corcoran’s “little White House” office -- with a full set of U.S. Reports—over the weekend, he produced an eight page outline for “It’s a Wise Founding Father: What Bench and Bar Have Done to Our Constitution.”¹¹⁸ Corcoran sent the prospectus up to Felix Frankfurter, who not only pronounced it “excellent” but advanced \$250 from his own pocket to cover the author’s living and traveling expenses—a sum later repaid by Lincoln Filene, the Boston merchant.¹¹⁹ At this point—late November 1936—the prospectus listed four possible remedies, three of which are discussed at some length: to pass a Constitutional amendment ending judicial supremacy, to use Congress’s power to regulate the Court’s jurisdiction, or to pass a Constitutional amendment “so that the people may amend the Constitution by national referendum.” The fourth alternative, in

its entirety, reads: "Pack the court, but you never know what a man will do once he is on the Court."

The writing went very fast, but events were running even faster. On November 23 the Supreme Court split 4-4, upholding the New York State unemployment-insurance act. Writing in the Post, Isidor Feinstein called the decision "a lucky toss of the judicial dice," arguing that "in the very act of giving the victory to liberalism the Supreme Court exposed the fundamentally irrational and bizarre nature of the process through which it sifts the aspirations of our democracy.... Why should the future of the country depend on the way Mr. Justice Hughes and Mr. Justice Roberts happen to feel when they get up three weeks from next Monday?"¹²⁰ It was a prophetic question.¹²¹

By mid-December he'd sent Corcoran a draft of the first half. By the new year the manuscript was complete, but on February 5 the author was forced to revise. Isidor Feinstein wasn't the only one taken by surprise by the President's plan to "pack the court" by appointing up to six new Justices. Ben Cohen read about it in a newspaper on the train to New York; Cohen took the next train back to Washington. Corcoran, given a day's warning, tried in vain to warn the President that Justice Louis Brandeis, leader of the Court's liberal wing, would be unalterably opposed. Even Felix Frankfurter refused to speak up in support of the President's plan.

That unhappy task now fell squarely on Isidor Feinstein. With his least-preferred solution now the President's policy, he used the pages of the Post—where loyalty to Roosevelt was still a cardinal virtue—to refine his rationale: "The Supreme Court has been 'packed' for years," he wrote in an open letter to Congress,

“with safe, conservative majorities. Those safe, conservative majorities brought on the Civil War. Those safe, conservative majorities have stood in the path of almost every major piece of social legislation enacted by the elected representatives of the American people. To suit their ends, those safe, conservative justices have twisted the Constitution itself beyond recognition.”¹²²

He returned to his labor the next day: “Let’s figure that Mr. Roosevelt has ‘set a precedent for packing the Court which other Presidents, less able and sincere, might eagerly follow.’ What then? What’s the worst that could happen? The worst that could happen is that the Supreme Court would be reduced to what the Constitution intended it to be—our highest court of appeal. It would no longer be what the Constitution never intended it to be—an autocratic super legislature overriding the other branches of the Government and the will of the people.”¹²³ Finally, in March, just as the manuscript was on its way to the publishers, the Court upheld the District of Columbia minimum wage law, reversing its own decision of the previous June, forcing further revisions—but also offering a vivid illustration of “the maze of inconsistencies that is our constitutional law.” Justice Owen Roberts had changed his mind, “and, by changing his mind, changed ‘the Constitution.’”¹²⁴

When it finally appeared, The Court Disposes proved an impressive synthesis of legal and political history; given its provenance, it was also a remarkably radical document. “The Court and the law,” argued the 29-year-old author, “are primarily concerned with the rights of property, and of those who own property. The law does not protect one’s right to eat, or to work,

or to have babies, though these answer to fundamental needs in human nature.” As for those liberals who saw the Court as a bulwark against fascism, “The Court can scent communism several centuries downwind, in a federal income tax or a minimum wage for chambermaids... If the Court were our only safeguard, the *Heil* and the goose-step would have established themselves here long ago.”¹²⁵

The arguments themselves were not new. Indeed, the author credits a long list of sources, including Louis Boudin, whose Government by Judiciary he’d reviewed on the Philadelphia Record: “the story of how the Supreme Court has steadily widened its powers, made itself supreme over Congress, the President and the States, encroached further and further into the domain of law-making and now blocks progress by welding the economic and social prejudices of individual judges into the supreme law of the land”—a fair precis of The Court Disposes.¹²⁶ What was new was the sense of political urgency: “So bold and daring has the Court become in circumventing acts of Congress and nullifying or emasculating amendments to the Constitution...” that “Democracy must curb the Supreme Court or the Supreme Court, instrument of our great concentrations of economic power, will destroy Democracy.”¹²⁷

The tone of the two books was also very different. Louis Boudin (whose daughter, Vera, married Sidney Cohn) was a founder of the American Communist Party, author of The Theoretical System of Karl Marx, and a distinguished legal scholar.¹²⁸ The Court Disposes “is a book by a layman for laymen.” Salted with journalistic wisecracks--“Laissez faire, like castor oil, is something one prescribes for others”—the book’s

more serious passages mine the deepest vein of native American radicalism. The debt to Populism is made explicit in a quote from the Minnesota Farmers Alliance, followed by the author's own summary: "The vast trusts which began to dominate our economic system between the 1870s and the 1890s had finally begun to dominate the Courts. On them now sat men who had been the servants of these trusts. The fabulous wealth that poured from the continent at the touch of these great combines . . . represented an irresistible power, able to twist newspapers, legislators, lawyers and judges to its purposes."¹²⁹

The reviews were mostly favorable. Matthew Josephson, writing in The New Masses called it "the most sensible and lucid tract" on the Court controversy by "one of our ablest young journalists."¹³⁰ Harvard professor Thomas Reed Powell found "Mr. Feinstein's detailed account of the Supreme Court and minimum wage legislation ... an effective lethal instrument."¹³¹ The New Republic and Nation reviewers both liked it—the Nation even ran an excerpt before publication.¹³² But it was Arthur Pierce, J. David Stern's senior editorial writer, who in the course of an extremely positive review put his finger on the book's problem: "It is unfortunate that this brief but brilliant book has not been available since the beginning of the Supreme Court controversy."¹³³

By the time The Court Disposes came out in April, the "court packing" plan was already fatally stalled. Roosevelt's attack on the Court had alienated many of the President's admirers, and his disingenuous explanation—that he merely "sought to aid overworked courts by adding new judges to the bench"—though parroted by Isidor Feinstein, was universally

dismissed. In May Justice Willis Van Devanter, a New Deal foe, retired, giving Roosevelt the chance to name Senator Hugo Black, a populist from Alabama, in his place. The New Deal now had five firm votes on the Court. Social Security, the Wagner Act, the Tennessee Valley Authority were all safe. In July the bill was recommitted—a face-saving procedure that fooled no one. Though at the height of his power, Roosevelt had been defeated.¹³⁴

And yet it moved. Roosevelt's threat to pack the Court did bring about what amounted to a revolution in constitutional law. The Post editorial calling the result a "defeat more glorious than many victories" may have been, in part, an attempt at self-justification by its author, but Isidor Feinstein's recognition that the "unprecedented series of reversals which were the Supreme Court's reply" were the campaign's most durable legacy was extremely prescient.¹³⁵ His personal accounting was even more positive. The Court Disposes didn't sell many copies or make its author much money. But it did solidify his standing, both as an intellectual and as a New Dealer. Corcoran passed along compliments from Judge Rosenman, the President's confidant. He also asked him to draft a series of four speeches—"the sooner the better."¹³⁶ Felix Frankfurter invited him up to Harvard to address his class. He was also invited to serve as a delegate at the second American Writers Congress—a fact he casually mentioned in a note to his new friend Matthew Josephson.¹³⁷ The Court Disposes may not have made his fortune, but it certainly made his name.

Chapter Four

Popular Front

Qu'est-ce qu'un nom dans notre monde révolutionné et révolutionnaire? Un numéro pour ceux qui ne font rien, une enseigne ou une devise pour ceux qui travaillent ou combattent. Celui qu'on me a donné, je l'ai fait moi-même et moi seule après coup, par mon labeur.

What is a name in our revolutionized and revolutionary world? A number for those who do nothing, a sign or a motto for those who work or fight. The one that I was given I made all by myself, after the fact, by my own efforts.
--George Sand, Histoire de ma vie

For a man who still hadn't celebrated his thirtieth birthday, and who practised the craft of journalism without benefit of column or byline, Isidor Feinstein was, by the summer of 1937, becoming remarkably well known. The Court Disposes helped. So did the Post's unique position as the only pro-New Deal paper in the country's cultural capital. Dave Stern's appetite for crusading journalism attracted a number of talented writers, from Ken Crawford in Washington to labor editor Edward Levinson to a cub reporter named Ruth McKenney, whose stories about her sister Eileen were beginning to appear in the New Yorker. Sam Grafton, more adept than his editorial stablemate at bending to the proprietor's whims, was busily carving out a niche as chief cheerleader for the New Deal.

Izzy's role was different. While Stern considered Grafton "a natural born writer," his colleague seemed "more of a student," prized for his skill as a quick study and a penetrating analyst rather than as a phrasemaker.¹ Outside the paper, he was also coming to be seen as an originator of ideas, a man who knew his own mind and who was, for that reason, worth cultivating. Like his friend Corcoran, he was comfortable talking policy or politics. He wasn't above a bit of patronage, either. Malcolm Cowley asked Izzy to help find a job for his nephew. After the store closed, Izzy used his contacts—probably Corcoran—to get Bernard a job at the Home Owner's Loan Corporation, and at the Philadelphia Mint. He then asked Corcoran to help get his father's Mint job made permanent—an effort that also called on favors from Stern and Senator Joe Guffey, the Pennsylvanian whose efforts to stabilize the coal industry made him an ally of both Franklin Roosevelt and John L. Lewis. He sent an out of work friend to Washington to see SEC Commissioner Jerome Frank—whom he knew through Corcoran, of course—and when the ever-cautious Frank failed to hire the man, wrote him an indignant letter. He also refused to help get Frank's book reviewed in the Post.²

The New Deal's favorite radical, he was never quite considered "one of us" by organizationally-minded leftists. Yet in late 1936, when a group of anonymous Republicans offered Earl Browder \$250,000 if the CP would nominate or endorse Roosevelt, the Communist leader took the story to Isidor Feinstein.³ Trusted (if not liked) by Trotskyists, sympathetic to (if no longer a member of) the Socialist Party, and with family ties to the CP, he was becoming a crucial intermediary both within the sectarian spectrum of the American left and, more importantly,

between the self-conscious radicals and the equally fractious, but far broader, elements of the body politic who answered to the label of “liberal.”

His friendships with Cowley and Max Lerner gave him increasing access to the pages of the New Republic and the Nation, and in the years to come he would use that access to speak out in a voice less restrained by the confines of daily journalism, less burdened by the need for the boss’s approval—or the fear of alienating influential advertisers. Acerbic, demotic, streetwise but not cynical, it was a voice that could resonate in union halls and public meetings, as well as the inner councils of the New Deal. The force of its logic could perhaps best be described as “Popular Front common sense”—the voice of Isidor Feinstein, on an outing with his daughter to buy her a typewriter, turning on his heels at the sight of striking department store clerks and announcing: “We don’t cross picket lines.”⁴ And though it was a voice that would be heard in the marble corridors of Washington, D.C., its rhythm was the Yiddish-inflected syncopation of Manhattan sidewalks.

II.

To Isidor Feinstein and his friends the League of American Writers Congress in June 1937 was practically a Penn reunion. Mike Blankfort was on the League’s National Council. Walter Hart, Sam Grafton, Edith Grafton, Shephard Traube, and Mildred Traube were all members of the League. Sidney Cohn, whose writing was confined to legal briefs (he’d become a partner in Louis Boudin’s firm) didn’t belong, but his brother-in-law, Ben

Algase, was the League's accountant.⁵ The program of panels, workshops, readings, and lunches would end with the Penn contingent gathered at Algase's Manhattan apartment, drinking and talking late into the night.⁶

But the day-time sessions were not all so cordial. A small group of writers, lead by the novelist James T. Farrell, opposed the League—and the whole Popular Front—for lending the Communists cultural legitimacy at the very moment Stalin was presiding over the destruction of culture in the Soviet Union. Farrell, a Trotskyist whose proposal at the 1935 Congress to close the proceedings by singing the “Internationale” had been approved by the delegates (though the Trotskyists, Socialists and Communists all sang different lyrics) had since become an implacable foe of his former comrades. But he was not—at least in 1937—an implacable foe of Isidor Feinstein.

Earlier that year Farrell had asked the newspaperman for help after one of his novels was banned for obscenity. Izzy's response, in a letter to Farrell's publisher, was a blurb suitable for framing: “I hear the vice people have their snout in James T. Farrell's ‘A World I Never Made.’ I hope it's true. It will increase his sales and he deserves a wider audience.... Mr. Farrell is an Irish-American Zola, but a Zola who doesn't have to refer to notebooks. The smut hounds didn't like Zola either.”⁷

To Farrell and his fellow Trotskyists, nothing happening at the Congress, or in the world, was as important as the purges and show trials that had been taking place in the Soviet Union since the assassination of Sergei Kirov in December 1934. One of the most durable myths of the 1930s is that fellow travelers, leftists who participated in coalitions with Communists, kept silent about

the purges in order to avoid offending their comrades.⁸ The record is more complicated. As early as December 1934, for example, Isidor Feinstein pointed out that “while radicals the world over protest the People's Courts by which Hitler's Reich is murdering its opponents without the shadow of a real trial, the Soviet Union adopts the same tactics in dealing with” Kirov's alleged murderers. His Post editorial optimistically described the first purge as “an isolated case and more of a personal grudge than a terroristic counter-revolutionary movement,” but warned “terror is a weapon that corrupts those who wield it.”⁹

After sentence was pronounced, the Post concluded that “Stalin is using the Kiroff assassination as an excuse for weeding out anyone who disagrees with his views.”¹⁰ Since no one on the Post confused Stalin with Norman Thomas, the fact that he was acting like a dictator was not exactly a scandal.¹¹ And though the Trotskyists (and their American literary fellow travelers) might disagree, in Izzy's view, when it came to civil liberties, “Trotsky was not a whole lot different from Stalin.... Trotsky in power was very draconian in dealing with problems of labor and labor discipline.”¹² But as someone committed to the Popular Front, he definitely found the trials disturbing, and said as much in print: “The latest stories of a terrorist plot by Old Bolsheviks who have been in jail for more than a year, and of a link between Hitler and Trotsky, seem fantastic. The good impression made by the new Soviet Constitution and recent moves in the direction of more democratic government are threatened by the Trotsky-Zinoviev-Kamenev ‘plot’ stories.”¹³

Hampered both by the desire to give the Russians the benefit of the doubt, and an extreme reluctance to draw darker

conclusions, he searched desperately for information that would “make sense” of the trials. One afternoon his search took him to Nathaniel Weyl. In the early 1930s Weyl had joined the Communist Party as a member-at-large, meaning that his dues were paid directly to the Political Bureau and his membership was kept secret. As an economist in the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, he’d been assigned to a secret Party unit whose members included Harold Ware, Lee Pressman and, according to Weyl, Alger Hiss. Though nothing happened at his unit meetings that Weyl could call improper, his discomfort over the need to maintain secrecy lead him to leave the government (but not the Party), working for a while as director of the Party’s “School on Wheels” before joining the Post as a reporter.¹⁴

“Izzy came to me with the request that I put him in contact with someone who could give him the true Soviet explanations of Stalin's actions as contrasted with the nonsense that Moscow was disseminating to the general public,” said Weyl.

“My own position was somewhat ambiguous. I was a member at large of the CPUSA. My wife and I had read the official transcript of the trials and concluded that the accused men had been judicially murdered. However, we thought that the communist movement was the most powerful world force against Nazism, and, therefore, that we should not join the public critics of Stalin.

“We arranged a meeting for him at our apartment with ‘Hans,’ a German refugee who was a member of the ECCI [Executive Committee of the Communist International]. I don't remember exactly what “Hans” told him. He may have used the Tukachevsky story--about a conspiracy against Stalin among the

Russian general staff, who were in cahoots with the Germans. Izzy left with a smile—which may mean he believed it, or it may mean he was just being polite.”¹⁵ For a while, Isidor Feinstein managed to remain agnostic about the extent of Stalin’s crimes. The effort it cost—and the mental accounting involved—can perhaps be glimpsed in a Post editorial he wrote in January 1937:

“The Moscow trials require one to believe either (1) that Leon Trotzky is a monster or (2) that Joseph Stalin is a monster. And no ordinary monsters. For either Trotzky or some of his followers have plotted with German and Japanese emissaries to dismember the Soviet Union so that they might overthrow Stalin, or Stalin has staged the greatest frameup in world history to discredit Trotzky..... In all, thirty-three men have confessed. Almost all of them were old revolutionaries, men who had faced death and torture. One must believe either (1) that their confessions are true, or (2) that not one of the thirty-three had the courage to let out a protest before the assembled representatives of foreign powers and the foreign press. Not one.”¹⁶

In June 1937 he went even further: “We have no reason to doubt the truth of the charges against the eight Soviet generals.... The character of the generals specially appointed as judges makes it impossible to believe that the eight were framed in a struggle between the Communist Party and the Red Army.”¹⁷ The possibility that Stalin himself might be responsible—that terror might have corrupted the entire process—was apparently now too monstrous to consider.

That this was a willed agnosticism there can be little doubt. But there is a difference between agnosticism and apology.

“Revolutions,” he’d written in January, “do not take place according to Emily Post. The birth of a new social order, like the birth of a human being, is a painful process.” Even more durable than the myth of self-censorship on the left is the myth of “clean hands” among the Trotskyites.¹⁸ As if being on the losing side of a power struggle conferred moral supremacy.* As if the fastidious disdain for compromise and coalition which rendered Trotsky’s New York admirers immune to the charge of Stalinism was anything more than an attempt to dignify their political marginalization. Poet Archibald MacLeish, angered at the Trotskyist argument that Writers’ Congress participants were “dupes,” replied: “the man who refuses to defend his convictions for fear he may defend them in the wrong company, has no convictions.”¹⁹

The world in 1937 was not a place where a politics of “clean hands” could be practised. And nowhere was this cruel necessity more apparent than in the country whose cause prompted MacLeish’s passionate engagement. A country whose very name was, for Isidor Feinstein and his friends, a kind of shorthand for all the reasons why they bothered to make the effort to remain agnostic, why they joined groups like the League, why many of them maintained, if not silence, what seemed at the time like a sense of proportion about the magnitude of Soviet crimes. Spain.

III.

* A distortion of the argument advanced by Trotsky in Literature and Revolution on the relative position of oppressed and oppressor.

As a matter of political taste, Isidor Feinstein always preferred the *Front Populaire* of Leon Blum to the *Frente Popular* of Largo Caballero. The French coalition may have lacked the utopian zeal of the Spaniards, who set out to redistribute *latifundias* and, in those areas controlled by the anarcho-syndicalist CNT* or the dissident communist POUM†, to bring about immediate social revolution. They may have seemed gray, cautious, moderate, even bureaucratic in comparison to the heroic struggle being waged on the other side of the Pyrenees, and they were certainly far too deferential to the British, but in their most critical task—keeping the government out of fascist hands—the French left came through. Even before Franco’s troops rose against the elected Spanish government in July 1936, Isidor Feinstein warned: “a constructive program is needed to maintain the alliance in power. The Spaniards do not seem to have evolved such an alliance.”²⁰

With an eye firmly on the ever-present threat from the right, the *Post* praised the French for their moderation, for “doing a much-needed 1933 Roosevelt job.” To make sure readers—and advertisers—got the message, the paper quoted “an outstanding department store executive” just returned from Paris to certify: “France seems to be safely emerging from a bloodless, constructive revolution.”²¹

The news from Spain was not so reassuring. But for once, J. David Stern and his radical young editorialist found themselves in complete agreement—at least at first: “Democracy is fighting for its life in Spain. Fascist Germany and Fascist Italy are doing

* *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo*

† *Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista*

their best to knife it.... Believers in democracy the world over should rally to the defense of Spain before it is too late. Protests later will be futile.”²² Stern’s fear of American involvement led to some evasions. “There is no longer any excuse whatsoever for refusing to sell arms to the Government in Madrid,” proclaimed an editorial in the summer of 1936. With Hitler and Mussolini both aiding the Spanish rebels, the Post urged “France and England” to “call Hitler’s bluff by shipping arms and munitions into Spain for the Government.”²³ On the question of whether the United States government ought to take similar action, the Post kept silent.

Time and again the Post berated the “democratic Powers of Europe” for allowing “nonintervention” to turn them into “passive allies of Hitler and Mussolini.” Stern didn’t even balk at an editorial praising the Soviets, who had become the Republic’s main source of arms and ammunition, for refusing to play along. But the fact that Franklin Roosevelt did nothing to stop what the Post described as “the rape of Spain”—refused even to prevent U.S. oil companies from selling to Franco on credit—was repeatedly overlooked.²⁴ This silence papered over a genuine difference of opinion. Stern, who wanted the U.S. to stay out of any European war, favored “mandatory neutrality legislation” barring the sale of arms “to any belligerent.”²⁵ His lead editorial writer thought it crucial to stop fascism in its tracks, lest the same methods “be applied tomorrow in Czechoslovakia, the next day in France.”²⁶

But the Post’s silence also covered the enormous pressure brought to bear on J. David Stern to drop his support for the Spanish Republic. In most sectors of American society Franco’s

Falangists were no more popular than Mussolini's Fascists or Hitler's Nazis. The one exception was the Catholic Church. As the faithful servant of the Spanish aristocracy, the Catholic Church was an early antagonist of the Republic. In Spain, the buildup of historic enmity meant, on one side, actions that went well beyond disestablishment to confiscation, church-burnings and, in some cases, murder; on the other side it meant that Franco's Army of Africa troops, many of whom were in fact Muslim, were blessed as "crusaders" by the Vatican.²⁷ In the United States, the Church hierarchy and the Hearst newspapers both cheered on the rebels. And if Hearst could be ignored, the Church could not.

The fact that so few American newspapers had a good word to say about the Spanish Republic made the exceptions—like the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, or Stern's three papers—more conspicuous. Stern not only published Isidor Feinstein's editorials, he sent George Seldes, legendary foreign correspondent and author of two muckraking studies of the press,^{*} to Spain as a special correspondent reporting on both the war and the distorted coverage of the war in the U.S. press. The Archbishop of Philadelphia, Dennis Cardinal Dougherty, called on Catholics to boycott the Record—a call echoed in the Brooklyn Tablet, and from pulpits in all three of Stern's markets. "Priests had driven our newsboys from their stands at the entrance of churches where Catholics customarily bought their Sunday papers after mass," Stern recalled.²⁸ The Post wasn't just losing readers. The Straus family, still bitter at the Stern's role in the anti-Nazi boycott, cancelled all of Macy's advertising in the

^{*} You Can't Print That (1929) and Lords of the Press (1935).

Post—and increased lineage in the Hearst papers by an equivalent amount.²⁹

Nor was his bottom line the only place Stern was vulnerable to pressure. Albert Greenfield, Stern's friend, financial backer, and political collaborator—part owner of the Record, and a director of both the Post and the Camden Courier—was also a close friend and personal financial advisor to Cardinal Dougherty. A frequent dinner guest at Greenfield's home, Dougherty even arranged for his friend to become a papal knight, "Commander of the Order of Pius IX"—the first American Jew to be so honored.³⁰

In I.F. Stone's view, Stern's resistance to such pressures ultimately cost him the Post.³¹ As late as the winter of 1937 the Post hailed Republican victories in Teruel and Madrid, where under the slogan "¡No Pasarán!" the Loyalists saved the besieged capital, with a "Salute to Heroes." As if in recognition of the sacrifices of the American Abraham Lincoln Battalion and other volunteers of the International Brigades, still under fire in the Jarama valley, the editorialist's rhetoric departed somewhat from Post norms: though the "monocles of Downing Street" may obscure the truth—that the policy of "the democratic powers" is "crucifying the Spanish Republic"—"the workers of the world sense the significance of Spain's agony." But even that Popular Front exuberance was tempered by an insistence that Spain "is not a religious struggle."³²

By May, when infighting between the syndicalist CNT and the communist PSUC* broke into open warfare on the streets of

* *Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya*

Barcelona, Stern was running out of nerve. In Spain, the Comintern's heavy-handed suppression of the civil war within the civil war turned volunteer George Orwell, whose comrades in the POUM bore the brunt of the repression, into a bitter anti-Communist. John Dos Passos, whose The Big Money would be voted novel of the year at the Writer's Congress, came to Madrid to help organize a shipment of arms to the Loyalists. The execution of his friend and translator, Juan Robles, framed on a charge of spying, sent Dos Passos out of Spain—and out of the left.³³

At the Post, the Spanish government's consolidation of power was greeted with relief. Stern was so delighted to be able to draw a line under “church burnings and murders of the clergy by thoroughly irresponsible Leftist groups” that the Post completely misrepresented what was happening in Spain. Instead of being seen as a tragic episode, perhaps justified, perhaps not, the Post described the repression as a move “closer to democracy and farther away from Left radicalism.” Instead of recognizing the replacement of Caballero by Negrin as the result of Comintern calculation on how best to appeal to “the democratic Powers,” the Post told its readers “the Government of Spain, far from turning Communist ... is moving toward the Right.”³⁴

Did Isidor Feinstein know any better? “We knew there were anguished choices,” he said many years later. “We knew the POUM were being treated badly and the anarchists were being treated badly. On the other hand, there had to be discipline in the war. We didn't know what to do.”

In the end, no amount of wishful thinking would satisfy Cardinal Dougherty. When the United States economy went back

into recession in the fall of 1937, the Post's finances went from chronic to critical, and David Stern's outspoken support for the Spanish Republic became a luxury he could no longer afford. In a truce arranged by Albert Greenfield, Stern issued a personal apology for his newspapers' coverage of Spain, published in the Philadelphia diocese's Catholic Standard and Times.³⁵ The boycott was over, but the bitter cost of his engagement with the Popular Front would stay with David Stern for some time.

IV.

One night in the summer of 1937, while he was still working as a police reporter on the Post, Sam Beer went with his friend and patron Izzy Feinstein to the apartment of the composer Mark Blitzstein. Blitzstein had invited Izzy to see an "oratorio" version of his new "proletarian opera," which had just closed after a two week run.³⁶ Originally commissioned by Orson Welles and John Houseman for Project 891, the WPA Federal Theatre Unit, the show nearly became a victim of one of Franklin Roosevelt's periodic attempts to balance the federal budget. A defiant Welles went ahead despite the lack of funds, only to find the Maxine Elliot Theatre padlocked on opening night. While actors Will Geer and Howard da Silva entertained the audience on the sidewalk, Welles and Houseman hired the Venice Theatre—twenty one blocks away. After a procession across midtown Manhattan, and with Blitzstein seated alone on stage at a rented piano (since union regulations forbid the actors from appearing, the cast delivered their lines from the audience) the

curtain finally rose on The Cradle Will Rock—a landmark in the history of American theatre.³⁷

Though it was set in “Steeltown U.S.A.,” the background to Blitzstein’s allegorical epic really began on January 29, 1936, in Akron, Ohio, when the tirebuilders at Firestone Rubber stopped the assembly line and sat down by their machines. Used at first as a tactic to settle shop-floor disputes, the sitdown strike spread from the United Rubber Workers to the rest of the CIO. As labor journalist Louis Adamic noted, the sitdown, though not a “purely American invention,” was “pragmatic” and “a bit anarchic, which also helps to make it truly American.”³⁸ Publicised by reporters like Adamic, Ruth McKenney, whose novel, Industrial Valley, centers on the Akron strikes, and her Post colleague Edward Levinson, the sitdown quickly became the winning weapon in labor’s arsenal. From 48 sitdowns in 1936 involving some 88,000 workers, the tactic exploded on American industry in 1937, with 477 strikes involving nearly 400,000 workers.³⁹

Blitzstein began composing his opera in the summer of 1936—just as John L. Lewis was kicking off a campaign to organize the steel and auto workers. As Lewis knew, the two industries were linked not just by manufacturing relationships, but by emotional and psychological affinities as well. Time and again activists on the Steel Workers Organizing Committee would report that the ethnically divided steelworkers “hesitate to stick out their necks. ‘Wait till you win the auto strike. Then we’ll join.’”⁴⁰ As an example of what the Popular Front’s ethic of solidarity could achieve, the great strikes that, in Edward Levinson’s phrase, “broke the back of General Motors resistance to unionism and,

incidentally, held the fate of the steel unionization drive in their grasp” still stand as a triumph of Popular Front common sense.⁴¹

Developed in Akron, the sitdown was perfected in Detroit. On January 12, 1937, the United Auto Workers were sitting in at Fisher Body Plant Number 2 in Flint, Michigan when a squad of police tried to rush past the picket line. After losing millions of dollars in the Depression, 1936 had been a boom year for GM, and 1937 promised to be even better—but only if the company could get the line moving. The auto industry’s highly segmented production made it especially vulnerable to the sitdown; in Flint, the strikers managed to tie up production so that instead of making 15,000 cars a week, GM could only turn out 150.⁴² But if the stakes were high for the company, the UAW had its back to the wall. As the police moved in, firing buckshot, they were met with a fusillade of nails, coffee mugs and two-pound steel car hinges. The retreating police were sped through the town’s frozen streets by streams of water from the factory fire hoses.

Immortalized as “The Battle of the Running Bulls,” the union’s victory at Flint forced the pace for both CIO organizers and their adversaries. At the beginning of February the strike spread to Chevrolet; after ten days of sitdown, President Roosevelt publicly backed calls for GM to negotiate with the UAW.

In the eight months following the union’s breakthrough at GM, UAW membership went from 88,000 to 400,000.⁴³ And on March 2, 1937—just as Blitzstein was starting rehearsals on The Cradle Will Rock—U.S. Steel signed an agreement to recognize the Steel Workers Organizing Committee. The corporation which “set the pattern for American heavy industry” had become a union shop before a single plant had been struck. The infant CIO had

outstripped the 56-year-old American Federation of Labor.⁴⁴

Blitzstein's hero Larry Foreman's chant, "Good-bye, open shop in Steeltown! Hello, closed shop!" seemed prophetic.⁴⁵

If the auto and steel campaigns were a watershed for the CIO, the effects on American radicals were equally dramatic. Socialists like Levinson (who'd been publicity director for the SP and worked on the party paper, the New York Call, before going to the Post) and Victor Reuther (an organizer at Fisher Number 2) were ecstatic. But as the hub of American radicalism, it was the Communists who had the most to celebrate. Party member Wyndham Mortimer directed the Flint organizing drive and represented the UAW at the final negotiations. Henry Krauss, the UAW's Flint publicist, was a Communist, as were key members of the strike committee.⁴⁶ The Party also played an important role in creating the political conditions which made victory possible. In the past, employers had used goon squads to break strikes, backed up by court injunctions and the National Guard. In Michigan, Governor Frank Murphy refused to allow troops to act as strike breakers. Murphy's restraint—and Roosevelt's studied neutrality—doubtless took account of the disclosures coming out of Senator Robert La Follette, Jr.'s Committee on Civil Liberties, which happened at that very moment to be examining the "labor spy racket" in the automobile industry. "The announcement by John L. Lewis that the UAW would seek a collective bargaining agreement with GM obviously spurred our work," wrote La Follette's chief counsel, John Abt, who had been recruited into the same Party unit as Lee Pressman and Nathaniel Weyl.⁴⁷

The La Follette Committee was back in the news in May, after the SWOC's drive at Republic Steel in Chicago ended in

police gunfire. “Steel Mob Halted” was how the New York Times headlined what would later be known as the Memorial Day Massacre. La Follette’s investigators revealed that every one of the ten unarmed demonstrators killed by police bullets had been shot in the back. They also discovered that the Republic Steel management had bought 10 times as many gas guns and 26 times as many shells as the Chicago Police Department.⁴⁸ Given Blitzstein’s deliberately incendiary style and controversial subject matter, the Federal Theatre administrator decided that government sponsorship of his opera would be too dangerous.⁴⁹

Despite its difficult birth, The Cradle Will Rock opened in triumph—indeed the production was so successful that Welles and Houseman transferred the show to their new Mercury Theatre. It was this “oratorio” version—with the actors back on stage, but without scenery, and with Blitzstein’s piano in place of an orchestra—that Beer and Feinstein saw in workshop*. Like the CIO organizers who furnished the models for his hero, Blitzstein was a member of the Communist Party. That November, the composer would serve as musical director for One-Sixth of the Earth, a CP pageant which filled Madison Square Garden with the Party faithful, “all of them” the Daily Worker reported, “guided by but one resolve, their love and devotion for the Soviet Union!”⁵⁰ With greetings from Stalin and speeches by CPUSA officials, the pageant, held at the height of Stalin’s terror, is, in retrospect, a grotesque spectacle.

The Cradle Will Rock is something else. Dedicated to Bertolt Brecht, and influenced heavily by Brecht’s collaborator Kurt

* According to Michael Denning, the Musicraft seven-record set of this production is the first full-length Broadway cast album.

Weill, Blitzstein's hard-boiled prosody is at the service of a musical vocabulary that ranges from Beethoven to "Boola Boola." If One-Sixth of the Earth was intended for a Party audience, Cradle aimed at, and attracted, a broader crowd.

Who were they? Virgil Thompson, reviewing the Mercury production, described the Cradle audience as "roughly the leftist front: that is to say, the right-wing socialists, the communists, some Park Avenue, a good deal of the Bronx, and all those intellectual or worker groups that the Federal Theatre in general and the Living Newspaper in particular have welded into the most formidable army of ticket buyers in the world. Union benefits, leftist group-drives, the German refugees, the Southern share-croppers, aids to China and to democratic Spain, the New York working populace, well-paid, well-dressed, and well-fed, supports them all."⁵¹

The historian Ellen Schrecker draws a useful distinction between the Communist Party and a "movement" which she does not name but which I have been calling the Popular Front. In traditional Cold War accounts, the movement is the tool—witting or "innocent"—of the Party. In traditional liberal accounts, where the aim is to certify the ideological wholesomeness of the movement, the stress is on the Party's marginality.⁵² In fact, as Schrecker properly stresses, the Party was at once the "institutional core" of the movement, and yet largely dependent on the movement for both political influence and, in American terms, moral authority.⁵³

The lines weren't always clear. Matthew Josephson was movement, but his wife, Hannah, was Party. So was Michael Blankfort's wife. Both Isidor Feinstein and his brother Marc, a

reporter for Federated Press, the left-wing labor news service, followed the rise of the CIO with intense professional and personal interest. And as Philadelphia friends of Blitzstein, both might have seen Cradle. But only Marc would have attended the Garden pageant. Marc was Party; Izzy was movement.

Drawing strength from the victories of the CIO, and a sense of urgency from the war in Spain, the Popular Front marked not a retreat from radicalism (or a watering down of principle) but a recognition of the movement's progress. The shift from sectarian to populist rhetoric was not some strategem, but an acknowledgement of the transition from an embattled subculture to a significant mass movement.⁵⁴ Within the Communist Party, the Popular Front "turn" seemed to license Earl Browder's efforts to move the CP away from a Bolshevik model, where power is seized from the margins of society, towards a social democratic politics in which the machinery of the state might actually be used for radical ends.⁵⁵ More importantly, such apparent openness allowed "movement" radicals to feel that on the central questions—industrial democracy and racial tolerance at home, anti-Fascism abroad—Party members were responsible and reliable comrades.

That such confidence turned out to be misplaced would have tragic consequences for both Party and movement. But if, in the long run, disillusion with the Popular Front meant the end of the Party as a significant force in American life, the legacy of the movement would prove far more durable. You could see it in the campaigns to end lynching and abolish the poll tax; you could hear it in Louis Armstrong's version of the Brecht/Weill song

“Mack the Knife” (adapted by Marc Blitzstein); there would be times and places when you could just about taste it.

The Popular Front was not a mechanism, or even a mind-set. It was a movement: fluid, protean, with disparate sources and diverse effects. To privilege the politics—or the culture—is to misunderstand the phenomenon. Politics are one bank of the stream. Culture—from Aaron Copland’s Fanfare for the Common Man to Ellington’s Jump for Joy to the Food, Tobacco and Allied Worker’s hymn “We Shall Overcome”—is the other bank. But the Popular Front is the stream itself.

James Agee’s sharecropper epiphanies, Langston Hughes’s Harlem nocturnes, Orson Welles’s narrator in Citizen Kane, Steinbeck’s exo-Dusters—there was no single Popular Front voice. But there were common elements, though making them out requires us to get past the caricature of critics like Dwight Macdonald or Lionel Trilling, whose personal discomfort with workers and the great unwashed spilled over into their critique of popular (and Popular Front) culture.⁵⁶ From our perspective, what is perhaps most remarkable about these Popular Front voices are the things they take for granted: an easy, confident radicalism (or notably sanguine radical pessimism), and a faith in the expressive possibilities of the American vernacular. Isidor Feinstein wrote not in the stilted subtexts of sectarian infighting, nor even in the defensive ironies of the typical Nation or New Republic columnist, but in the frankly majoritarian cadences of daily newspaper editorials.

Isidor Feinstein had already found his voice. The Popular Front gave it reach and power—an audience, an analysis, influence. It gave him one more thing as well, an asset that would

endure though his audience would disappear and his influence become imperceptible: the Popular Front gave him courage. This courage could look like a kind of innocence, or even naivete, but the cub reporter who walked off the job to protest the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti already knew too much about power to be anybody's dupe. Instead of an insouciance he never had, the Popular Front gave him a hard-won sense of political possibility.

If at times he seemed to hold that sense of the possible aloft, like a banner or a totem, when other men saw only cynicism and defeat, perhaps that was because he still remembered what the Popular Front's ethic of solidarity could do. Not just in factories, or welfare offices or coal towns. And not just for tire builders or longshoremen or steel workers. But for a scared, pudgy newsman with two kids, and one more on the way, and a boss who leaned on him.

The threat of Fascism scared Isidor Feinstein the way nothing ever would before or after. It scared him out of the Socialist Party; it scared him into the Popular Front. To understand how much he valued what he found there, to appreciate what the Popular Front gave him—and why he remained rooted in the values of the Popular Front long after the political conditions which gave it birth had passed from the scene—we first need to understand that fear.

V.

Franklin Roosevelt's decision to balance the Federal budget in the spring of 1937 had consequences far beyond the confines of "Steeltown U.S.A." Besides putting thousands of writers,

artists, actors, carpenters, painters and construction workers back on the street, the president's cuts in the Public Works Administration and the Works Progress Administration took the safety net out from under an economy that was, by October, heading for a fall. The "Roosevelt recession" saw stock prices plunge farther and faster than in the Depression of 1929. The panic on Wall Street soon spread to the rest of the country, as unemployment rose to nearly one in five workers—a level last seen in the grim winter of 1933.⁵⁷

For the newly organised unions of the CIO, the effects were particularly devastating. With production down 40 per cent in rubber, 50 per cent in autos, and 70 per cent in steel, hundreds of thousands of new union members were laid off.⁵⁸ Without some renewal of government stimulus, all the gains of the last few years would soon be nullified.

Four years earlier, Franklin Roosevelt assured Americans they had nothing to fear but fear itself. Now the President's appetite for experimentation seemed spent, his political vigor consumed by his recent battles with Congress. With the nation desperate for leadership, Interior Secretary Harold Ickes noted despondently "the President acted like a beaten man."⁵⁹ But if the administration remained paralyzed, others were willing to act. This time, the thunder was on the right.

Despite the New Deal's manifest failure to keep the capitalist economy running smoothly, Communist poet Joseph Freeman's assertion, during a debate at the Writers' Congress, that "we are living in a period when our basic job is to preserve those conditions under which a congress such as this can be held at all" found echoes throughout the Popular Front.⁶⁰ Roosevelt's

“Quarantine the Aggressor” speech in October 1937, with its veiled references to Germany and Japan (and implicit sympathy for collective security) brought renewed declarations of fealty from American Communists.⁶¹ The far right, however, viewed the country’s economic crisis as a call to arms.

Charles Coughlin, the Catholic priest whose radio broadcasts from Michigan’s Shrine of the Little Flower shifted from “Roosevelt or Ruin” in 1932 to an alliance with Huey Long and, following Long’s assassination, support for third-party candidate William Lemke in 1936, took a vow of silence following Lemke’s humiliation at the polls. Returning to the airwaves in 1937, Coughlin’s calls for strong leadership now mutated into full-throated fascism, with Jew-baiting, barely a motif in the days when Coughlin drew 80,000 letters a week, a principal theme.

Though no longer a political threat to the President, Coughlin could still cause trouble. His print organ, Social Justice, spread its aegis over the thugs of the Christian Front, a group whose frank advocacy of violence brought it particular notoriety in New York, where Front members would deliver racist street corner tirades in hopes of provoking Jewish passers-by.⁶² Social Justice also took over from Henry Ford’s Dearborn Independent as chief American publicist for that classic of anti-Semitic paranoia The Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Though Coughlin’s Catholicism kept his followers—many of whom were Irish- or German-Americans—from joining forces with the virulently anti-Catholic Silver Shirts, lead by William Dudley Pelley, or George Deatherage’s Knights of the White Camellia, all of America’s native fascists admired Adolf Hitler, not least for his outspoken anti-Semitism.

With hindsight it is easy to dismiss the threat of a fascist uprising in the United States—or a fascist invasion—just as, with hindsight, we now know that those prosperous, comfortable, confident Jews who chose to remain in Germany were fatally deluded. But in 1937—a year before *Kristallnacht*, but two years after the Nuremberg laws—a time when, flanked by Nazi and American flags, speakers at a German-American Bund rally led a packed Madison Square Garden in chanting “Heil Hitler!,” and when the robed and hooded troops of Michigan’s Black Legion openly flogged CIO organizers, the threat was harder to gauge.⁶³

Nor could fascism be dismissed as un-American, or even unfashionable. For every Congressman Dickstein* (who eventually persuaded the House to create a special committee on un-American activities to investigate American fascism) or Voorhis who tried to expose the danger, Congress had its Bilbos, Rankins, and Thorkelsons, unabashed racists who scarcely bothered to disguise either their bigotry or their broader sympathy with fascism. The Black Legion might be rabble—and Senator Bilbo a rabble-rouser—but Lawrence Dennis, a State Department veteran and advocate of The Coming American Fascism, was no gutter politician.⁶⁴ Neither was Philip Johnson. Heir to a famous American fortune and curator of architecture at the Museum of Modern Art, Johnson attached himself first to Huey Long and then to Father Coughlin before setting up his own band of “grey shirts.”†⁶⁵

* According to Allen Weinstein and Alexander Vassiliev’s 1999 study The Haunted Wood, Dickstein, the prime mover behind the creation of HUAC, was on the Soviet payroll from 1937 to 1940.

† The high point of Johnson’s career as a fascist intellectual must have been his jaunt to Poland where, as a correspondent for Social Justice, he followed

Harold Ickes, who considered himself “the only New Dealer” in the cabinet, took the right-wing resurgence seriously enough to raise the issue with the President a number of times.⁶⁶ Ickes asked researcher Irving Brant, who followed the native fascists, to draft some speeches on the threat. Isidor Feinstein knew Brant, too.⁶⁷ But then Izzy was in no need of instruction on the dangers of fascism. Since his days on the Camden Courier he’d watched fascism fill the void left by exhausted parliamentarians in Italy and Germany. Fear of fascism in Spain coarsened his rhetoric: “Only the writer who draws his sustenance from the caved-in teat of a decayed past can be a Fascist,” he declared in Writers Take Sides, a League of American Writers pamphlet. It also simplified his politics: “Criminal disunity among liberals and the Left helped fascism to victory in Italy and Germany. The Popular Front has made it possible for the people of Spain to fight the greatest battle against fascism the world has yet seen.... We must never forget that the barricades of Madrid are barricades everywhere—in defense of freedom, of culture, and of humanity.”⁶⁸

As long as those barricades held, he knew where he stood. Isidor Feinstein had taken his side. But what if they were breached? Not just in Spain, where the situation looked increasingly desperate. But in the United States. In New York. On Wall Street. In 1934 Major General Smedley Butler (ret.), former commandant of the Marine Corps, told Congressional investigators he’d been approached by a group of New York brokers and asked to raise a fascist army. Most newspapers,

the invading *Wehrmacht*. Though he expressed neither regret nor remorse for this episode, Johnson’s post-war rise to the pinnacle of American

hostile to Roosevelt and the New Deal in the first place, buried the story. J. David Stern, who'd known Butler as Philadelphia's crusading police commissioner in the twenties, put it on the front page of the Record and the Post. His editorialist warned: "They did it in Italy. They did it in Germany. They did it in Austria. They will try to do it in America.

"Their talk will be of 'liberty,' but it will be liberty to plunder labor, consumer and investor without check from the ballot box, the press, the pulpit or the agencies of free government.

"They'd like to do it here if they could get away with it. They'd like to turn all America into a Pennsylvania company town where everything and everybody are controlled by the company and no one dare protest or speak."⁶⁹

In 1934 most Americans preferred a man in a wheelchair to any savior on horseback. Three years later, with the economy in crisis again, big business scented blood. Ickes, Corcoran, and the rest of the New Deal's inner circle girded up for a fight. Not everyone relished the battle. When talk of the "Jew Deal" and "President Rosenfeld" first became staples of the country club as well as the lunch counter, Jerome Frank, the Chicago-born Jew who went from the AAA to the SEC, asked staffers "to recommend lawyers who are not Jews."⁷⁰ Isidor Feinstein had no intention of walking away from the coming struggle for the soul of the New Deal. For that matter, he felt increasingly compelled to speak out on the very issue which brought the country's disparate rightists their greatest public response: the charge that America was being manipulated into another European war.

architecture—and New York society—was remarkably unhampered.

But he was also very much afraid. Whether Isidor Feinstein was worried more by home-grown fascism and anti-Semitism or by the rise of Nazism is impossible to say. However there is no doubting the strength of his fear—if not for himself, then for his family, especially his children. Because in the fall of 1937 he did something that, even though in some ways crucial to his continued effectiveness and later success, he felt guilty about at the time, and would always partially regret. We know he regretted it because he said so.⁷¹ His guilt is suggested by the fact that he initially bungled the job.

In September of 1937 an article in the Nation attacked neutrality—the cherished goal of Franklin Roosevelt’s foreign policy and J. David Stern’s editorial policy—as “a dangerous myth.” The writer begins on a personal note: “I hate fascism. My heart is with the Spanish Loyalists.” He asks readers to imagine “an America geared to fight a peace rather than a war, pouring out millions for construction, clearing slums, ending floods, halting the deserts encroaching on our Western plains, building a new America, a richer, happier America, while the Old World, in a frenzy, spills its blood and treasure.”

“The prospect,” he admits, “is inspiring, but is it possible? I doubt it. It can be reduced to blueprints. It is as simple as arithmetic. It is sane and it is sensible. But it won't work. True, we mobilize for war. Why not for peace? But we make a profit on war. There are dividends in war.... Peace with isolation means a loss, and our boards of directors are not convened to pass altruistic resolutions.... The problem would be to produce more, to distribute it better, and to do this quickly. That spells socialism

of one variety or another. Would we give up profit for peace? I doubt it.”⁷²

Who was this “I”? The byline, Geoffrey Stone, had never appeared in the *Nation* before. For a piece whose rhetoric was so dependent on the writer’s personal authority, this was somewhat paradoxical—as was the total absence of any explanation by the magazine’s editors. Just how paradoxical was made excruciatingly apparent the following week, when the magazine’s letters page ran—without comment—the following:

Dear Sirs: Your new contributor, Mr. Geoffrey Stone, is of course as much entitled to the use of his name as I am to the same name, but perhaps the fact that I proceeded him in published authorship will allow me ... to point out that I did not write the article in this week’s *Nation* beginning “I hate fascism. My heart is with the Spanish Loyalists.” As will have been plain to any *Nation* readers who may have seen articles and reviews signed by me in the *American Review*, the *Commonweal*, and elsewhere, it is Marxism that I hate, and my heart is with the Spanish Nationalists.”

Geoffrey Stone, Assistant Editor, the *American Review*

His next move was worse. According to a story which soon became part of *Post* legend, one morning the young editorial writer strode up to the managing editor and announced: “I am no longer Isidor Feinstein. I have decided to change my name. From now on, I won’t have you call me Izzy. I have decided to call myself Abelard Stone.” At which point the managing editor looked up and said, “Okay, Abie.”⁷³

Why such awkwardness? After all, his father and grandfather had both changed their names (from Baruch to Bernard and from Tsvilichovsky to Feinstein). And for a Jew with any kind of public visibility or aspiration, the name-change was as much a part of Americanization as dropping Yiddish for

English. This was the era, after all, that saw Julius Garfinkel become John Garfield, and Billy Chon (né Chonofsky) give way to the urbane William Shawn. How else could “a shy, introspective Jewish kid named Arthur Arshawsky” emerge as “a sort of weird, jazz-band-leading, clarinet-tooting, jitterbug-surrounded Symbol of American Youth” named Artie Shaw? That such metamorphoses were not necessarily regarded as shameful, even on the left, can be seen from the case of Itzok Granich, mild-mannered Hebrew school drop-out, who became Mike Gold, the New Masses’ hard-boiled literary enforcer. No one could have accused the man who wrote Jews Without Money of trying to “pass”—his new name functioned as *nom de guerre* as well as *nom de plume*.⁷⁴

Isidor Feinstein’s new name would, he hoped, also serve such a dual purpose. At the same time, unlike Gold, he was trying to pass—or at least to allow his children to pass. The Holocaust may well have increased a sense of retrospective shame about all this. The fate of European Jewry certainly colors our view of what even at the time could hardly be described as an act of solidarity or moral courage. But his initial embarrassment probably owed more to the frank recognition of fear among his motives than to any feeling of group loyalty.

The name he finally made for himself, I.F. Stone, first appears in the Nation dated October 2, 1937—the same day that Esther gave birth to their third child, Christopher David Stone. Though named for the author of Tamburlaine, Christopher, as his father knew, is Greek for “Christ-bearer.” In his Nation debut I.F. Stone pays tribute to “the resistance faith has always shown to faggot.” Citing recent attacks on the Church in the Hearst press

and in Germany, the author describes Christianity as sympathetic to the oppressed and “in this sense ... inevitably Marxist.... From Lollard to Leveler, common men have drawn radical conclusions from their Bibles.... Democracy, humanitarianism, and utopian socialism, all derive from the enthusiasm with which the lower classes, as learning revived and printing spread, turned to Old and New Testament for solace and guidance.”⁷⁵ Such a robust and venerable radical institution could surely afford shelter—or at least camouflage—to his own family. He would never disguise the fact that he was Jewish, he assured Post colleague Nathaniel Weyl, but saw the change as “protection for his children.”⁷⁶

Christopher Stone’s birth certificate lists his mother and father as “Esther Stone” and “I.F. Stone.” That December Izzy petitioned a New York court to “shorten and anglicize” his name and the names of his older children. In a separate petition, Esther Miriam Feinstein became Esther Mary Stone.⁷⁷ His brothers and sister all changed their names as well. “He said he didn’t want to turn a reader off who might be anti-Semitic, right away, before he ever read the article,” Lou Stone explained. “If the byline is I.F. Stone, people would read on... So we had a talk and we all agreed to go along with that.” This display of family unity was spoiled by Bernard, however, who preferred to remain a Feinstein.⁷⁸

Freed completely from the shadow of paternal authority, Isidor F. Stone (“I have a memory of him telling me the ‘F’ stands for ‘no middle initial’,” Jeremy Stone recalled) would gain renown sufficient for several of his friends to claim credit for the change. Mike Blankfort, George Seldes, and Jill Stern all believed they had provided either the inspiration or the final abridgement.⁷⁹ But Bernard was not the only dissenter. The day

he first entered the newsroom as I.F. Stone, Post columnist Sylvia Porter greeted him: “Good morning, Mr. Phone-stone.”⁸⁰

Westbrook Pegler, the sportswriter-turned-sage of the Hearst chain, and Cordell Hull, Roosevelt’s Secretary of State, would both try to use Izzy’s name-change to discredit him. The level of hostile comment was high enough that Stone felt the need to explain himself to Felix Frankfurter, whose own last name was a frequent target of right-wing witticisms.

He needn’t have worried. “I can only say about your metamorphosis that I can imagine all the pangs through which you went,” Frankfurter replied, “and, knowing you and your purposes, I bow to your judgement. Izzy by any other name, etc., apparently isn’t the truth.”⁸¹ He needed the encouragement. He probably needed the camouflage as well. Because by the end of 1937 I.F. Stone, though still publicly committed to “collective security”—a stance that already put him at odds with his employer—was privately convinced that war with fascism was not only inevitable, but welcome.

The emergence of I.F. Stone was more than just the birth of a byline. An editorial writer, no matter how influential, is still essentially the creature of his employer. Isidor Feinstein had long chafed under the restrictions imposed by J. David Stern, and as I.F. Stone wasted little time in declaring his independence.

Recognizing that opposition to collective security “is sustained emotionally by the parallel between 1914 and 1937”—a parallel drawn countless times on the editorial pages of the Post—he attacked the premise head on. “The Germany of 1914 dreamed, as does the Germany of 1937, of a greater Germany. But the Germany of 1937 and the Italy of 1937 have

new weapons. There is first the virus of anti-Semitism.... Injected into the democratic powers, it sets Frenchman against Frenchman, Englishman against Englishman, American against American.” The second weapon, he informed Nation readers, is “the bogy of communism.”⁸²

Here, too, his tone was a far cry from the even-handed denunciations of Stern’s Post: “The Russia of 1937, though still in many respects absolutist, as all Russian governments have been for centuries, is nevertheless the scene of the greatest social experiment of our time. Under the most difficult circumstances--lack of capital, lack of literacy, lack of international security--its ruling party is seeking to transform the most backward of the great European nations into the most advanced.” Acknowledging “a hunt for and extermination of suspected dissident elements that has left the outside world bewildered” he argued that “the rise of fascism in Germany has led the Communist doctrinaires to abandon their intransigent position of the past--a position that helped Hitler to power in Germany--and to seek the help of democratic countries” in maintaining peace.

Once again he sensed a hardening of options: “The European democracies themselves, caught between their national interests and the pro-fascist feeling all too common among their upper classes, fumble and falter as fascism advances. Today it is Madrid. Tomorrow it will be Prague. How long before it knocks at our own doors?”

And once again, he was moving to the left. “The experience of the Spanish republic shows that when that time comes there will be only one place to which anti-fascists can look for aid in

the event that they must fight for their liberties and their lives. I shall not mention the bogymen by name.”⁸³

“Even for those who knew the trials were wrong,” wrote Alfred Kazin of this period, “the danger was Hitler, Mussolini, Franco. And because the Fascist assault on Spain and the ever-growing strength of Hitler had made the United Front necessary, I found myself more sympathetic to the Communists. They had, they had just had, they still seemed to have, Silone, Malraux, Hemingway, Gide, Rolland, Gorky, Aragon, Picasso, Eluard, Auden, Spender, Barbusse, Dreiser, Farrell, while the Socialists seemed to have only their own virtue. I was tired of virtue, and now wanted to see some action.”⁸⁴

As Abelard Stone he'd blundered into the claustrophobic, marginal arena of sectarian in-fighting—and quickly made his exit. As I.F. Stone he moved into the mainstream of the Popular Front. For a time, it seemed as if the entire New Deal was moving along with him.

VI.

“Organized wealth, which has controlled the government so far, seizes the opportunity to decide whether it is to continue to control the government or not.” The date was November 6, 1937. The setting was the White House. The speaker was the President of the United States.⁸⁵ Perhaps because it so admirably accorded with their own prejudices, the theory that the country's economic woes were the result of a big-business conspiracy—a

“capital strike”—had numerous adherents in both the Popular Front and the New Deal.*⁸⁶

America's Sixty Families, Ferdinand Lundberg's muckraking study of the plutocracy, had just been published—and favorably reviewed in The New Republic by I.F. Stone. Applauding Lundberg's treatment of “the irreconcilable conflict of our age,” namely “the existence of economic sovereignties so vast that they overawe the State,” Stone felt Lundberg was unfair to “progressives of the past” and “too trusting” of the New Deal.⁸⁷ But Harold Ickes, a Bull Moose Republican, thought Lundberg had identified the true cause of the recession, and, encouraged by Corcoran, Cohen, and the President himself, said so to a national radio audience in a speech on December 30. Charging that the country was at the mercy of a “general sit-down strike—not of labor—not of the American people—but of the sixty families,” Ickes warned of “the irreconcilable conflict” between “the power of money and the power of the democratic instinct.”⁸⁸

Though the echo may have been a coincidence, at the least it suggests a convergence of views. And though they may have differed in their assessments of the man Izzy referred to as the “squire of Hyde Park,” the reporter and the cabinet curmudgeon also agreed on what was at stake in the current crisis—and on the relevant historical precedent. “There are many similarities between the Jacksonian period and our own,” wrote I.F. Stone.†

* Of course it is also possible the theory was correct. Economists are no more in agreement on the factors responsible for the “Roosevelt Recession” than they are for the crash of 1929. There is, however, consensus that Roosevelt's attempt to balance the Federal budget was at best ill-timed.

† Both Stone's review and the Marquis James biography of Jackson which furnished the occasion for his remarks were part of a broad revival of interest

Reviewing a recent biography of the master of the Hermitage, he found Jackson “as little fitted by his class position to be the leader and the symbol of the struggle for political democracy as Franklin D. Roosevelt was to be the leader and symbol of the present movement toward social democracy.” It was “popular aspiration,” he declared, that “harnessed Jackson and made him great.... The time lifted Jackson up, as it did Roosevelt.”⁸⁹

Two weeks after the review appeared, Ickes listened to the President’s complaint about “organized wealth.” As the cabinet meeting broke up, he passed Roosevelt a note: “This looks to me like the same kind of fight Jackson made against the United States Bank....” The President replied: “That’s right.”⁹⁰

Publicly the President remained silent. But in the same week Ickes issued his warning about a “big-business Fascist America” another New Deal insider was even more explicit in charging that “certain groups of big business” were engaging in “a strike of capital” to “liquidate the New Deal.” Robert Jackson was head of the Justice Department’s anti-trust division. At the time he made his remarks, in two speeches at the end of December, he was also well-known to be a particular favorite of President Roosevelt, who told his political operatives to talk up Jackson as a possible candidate for New York governor—an ideal position from which to campaign for the White House in 1940. The “Jackson boom” was closely managed by Corcoran, faithfully assisted on the pages of the *Post* by I.F. Stone.⁹¹

Jackson’s harsh portrait of the nation’s economy as “an impossibly long ladder of a few great corporations dominated by

in the seventh president which would find its apotheosis in Arthur Schlesinger’s *The Age of Jackson*, first published in 1945.

America's 60 families," though far from the received view even at the Justice Department, was something of an article of faith among two sets of New Dealers. One group has been described as "a party within a party." Self-consciously conspiratorial, its members were "linked to one another through an informal pattern of friendships and intellectual associations. Groups of them gathered in restaurants for weekly dinners They held private meetings on Sunday afternoons to discuss the contours of administration policy. They attended dinner parties at one another's homes, often to meet with a visiting journalist or scholar sympathetic to their aims. They passed books and articles back and forth. They sent each other frequent letters offering encouragement and advice."⁹² The second group were members of the Communist Party.

Few if any of the "liberal crowd," as Thomas Corcoran called his true-believing cronies in the administration, were members of the Communist Party. Yet this fact, crucial as it was to generations of liberal historians eager to defend the New Deal legacy from right-wing attacks, also serves to mask another, more complex set of relationships. By the sheer magnitude of its administrative ambitions, the New Deal created an immense demand for new functionaries—by one estimate over a quarter of a million new bureaucrats arrived in Washington in the first year alone.⁹³ And though the Party's preferred image was of the dedicated, courageous factory worker, during the Popular Front Communism also had considerable appeal among white-collar workers--architects, teachers, social workers, even lawyers—exactly those groups which, hit hard by the depression, rallied to the banners of the New Deal. Thanks to the lingering

effects of McCarthyism—and to the CP's habitual duplicity—we may never know the extent to which the Party was literally “a junior partner within the New Deal coalition.”⁹⁴ New Dealers and Communists shared a taste for conspiracy—a sense of themselves as embattled crusaders against a powerful established order—and it seems at least plausible to imagine that the Party may have played a role similar to its involvement in building the CIO: as a cadre of experienced organizers who brought personal dedication, and, thanks to the Popular Front, political direction, to the haphazard experiment which was the New Deal.

Franklin Roosevelt was of course no fonder of Communists than John L. Lewis. But his administration, like the CIO, needed capable operators. He also needed to mobilize public opinion. “You must *force* me to act,” he repeatedly told liberal supporters. The Party's armada of letterhead organizations might not have been as broadly-based as they pretended—though during the Popular Front, many groups set up as Party “fronts” became genuinely popular—but groups like the Civil Rights Congress or the American Student Union or the League of Women Shoppers were repeatedly able to generate publicity and raise public awareness on issues important to New Dealers.

It was not a question of secret sympathy or identity of aims, but of mutual utility. Under Earl Browder Party members were encouraged to work within the institutions of the state to further causes like union recognition or justice for southern sharecroppers.* At the same time, New Dealers like Corcoran or

* Though we now know beyond serious doubt that some Communists in government service would also be encouraged to spy for the Soviet Union, there is no evidence to suggest that most Communist cells in Washington,

Ickes knew that traditional politicians like AAA administrator George Peek and reactionaries like Texas Congressman Martin Dies—quickest to decry “Communist influence”—were just as hostile to the New Deal’s efforts to reform the capitalist system. In the late 1940s Thomas Corcoran would be the target of an FBI wiretap (and Robert Jackson, writing as a Supreme Court justice, would warn that American Communists sought to recast American life “after the Muscovite model of police-state dictatorship.”)⁹⁵ In the early 1940s, Martin Dies sent Jackson a list of 1,121 alleged Communists in the government; though the list “read like a Who’s Who of Popular Front Washington and contained the names of many of the New Deal’s best and brightest lawyers and bureaucrats,” only two people lost their jobs. Jackson, as his later actions would show, was an opportunist, not a fellow traveler. It’s just that in 1938, when his views on the economy were so closely attuned to those of I.F. Stone—and when he joined Nathan Witt and Lee Pressman to help found the National Lawyers Guild—opportunity seemed to be knocking on the door to the left.⁹⁶

This was the signal political achievement of the Popular Front: to create, amidst all the adverse historical, social, and ideological conditions for which America is famous, and at a time when world events were far from propitious, a sense of optimism, even inevitability, about the future of the left. It is this political confidence, this shift in tone from shrill to more sure-footed, which sets the work of I.F. Stone apart from the writings of Isidor Feinstein. Writing in the New Republic, he admonishes William

despite their secrecy, were anything more than political “ginger groups” or talking shops.

Allen White, a foe of the CIO and critic of the New Deal, to take the long view: “We barricade ourselves and Mr. White against despair with the thought that history is less logical than man; cuts its own patterns; picks its own instruments; eludes our formulas; is perverse, eccentric, whimsical. Sometimes it leaps.... Sometimes history creeps (and this is where we come in).”⁹⁷ This is the voice of a man who is not only confident of his place on the train of history—perhaps in one of the more comfortable carriages, rather than the locomotive—but is determined to enjoy the view as well.

And why not? Besides the New Republic, whose pages seemed open to him whenever he had something to say, he was also becoming a frequent contributor to the Nation. At the same time, his Post editorials on New York city’s transit finances resulted in an invitation to Washington to testify before a congressional committee.⁹⁸ The trip was a triumph: his testimony that a revision of the federal bankruptcy law, pending before Congress, could endanger New York’s five-cent subway fare prompted Senator Robert Wagner to press for changes in the bill. The whole campaign was featured on the Post’s front page for three days running—with the stories bylined “I.F. Stone.” And though S.E.C. chairman William Douglas was out of town, Izzy was able to meet with Corcoran, Cohen and S.E.C. Commissioner Jerome Frank. From his base at the Post, his influence now extended from the inner councils of the New Deal to the outer reaches of the Popular Front. And yet within a year he would lose that base; within two years, he would be off of the train of history—this time for good.

VII.

The trouble started less than two weeks after his return from Washington. I.F. Stone might still joke about a report in Pravda that Soviet newspaper editors were being purged “as enemies of the people for allegedly deliberate typographical errors” and because they gave “full freedom” to reporters: “If Crime No. 1--typographical errors--is serious, Crime No. 2--editorial freedom—is doubly serious.”⁹⁹ But with the Post’s finances going from pale pink to deep red, J. David Stern was no longer smiling.

On February 15, 1938, the Post declared war on the Popular Front. “There can be no united front for democracy with the enemies of democracy,” argued Stern. Though reasonable on its face, Stern’s premise quickly degenerated into the claim that Communism was “more dangerous” than Fascism and that “the ‘united front’—union of liberals with Communists against Fascists--is a greater threat to democracy than the frontal attack of reactionaries.”¹⁰⁰ Stern’s opening salvo, which took up two full columns on the Post’s front page, was supposedly prompted by Stalin’s call for “political help of the working class of bourgeois countries to the working class of our country in case of military attack”—neither a novel or particularly provocative statement. Certainly I.F. Stone believed that his boss’s warning to “resist all efforts of Communists in disguise to entangle liberals in ‘united front’ efforts” had more to do with falling revenues than fear of revolution.

If Stern was trying to pick a fight with the left, he didn't have long to wait. That very night the publisher attended a dinner party at the home of George Seldes, who denounced the editorial to his face.¹⁰¹ At the paper the next day, I.F. Stone was equally vehement. In the past, Stern had always been the most forbearing of bosses. "I was a very hard guy to handle," said Stone. "I'd always fight back and give him a big argument. Because we were old friends, and he was a great guy, he would let a guy talk back to him, and holler."¹⁰² This time was different. Partly because Stern felt himself in a corner financially. And partly because the shouting match over this editorial soon became public.

"Once there was a liberal paper in New York City and now there is none," Heywood Broun informed readers of his column in the New Republic. Broun moved swiftly from the general to the personal: "In the Red-Baiting Handicap (one mile and a furlong for colts and geldings) J. David Stern was a slow starter... [yet] as they charged across the finish line it was evident that Stern had won by a head." Behind the horse-racing metaphor was a furious attack. Stern was the first publisher to sign a Newspaper Guild contract. "There never has been a time," wrote Broun, "when J. David Stern was not eager and ready to bleed subcutaneously for a good cause." His papers were easily the most contentiously liberal in the country. "J. David," scoffed Broun, "was playing the wolf only until such time as he could be measured for sheep's clothing."¹⁰³

In normal times Stern would probably shrug off Broun's barbs; he might even welcome the publicity. But Stern, as Broun well knew, was almost as dependant on the union's good will as

he was on advertisers' patronage. He may have already begun negotiations with the Guild over the deep pay cuts he needed to keep the paper solvent.* Under the circumstances, the Guild president's hostility was potentially dangerous. The fact that Broun punctuated his tirade with praise for I.F. Stone's work—"personally, I always felt that the editorial page was the chief attraction"—probably didn't help.

For the moment, there was little Izzy could do. He bombarded Nation editor Freda Kirchwey with suggestions for editorials. He also proposed writing a column for the magazine.¹⁰⁴ At home, he and Esther began to economize, subletting their apartment in the city and moving the family to a bungalow in Northport, Long Island. The commute to work gave Izzy a chance to read the papers in the morning, and work on freelance projects in the evenings. On weekends he took the family for drives in Rin Tin Tin—a battered 1932 Dodge—or strapped on roller skates.¹⁰⁵

The situation at the Post was hostile but not yet terminal. One reason may have been that in the spring of 1938 J. David Stern temporarily discovered the virtue of solidarity. The agency for this realization was Frank Hague, boss of Jersey City and self-appointed scourge of the CIO. For over twenty years Frank ("I am the Law") Hague's grip on power in Hudson County easily justified his sobriquet: juries, judges, prosecutors and tax assessors were his instruments. His critics found themselves

* Broun biographer Richard O'Connor reports city-room gossip that Broun himself engineered Guild approval of the pay cuts, which took effect in September. Though Broun's fondness for sharp turns lends the rumor some plausibility, given the absence of any other evidence, and given the pitch of Broun's hostility, the story lacks basic credibility.

assessed to the point of penury, denied the right to vote, and, if they were persistent critics, arrested on fraudulent charges.¹⁰⁶ Though Franklin Roosevelt studiously ignored Hague's antics (stayed perhaps by the knowledge that in 1932, when his own statewide margin in New Jersey was only 30,000 votes, Hague carried Hudson county by 117,000) David Stern not only published three of the region's leading newspapers, he actually lived in New Jersey. When Stern dared to differ with a mayoral edict banning CIO organizers from Jersey City's streets, sidewalks and parks, Hague issued a further ukase ordering the city's 200 newsdealers to remove the Post from their stands.¹⁰⁷

In the ensuing free-speech fight Stern found himself in harness with Norman Thomas, the American Civil Liberties Union, the CIO, the Communist Party—the whole of the Popular Front to the left of the New Deal. For a while it looked as if Stone's constitutional expertise would save his job. Certainly there were not many newspapermen who could command the respect of Felix Frankfurter, quarrel on equal terms with Jerome Frank, conspire with Corcoran and Cohen, and write with fond authority about the legal opinions of Benjamin Cardozo: “he was the master of a style that always illumined but sometimes dazzled.”¹⁰⁸ Hague's own red-baiting may even have shamed Stern into calming down—momentarily. “We hear about Constitutional rights, free speech and the free press,” Hague once said. “Every time I hear those words I say to myself, ‘That man is a Red, that man is a Communist.’ You never heard a real American talk in that manner.”¹⁰⁹

But the terms of Stone's quarrel with Frank also revealed the depths of his difficulty with David Stern. In a warning note to

Frank, he'd described his upcoming review of the S.E.C. commissioner's book Save America First as a "destructive job." Any hope that Izzy was speaking in jest—hopes that might have been encouraged by his opening description of the book as "brilliant, stimulating and informing even when one disagrees with it"—were soon dashed by further reading. "Jerome Frank's Dilemma" is indeed a demolition job. Frank's thesis that the depression is "a mental, not an economic phenomenon" is summarily dismissed: "it will take more than a combination of Christian Science and specious anthropological analogies to end the paradox of want amid plenty." The second pillar of Frank's argument, that "America's prosperity requires relative isolation" prompts this brutal rebuttal: "He is, like most of the isolationists, Anglophobic; a belated critic of British Imperialism. Their reaction to the crimes of Hitler and Mussolini is to protest the raw deal England handed Ireland, Egypt, India and the Sultan of Zanzibar a century ago. The apologists of Fascism use the same line of argument."¹¹⁰

Izzy seems not to have cared very much for Jerome Frank. Perhaps he was aware of Frank's reluctance to hire too many Jews. Certainly he was aware of Frank's reluctance to hire his friend George Brounoff, to whom, on the promise of an interview with Frank, he'd loaned the \$10 train fare to Washington only to have the man shunted off to an assistant who gave him a form to fill out but no promise of a job.¹¹¹ But the fury in Stone's prose suggests that Frank's book was only a proxy for his real target, a man whose arguments against structural economic change and in favor of American isolationism he couldn't yet confront directly: J. David Stern.

That such a confrontation was in the offing Stone could no longer doubt. The free-ranging banter of happier days had been replaced by a frosty formality. When the financially-pressed publisher of the Post and his former protege needed to communicate with one another, they did so via managing editor Harry T. Saylor, an old-fashioned newsman deeply suspicious of intellectuals in general and I.F. Stone, who in Saylor's view held "an exalted opinion of himself," in particular.¹¹² Preparing for the inevitable, Stone worked through his summer vacation, doubling for the absent Sam Grafton as well.

He also rode the wave of CIO organizing a bit further. Gerhard Van Arkel, his friend since their days together in Haddonfield editing the Progress, had abandoned journalism for law, and was now on the staff of the National Labor Relations Board. Acting on complaints from John L. Lewis's United Mine Workers, the NLRB's efforts to force Harlan County, Kentucky mine owners to obey the Wagner Act had already resulted in the conviction of two coal companies. But as the CIO quickly discovered, though the NLRB could prevent companies from firing union members, it couldn't force them to sign a union contract. So the Roosevelt administration decided to try out a new weapon: 55 defendants—coal companies, mine operators, the county sheriff and 22 of his deputies—were charged with violating the Civil Rights Act of 1870 by depriving Harlan miners of their right to organize.¹¹³

After the first jury deadlocked (with a majority in favor of conviction) the Justice Department moved for a retrial. In the meantime, the CIO mobilized its friends in the press. Following in the footsteps of John Dos Passos, Theodore Dreiser, and his

friend Malcolm Cowley—who'd all been on a 1931 Party-sponsored fact-finding mission--Stone went down to Kentucky to report on conditions. Beyond his predictable outrage at the coal companies' tactics—there was little chance I.F. Stone would side with the “thugs for J.H. Blair”—his dispatches from the CIO's front line are notable for two reasons. The first was his retrospective scorn for “the ineffectiveness of the famous Dreiser-Dos Passos investigation:” despite “mass meetings in New York City ... [where] protests were drawn up and money collected ... the operators were undeterred. By autumn of 1931, twelve miners had been killed, two reporters had been shot, a relief kitchen ... dynamited.” The result: “Unionism in Harlan was crushed.”¹¹⁴

More striking still was his endorsement of the “unrelenting pressure of inquiry and prosecution by the Government this year.” Surveying the effect of La Follette committee exposure—once again used to soften up a CIO target—followed by NLRB and Justice Department intervention, Stone was optimistic. The legal situation might be stalemated, but the end result, he predicted, would be “a far cry” from the vain battle that gave “Bloody Harlan” its fame. “Whatever the outcome of the new trial ... Harlan is changing for the better.... The rights of labor are slowly winning recognition.” Not even the combined might of “absentee owners U.S. Steel, International Harvester, Ford, Aluminum Company and Peabody” could resist this Popular Front-New Deal coalition.¹¹⁵ I.F. Stone's faith in what, writing in the Nation that August, he called the “Roosevelt Revolution” was vindicated a few weeks later when the Harlan County Coal

Operators' Association signed a UMW contract.¹¹⁶ The tide was still running to the left.

His report from Harlan County was just one of a series of articles—all of them unsigned—he wrote for the Nation that summer while filling in for the vacationing Max Lerner. Though still seeking to avoid a final rupture with the Post, Izzy was deeply grateful when Lerner, quitting the Nation in September, arranged for his summer substitute to take over his half-time job. “This has been a terribly unhappy year for me on the Post which has been going right fast,” he wrote Michael Blankfort, “and the Nation gives me a substantial oar to windward.”¹¹⁷

Stern's debt to Lerner was intellectual as well as practical. Reviewing his benefactor's It Is Later Than You Think, he hailed “the first book of a man destined to a foremost place among American political thinkers.” Though clearly a quid pro quo, his enthusiasm for Lerner's anatomy of “the feelings, doubts, dilemmas, hesitations, beliefs, and gropings of the contemporary middle-class Leftist intellectual,” seems unfeigned. He quotes the climax of Lerner's diatribe with evident relish: “His symbol is the swivel chair--whether that of editor, columnist or professor--and the best thing about it is that it can turn in so many directions. His ammunition is abstractions. His tenacity is nil.”¹¹⁸

“Only a man's relatives,” Stone remarks, “can make him so furious.” Or, he might have added, a man's boss. Hence his delight at Lerner's slap at liberal isolationists, whose hopes “rest on the premise that the fascists will keep promises they make in being bought off from breaking other promises previously made.” But where “Lerner would like to take capitalism from the capitalists—but peacefully” his successor demurs: “History

doesn't work that way."¹¹⁹ To I.F. Stone, capitalism was bankrupt. Why else would Neville Chamberlain prefer peace on Hitler's terms to cooperation with the Soviet Union? In the long term Stone wanted socialism, not "capitalist collectivism." His immediate objective, especially after Munich, was equally abhorrent to David Stern. In a letter to "Maddie" Josephson enclosing his Nation blast at appeasement (and asking the writer to support Mike Blankfort's application for a Guggenheim fellowship) he closed with a terse p.s.: "pray for war NOW."¹²⁰

The final breach with Stern came in January, 1939. According to Stone, "there was a strike at a Brooklyn department store. There was secondary picketing, and [Stern] wanted me to write an editorial saying that it was unconstitutional." Stone, who'd recently given several talks to department store unions at the invitation of his friend Sidney Cohn, refused. "I said, 'Look, the Supreme Court recently upheld secondary picketing. I can't write that!' So he was really sore. 'Goddammit, I need that editorial to get the department-store advertising.' And I said, 'Goddammit, why didn't you tell me that in the first place? I've been in a whorehouse long enough to know what one's supposed to do!' I don't think I ever wrote the editorial."¹²¹

According to Samuel Grafton, it was Izzy's acerbic manner, not his principles, that cost him his job. "One day Izzy and I were haggling a little over who was to write a particular editorial. And finally it was agreed that I would write it. Izzy, who never let the grass grow under his feet, decided to go off on an errand or something, and Harry T. Saylor, the managing editor, came in and said, 'Sam, I'd like to write that editorial.' So, Saylor wrote the editorial. The next morning, we had an editorial conference,

and Iz took off: 'That was a lousy editorial, poorly written, etc.' I was trying to signal him, but he thought I was trying to get him to take it easy on me. So then it struck me--enough of this. I leaned back, lit a cigar, and let nature take its course.... Izzy was fired that day."¹²²

Actually Stone was never fired; he was simply transferred to the news desk and given nothing to do. Stern later claimed he was distressed by "Izzy's juvenile attitude" toward subway finance.¹²³ But Stone's Post campaign had been a resounding success. Besides, Stone's transfer was in January; he hadn't written a word about the subways since "Wall Street Goes Socialist"—a tidy piece of muckraking, but hardly the Communist Manifesto—in the August New Republic.¹²⁴ A more likely trigger was a fight between the Post and the New York College Teachers Union over charges of Communist domination. The paper's pronouncement that unions should stay out of politics would have been anathema to any partisan of the CIO.¹²⁵

In later life he claimed "it was fun to be back on the street." This cheerful picture is completed by the assertion that "on the first day, I got a page-one story."¹²⁶ But Newspaper Guild records show that I.F. Stone was banished to the newsroom on January 23, and his byline does not appear on the Post's front page at any time that month—or afterwards.* A more realistic picture of his mood comes from Jeremy Stone, who remembers "my father had a recurrent nightmare that they wouldn't let him work."¹²⁷ Nor is there any bravado in his complaint to the union. Stern and

* It is likely that he was conflating his transit stories from a year earlier, which may well have been the fruit of an earlier, temporary banishment, with his final transfer out of editorials.

Saylor wanted to humiliate him into quitting, he charged, in order to avoid paying severance. “As editorial writer I was subject only to the editor, and my advice was sought and friendship cultivated by persons high in the City, State and Federal governments; as reporter I am subject to four City editors, to the news editor, and to the managing editor as well as to the editor and publisher.... In the newsroom, too, I have been kept “on ice” ... usually with nothing at all to do.”¹²⁸

“I do not deny the management’s right to discharge me, nor do I ask reinstatement.” All he asked was his severance pay—after ten years in Stern’s employ a considerable sum. Lulled by his apparent rapprochement with Stern during the Hague fight, Stone had moved his family to “an enormous house” in the Richmond Hill section of Queens. He’d also learned, on a recent visit to his doctor’s, that he was losing his hearing. His Nation pay would “keep us all in food and clothes,” but keeping that job—let alone maintaining the contacts and visibility that might land another editorial job—depended on a freedom of movement barred by his chair-warming duties at the Post. His chances of getting another reporter’s job were, at that point, negligible.¹²⁹

Stern, who after years of losses had decided to sell the Post, refused to pay. In the legal wrangle that followed Izzy was represented by Newspaper Guild counsel Abraham Isserman, with assistance from Louis Boudin.* Though his new duties were non-existent, Izzy’s salary remained \$115 a week—more than double what his fellow reporters and re-write men were getting. Stern claimed this was evidence of good faith; Izzy argued that it was

* Isserman, who would go on to represent the Communist Party in the Dennis case, was the uncle of historian Maurice Isserman.

designed to embarrass him. Arbitrator Francis Biddle agreed with the publisher.¹³⁰

I.F. Stone never got his severance from the Post. He did, however, get the last word. When Stern finally managed to unload the paper in July, his former employee wrote that the sale “again demonstrates that freedom of the press is nine-tenths rhetoric.” Though faulting “the Post’s baiting of reds and the Soviet Union,” its call for “regulation of labor unions” and “an ignominious run-to-cover on Spain,” Stone was generous to Stern: “Although New York City’s numerous liberals and powerfully organized workers would seem a natural market for a progressive, pro-labor daily, the same economic forces that killed the old Globe and the World have proved too much for one of the country’s most enterprising publishers.”¹³¹ It was an epitaph he would have occasion to remember more than once.

VIII.

An out-of-work journalist is like a “resting” actor. There is the same necessity to keep one’s wares on display, the same habit of calculation—and the same need to keep mounting desperation hidden behind a mask of pliable, easy-going amiability. That the whole process remain unacknowledged is essential if self-respect is to be maintained.

His friends tried to help. George Seldes wrote to Harold Ickes asking him to give Izzy a job. Ickes was interested—until an underling, describing “Feinstein” as “a bright emotional writer of fixed views” reminded the secretary that Izzy had been “the author of a number of ... editorials to the effect that Ickes’ PWA

is snarled in red tape.”¹³² Freda Kirchwey promised a full-time spot as soon as the money became available; in the meantime, she urged Izzy to take a job he’d been offered as press secretary to the National Housing administration, while continuing to write for the Nation on the side.¹³³

Instead he took a six-month research job with the Institute for Propaganda Analysis, a think tank funded by his Court Disposes benefactor Edward Filene’s Goodwill Fund and by the American Jewish Committee. He also moved his wife and children to a small house in Forest Hills, let the maid go, sold the car, and tightened the family belt by about \$100 a month. Though all three children now slept in the same room, the only complaint came from three-year-old “J.J.” --disappointed that his father wasn’t going to become a policeman like the little boy next door’s father.

Attached to Teacher’s College at Columbia, the Institute sought to “help the intelligent citizen detect and analyze propaganda.” The editorial director, Harold Lavine, was a good friend of Nation labor correspondent James Wechsler, and like Wechsler had recently left the Young Communist League. In the 1940s these ex-Communists would turn violently anti-Communist. But in May of 1939, when I.F. Stone reported for work at the Institute, there appeared few grounds for disagreement among the “large numbers of independent progressives for whom,” wrote Wechsler, “the growth of fascism was the central fact of political life.”¹³⁴

This “central fact” helped make the spring of 1939 swingtime for the Popular Front. On Broadway, Harold Rome’s Pins and Needles, a musical revue staged by the International

Ladies Garment Workers Union, was in the second year of the longest run in Broadway history. A celebration of CIO values—“No court's injunction can make me stop/Until your love is all closed shop” went the lyrics of “One Big Union For Two”—Pins and Needles put real garment workers on stage, while songs like “Chain Store Daisy” put the workers’ lives in the spotlight. Determined to have it both ways, the show satirized the conventions of Tin Pan Alley even as it depended on audience knowledge of those conventions to give a number like “Sing Me a Song of Social Significance” its satirical bite.¹³⁵

Further downtown, at Barney Josephson’s nightclub Café Society, the songs of social significance came with a jazz beat. Featuring left-wing comedians Jack Gilford and Zero Mostel, stride pianist Meade Lux Lewis, singers Lena Horne and Hazel Scott, and Teddy Wilson’s band, the club’s lineup changed nightly. But for nine months in the spring and summer of 1939 every show ended the same way: “lights out, just one small spotlight” on Billie Holiday, singing the ballad of a lynching, “Strange Fruit.”¹³⁶

What with rent parties in Harlem, dances to raise money for the Scottsboro Nine and benefits for the Spanish Loyalists, the Popular Front gave a lot of jazz musicians their first steady work. “We used to play for all the communist dances,” said Dizzy Gillespie.¹³⁷ In Philadelphia, Gillespie recalled, the players often finished with a jam session at Charley Roisman’s apartment. Nicknamed “Professor Bogus,” Roisman was Gillespie’s lawyer—and Esther Stone’s big brother.¹³⁸

Even the “*deshabilleuses tentatrices*,” as Izzy liked to call the artistes at Minskys, were enlisted in the cause. In May 1939

an advertisement in the Nation showed a scantily-clad Gypsy Rose Lee over the teasing caption: “Clothes? Any Old Clothes?” It seems the celebrated stripper was chair of the Clothing Division of the Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign.¹³⁹ Partial as he was to burlesque, Izzy was more of a literary man. Like most of literate America that year, he’d been reading John Steinbeck’s Grapes of Wrath. In Stone’s case, however, the novel was of interest mainly as background for his next assignment: an exposé of the Associated Farmers.

Though wreathed in rural pieties, the Associated Farmers, Stone told readers of the IPA bulletin Propaganda Analysis, was little more than a “front” for West Coast banks, utility companies, railroads and big growers to prevent migrant pickers and cannery workers from joining labor unions. Stone traveled to California and Oregon to interview group members and their adversaries. He befriended Carey McWilliams, who’d just published his own survey of California agribusiness, Factories in the Field. As the state Commissioner of Immigration and Housing, McWilliams was an invaluable source for Izzy—who did his best to return the favor: “Steinbeck’s Grapes of Wrath here finds its sequel,” he wrote in the Nation. “And who would understand and help the Joads must read Factories in the Field.”¹⁴⁰

Warning tender-hearted readers that “charges of ‘Communism’ and ‘Communist agitation’ are justified”—since “the Communists ... long had the field of migratory farm labor to themselves”—Izzy recounted the struggles of the Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union, whose organizers had been shot, beaten, tarred and feathered, and, convicted under California’s Criminal Syndicalism Act, imprisoned in San Quentin.

“Whatever the theories of government and society to which these leaders subscribed, the result of their organizational work seems to have been a humble and lawful one. Gregory Silvermaster*, former Director of Research for the State Emergency Relief Administration, estimated that as a result of the strikes led by this union, the general level of wages for unskilled farm workers was lifted from 15 cents an hour to 25 cents an hour.”¹⁴¹

I.F. Stone’s attack on the false populism of the Associated Farmers, like Isidor Feinstein’s expose of A.F. of L. racketeering, was very much in tune with the left wing of the American labor movement. Indeed by the fall of 1939 his politics—and the Popular Front generally—can be seen as the rising counterpoint of two powerful themes: opposition to Fascism in Europe and the fight for economic justice and social progress at home. His emphases would vary; so would his moods. Reporting on what had already been accomplished in Harlan County, he saw a “Roosevelt Revolution” and would allow himself to hope what others feared, namely that “the New Deal was a genuine revolution, whose deepest purpose was not simply social reform within existing traditions, but a basic change in the social, and above all, the power relationships within the nation. It was not a revolution by violence. It was a revolution by bookkeeping and lawmaking.”¹⁴² Most of the time, though, he despaired of Roosevelt’s moderation, his reluctance to confront big business. Declaring himself “dubious of attempts at ‘cooperation’ among government, industry, labor and consumers,” he favored “direct

* Under his full name Stone’s source, Nathan Gregory Silvermaster, would make headlines in the 1940s as the purported leader of a Soviet spy ring whose members were alleged to include Assistant Treasury Secretary Harry Dexter White and White House aide Lauchlin Currie.

government action [to] bring idle men and idle materials together.”¹⁴³

“Liberals,” Stone lamented, “never learn.” The Supreme Court’s decision to outlaw sit-down strikes only sharpened his radicalism. Even at the Nation his skepticism about Roosevelt’s determination on the home front put him to the left of the magazine’s editorial board, prompting a warning from Freda Kirchwey to “use due tact and discretion in regard to the subjects you write about in editorial columns.”¹⁴⁴ But for all his impatience with the tempo of the New Deal, opposition to Fascism remained the bass line of Stone’s politics, and here Franklin Roosevelt’s caution was much more in harmony with his own view. “I am not anxious to see this country commit itself too soon or too rigidly so long as pro-Fascist elements are at the controls in England or France,” he wrote in June 1939.¹⁴⁵

His faith in the President’s step-by-step approach was not limitless. “It is possible to wade,” he agreed, “but one should be prepared to swim.” The danger was clear: “Adolf Hitler is out to dominate the world, and may do so unless we recognize that security is indivisible, and that like the Thirteen Colonies other nations must hang together—or separately....” So were the pitfalls of impulsive action: “I would [not] hand a blank check signed “Uncle Sam” to the umbrella man from Birmingham.... The safest course,” argued Stone, “would be to give F.D.R. enough elbow room to steer with skill and safety.”¹⁴⁶

I.F. Stone was a radical, not a liberal—a supporter of the campaign to raise money for wounded veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, whose members paid the price of Franklin Roosevelt’s hand-wringing over Spain.¹⁴⁷ He understood the

difference, as did liberals like Freda Kirchwey, Communists like New Masses critic Granville Hicks, and ex-Communists like James Wechsler—all members of the Popular Front’s anti-fascist chorus. But with the Nazi takeover of Czechoslovakia in March, and Franco’s announcement the following month that Spain would join Germany, Italy and Japan in the Anti-Comintern Pact, dwelling on such differences seemed suicidal.

So in May, when the Committee for Cultural Freedom published a “Manifesto” in the Nation, it was Freda Kirchwey who questioned the group’s purposes. Describing the signers as “honest but not innocent,” Kirchwey, noting that “the only important feature of the present manifesto is its emphasis on Russian totalitarianism,” had little doubt the group “intended to drop a bomb into the ranks of liberal and left groups in the United States.” Kirchwey did not accuse the Committee of red-baiting. Nor did she deny the abundance of incendiary material. “The Communist Party,” she agreed, “is a nuisance or a menace to all its opponents. Whatever its line may be, its tactics are invariably provocative and often destructive.... The result has been to create a fund of bitterness on the left which can be drawn upon whenever a convenient occasion arises.”¹⁴⁸

Kirchwey understood the impulse “to create a clear division on the left by relegating members of the Communist Party and the vague ranks of its sympathizers to outer totalitarian darkness.” But she felt it should be resisted. Not just because Communists “have helped to build up and to run a string of organizations which serve the cause not of ‘totalitarian doctrine’ but of a more workable democracy.” Or because “in the name of the fight against fascism, they have committed themselves to an

almost uncritical acceptance of the status quo.” But because “the Communists in their present phase seem to me to share the larger hopes and fears that animate most other people who stand to the left of center.... Add to this the fact that they oppose with obvious sincerity all forms of racial discrimination, and the total score is one that forces me to question the whole premise” on which the Committee is organized. “Instead of signing any such document, I should like to plead for an era of good-will and decency.”¹⁴⁹

Committee founder Sidney Hook replied with a blaze of dialectics: “If you are opposed to all gangsterism, it is neither principled nor strategic to extenuate the crimes of one gang rather than another.” Though prodded to the point of asperity—“One cannot but envy the man who is able to dispatch his social problems so easily”—Kirchwey reiterated her view that for all its faults, not least its many attacks on the Nation, “the Communist Party and its press ... have also fought for decent conditions for workers and the unemployed, for equality of rights for Negroes, for relief and aid to the victims of the civil war in Spain.” Kirchwey admitted the issue was “confused and troubling,” but stood her ground: “It is not necessary for liberal lambs and Communist lions to lie down together. Enough if they will move ahead toward their common objectives without wasting time and strength in an attempt to exterminate each other along the way.”¹⁵⁰

As a statement of Popular Front common sense, a credo for fellow-travelers, Kirchwey’s plea for “factional disarmament” on the left could hardly be bettered. But by the end of the summer the current of feeling on the left was moving so fast that

Kirchwey's reminder that "there is virtue in merely refusing to shoot" was seen in some quarters as insufficiently vigorous. Kirchwey's argument, after all, rested on an implicit distinction between the Soviet Union and American Communists. The latter she would defend; of Stalin she would say only that his government, has "stood consistently for justice and non-aggression in international relations." And her suggestion that "Communists have developed a sort of double mental book-keeping by means of which they are able to account jointly for their love of Stalin and their adherence to the New Deal" was doubtless too acute for comfort.¹⁵¹

In August the Popular Front shot back. Addressed "To All Active Supporters of Democracy and Peace"—the barb was in the third word—this counter-manifesto warned: "On the international scene, the fascists and their friends have tried to prevent a united anti-aggression front by sowing suspicion between the Soviet Union and other nations.... On the domestic scene the reactionaries are attempting to split the democratic front by [encouraging] the fantastic falsehood that the U.S.S.R and the totalitarian states are basically alike."

"Some sincere American liberals have fallen into this trap," the letter continued, but "to make it clear that Soviet and fascist policies are diametrically opposed ... we should like to stress ten basic points in which Soviet socialism differs from totalitarian fascism:

1. The Soviet Union continues as always to be a bulwark against war and aggression."

The remainder of the list was a predictable mix of plausible statements ("the Soviet Union considers political dictatorship a

transitional form”), irrelevant truths (“The Soviet Union has emancipated women and the family, and has developed an advanced system of child care”) and outrageous falsehoods (“it has eliminated racial and national prejudice within its borders”).¹⁵² To the 400 signers, however, it is probably fair to say item number one was the only one that mattered. The arguments were crude, the signatures were mostly the usual Party suspects (just as many of those who endorsed the Committee for Cultural Freedom were Trotskyists)*. Indeed, many of the counter-manifesto’s signers (including Marc Blitzstein, Granville Hicks, and Nation Associate Editor Maxwell Stewart) had also signed “a statement by American Progressives” defending the Moscow Trials a year earlier.

Though he was in glittering company (Nelson Algren, Malcolm Cowley, Dashiell Hammett, Lillian Hellman, Dorothy Parker, Irwin Shaw and, to his eternal regret, John Garfield also signed) Maxwell Stewart was the only Nation editor to defend the Moscow trials.¹⁵³ But the letter defending the Soviet Union, though opposed by Freda Kirchwey and the Nation editorial board, was signed by I.F. Stone.

“I signed,” he told Kirchwey, “because I wanted to see Russia in alliance with the West against Hitler.”¹⁵⁴ Popular Front optimism—or wishful thinking? By the time the letter appeared in print, in the August 24 issue of the Nation, the question was moot. On August 22, it had been announced that Nazi Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop would fly to Moscow the

* Though William Carlos Williams, who’d helped edit ... And Spain Sings, a collection of ballads published by the League of America Writers, somehow managed to sign both statements.

following day to sign a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union. The Popular Front was dead.

Chapter Five

War Years

“Where did you hear that I felt a sense of ‘personal betrayal’?” Izzy wrote to Michael Blankfort. “Personal betrayal would be ludicrous, yet while I kick back at the description, maybe it has truth in it. I have recovered--but no more fellow traveling.”¹

Like a shell which, in the moment of detonation, illuminates the battlefield even as it causes immense damage, the Nazi-Soviet pact and its aftermath shed a harsh, unforgiving light on the American left. The American Communist Party, whose leaders had spent the previous weeks ridiculing rumors of any rapprochement, was stunned into silence. The New York Post, like the Times, Daily News, and the Herald Tribune, all put the pact on the front page. But the Daily Worker had no story at all; reporters who called at party headquarters were told that Earl Browder and other party officials were “out of town.”

New Masses editor Richard Rovere left the party; so did literary critic Granville Hicks and numerous other intellectuals. Disaffection among the rank and file varied; in New York, many Jewish Communists, drawn to the party by its leadership in anti-fascist campaigns, found the pact difficult to stomach. Scottsboro defense attorney Sam Leibowitz, whose campaign for Brooklyn district attorney had drawn assistance from both I.F. Stone and

his brother Lou, dropped out of the race.² But to a veteran CIO organizer in the midwest or a Communist working with sharecroppers in Alabama or tobacco and textile workers in the Carolinas, the pact was just a piece of paper whose abstract importance mattered far less than the shared risks and shared triumphs of daily political struggle.³

Defections of high-profile intellectuals have lead some to over-estimate the pact's effect on American Communists; in fact, most party members weathered the storm.⁴ If the pact put an end to the Communist Party's influence in American public life—which it did—that was due to the almost physical revulsion felt by the party's far more numerous collaborators who made up the vast majority of the Popular Front.

There were, to be sure, some efforts at accomodation. When Billie Holiday moved from Café Society to Kelly's Stables in 1940, she added Harold Rome's "The Yanks Aren't Coming" to her set. Almanac Singers Lee Hays, Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie dropped calls to arms like "Viva La Quince Brigada" in favor of pacifist anthems:

Oh, Franklin Roosevelt
told the people how he felt.
We damn near believed what he said.
He said, I hate war
and so does Eleanor,
but we won't be safe till everybody's dead.⁵

I.F. Stone's response was far more typical. Like Richard Rovere, who saw Munich as "a signal for Hitler to move eastwards," he blamed Neville Chamberlain for Britain's "interminable delay in negotiating" with the Soviets.⁶ But his fury was reserved for Stalin, "the Moscow Machiavelli who

suddenly found peace as divisible as the Polish plains and marshes”—and for his “apologists-after-the-fact” on Union Square. Scorning the Communist Party’s new “imperialist war” line, he informed Nation readers: “It is still a war against fascism, despite Mr. Chamberlain, and anti-fascists should urge repeal of the embargo” on arms sales to Britain.⁷

How much of Stone’s anger derived from personal embarrassment is impossible to say. He didn’t regret signing the Nation petition, he told Freda Kirchwey, “though I wouldn’t sign it now and told Corliss Lamont to take my name off a few days after the pact.”⁸ The closest he came to a public *mea culpa* was an admission, in the Nation, that “the future of Russo-German relations is a no man’s land into which the prophet ventures at his own risk. More than one seer has been blown to bits, and most of us are already shell-shocked.” But that was in an unsigned editorial.⁹

“Among fellow travelers,” wrote Granville Hicks, “there is almost complete disillusionment, with bitterness varying according to the closeness of the travelling.” Hicks describes a correspondent, “a man who worked with the party for years and last summer was ready to join.” Hicks never names his man—almost certainly I.F. Stone. But he quotes him at length: “My attitude toward the CP is one of distrust. The party bet its pants, shirt and G-string on Russia (and those of everyone who accepted its analysis and followed its line) and lost to the last stitch. It clings more desperately than ever to the Russian connection as the be-all and end-all of its existence, and insists that people continue to trust Russia (i.e. to take on faith what it says about Russia) and accept lines built on what it thinks is

Russia's orientation. Those who peddle a gold brick twice over ought not to be surprised if they get the door slammed in their faces. The whole Russian connection has become an absolutely gratuitous nuisance and a stumbling block.”¹⁰

In the Nation, Izzy called the pact “a blackmailer’s peace,” adding “two months ago Hitlerism was a menace to world civilization. Now Izvestia says, ‘One may respect or hate Hitlerism, just as any other system of political views. This is a matter of taste.’ Thus Marx is wedded to Savarin.”¹¹

Writing to Michael Blankfort later that week, he was equally caustic: “I’m off the Moscow axis. They aren’t playing a bad game for themselves. The Ukraine and White Russia is better off under them. But the Pravda editorial on the Poles causing the war and the Izvestia editorial on liking or disliking Nazism ‘a matter of taste’ ... have turned my stomach and the party and its organs have stunk pretty badly in their efforts at explanation....

“A new Jesuitry is visible in these interminable and contradictory ‘explanations’. A new Catholicism is growing up in Communism as directed from Moscow, with its own Pope and its own heretics, bitterly persecuted and pursued. The ease with which party members flip-flop on instruction and are all against Nazism one day and British Imperialism the next is indicative of the robot quality the party creates.”¹²

Until August 22, 1939 Stone, Hicks and their comrades in the Popular Front had been red figures on a red ground. The whole political terrain seemed to be open on the left. Now they were figures in a blasted landscape visible only in shades of gray. What had once been a movement, a mighty stream, now seemed more like a collection of islands.

Some responded by withdrawing to the interior:

I sit in one of the dives
On Fifty-Second Street
Uncertain and afraid
As the clever hopes expire
Of a low dishonest decade:¹³

W.H. Auden disowned not only his own fellow traveling, but a whole decade of political commitment.

Trotskyists, who had never been part of the Popular Front, reacted to its collapse with predictable *schadenfreude* (Trotsky himself, however, was far less sanguine, seeing in the pact a “capitulation” which strengthened Fascism). Dwight Macdonald, a recent émigré from Fortune magazine to Partisan Review, called for “revolutionary action against the warmakers.” Arguing that workers in the west should put insurrection ahead of defeating Fascism, Macdonald joined the Socialist Workers Party. Within a few months Macdonald had jumped again—this time to Max Schactman’s Workers’ Party—leaving after only a few months but retaining his belief that American entry into the war would mean Fascism at home. Macdonald’s allegiance to what a biographer has called “revolutionary socialism in one editorial office” was shared by the young Irving Howe, who as editor of the Workers’ Party weekly Labor Action exhorted his readers “the only way to fight against Hitlerism is for American workers and farmers and unemployed to take over the government.” A month after the fall of France, Howe declared: “No conscripts for Wall Street’s War!”¹⁴

For the Trotskyists (and the right-wing Social Democrats in whose ranks so many Trotskyists would end up) only a public recantation would suffice—and only if the heretic’s former views were renounced in full—preferably under the banner of the

Committee for Cultural Freedom. In late October, weeks after Izzy had dismissed any defense of the pact as “wishful thinking” and, in the same signed editorial, written that it would “discredit the Soviet Union”—and days after the magazine published his bylined declaration that “the hammer-and-sickle, as well as the umbrella, is linked with the swastika in responsibility for the attack on Poland”—his former friend Jim Farrell sent a furious letter to Freda Kirchwey accusing her of harboring “two Stalinists on your editorial board.”¹⁵

In Stone’s case, the charge was nonsense. He may have been a Stalinist on the Modern Monthly—at the very least, he was a small “c” communist. In the years since, however, he’d been no more than an enthusiastic fellow traveler. But Farrell’s error—his conflation of the Popular Front with the Communist Party, and his assumption of an implied fealty to the Soviet Union—was not confined either to Trotskyists or to the confusing period immediately after the pact. “The literary united front has disappeared,” wrote Granville Hicks in July, 1940. “Not only many of its new recruits but also some of its veterans have left the Communist Party; there has been a sharp revulsion against the Soviet Union.”¹⁶ As a former Stalinist himself, it suited Hicks to both overstate the importance of the party within the Popular Front and to equate cooperation with the party with admiration for the Soviet Union. To gauge the effect of the pact on particular actors you’d really need to know not just where they ended up, but where they started from.

September 1, 1939 found I.F. Stone not in a dive, but in a coffee shop, having breakfast with Max Lerner. The news that Hitler had invaded Poland, which they heard on the radio at the

Nation office, was hardly a surprise.¹⁷ Neither man had ever been a big fan of Joseph Stalin or the Soviet Union; yet for them, the thirties would never be “a low dishonest decade.” Stone had, like every other anti-Fascist (excluding the Trotskyists) been grateful for Russia’s apparent willingness, in Spain and afterwards, to contribute more than mere rhetoric to the fight against Hitler, Franco and Mussolini. He had also, like most fellow travelers, been willing to trade a certain ideological forbearance for the stamina and organizational know-how Communist Party comrades brought to the battles for industrial democracy and racial equality. Years later he regretted having kept silent about Loyalist excesses in Spain.* But in the fall of 1939 he saw Hitler on the march in Europe and the New Deal under fire at home. There was no time to cry over spilled borscht.

II.

Disillusioned but not despairing, I.F. Stone soon found he was not the only intellectual left homeless by the disintegration of the Popular Front. The group that gathered in Max Lerner’s apartment in October 1939 ranged from Hicks and Rovere and Joseph Lash (who’d resigned as executive secretary of the American Student Union over the pact) to Malcolm Cowley and

* When Dorothy Day, editor of the Catholic Worker died in November 1980, Stone traveled to New York from Washington for her funeral. After the wake he approached one of Day’s colleagues and said that during the Spanish Civil War, he had received reports from a woman journalist that the Republican forces had committed some atrocities on the civilian population outside Barcelona. “It was the only time in my life as a journalist that I did not print the truth about what was happening in Spain,” Stone told Worker associate editor Michael Harank.

the economist Paul Sweezy—the two members least hostile to both the Communist Party and the Soviet Union.

Taking their inspiration from the German “New Beginnings” group that sprung up after the Nazis took power, they agreed to call themselves the “Independent Left” and to meet again in a few weeks. Beyond that they agreed on very little. Rovere wanted “a neo-Marxist movement, one not cursed by the incubus of Stalinist foreign policy.”¹⁸ His fellow ex-Communist Hicks also hoped for “something like the Party,” as did Teachers Union President Ernest Simmons. Sweezy wanted to issue “an out-and-out Socialist manifesto,” while Malcolm Cowley just wanted to “discuss what we ought to believe now that Marxism has collapsed.”¹⁹

Lerner wanted influence “on people in key positions;” Hicks wanted “names with prestige, thus money, thus members.”²⁰ There was an approach which, in an essay written the week of the group’s first meeting, Stone derided as trying “to affect events by memorandum rather than by manifesto.”²¹ Like his Nation colleague James Wechsler, and writer Leo Huberman, who were also members of the group, Stone wanted action.

They met at least once more, at the Nation offices in November. But the members were already going their separate ways—some to the surviving shells of the Popular Front, some, like Wechsler and Huberman, toward the CIO, and some, like writers Kyle Crichton and Matthew Josephson, and critic Newton Arvin, out of political life altogether. Though little more than a footnote in the history of the Popular Front, the Independent Left marked an important conjunction in I.F. Stone’s intellectual career.²² In a period when many on the left seemed to lose their bearings, he’d found colleagues who, whatever their differences,

trusted his good sense and good faith. And while the group was soon overtaken by events, several of the *dramatis personae* would recur in his life repeatedly over the next two decades.

“I've got my debts cleaned up,” Izzy wrote to Michael Blankfort, “and more money in the bank than we ever had before ... enough to keep us going six months in case of need. On that basis I'm going to try and become a writer.”²³ That resolve, too, would be overtaken by events. On November 30 the Soviet Union, having swallowed half of Poland, and forced Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania to sign “mutual assistance” pacts, invaded Finland. So much for a quiet exit from the train of history.

George Bernard Shaw blamed the invasion on American support for the Finns, telling reporters that of course the Soviets had to defend themselves from “other Great Powers.”²⁴ Lillian Hellman refused to allow a benefit performance of her play, “The Little Foxes,” for Finnish war relief.²⁵ But Freda Kirchwey had no doubt who was at fault: “the horrors that fascism wreaked in Spain,” she wrote, “are being repeated, in the name of peace and socialism, in Finland.” I.F. Stone also invoked what was, for fellow travelers, a devastating comparison. The “attack on the Spanish Republic,” he wrote, was “strikingly parallel to the attack on Finland.” The Finns, he summed up, “are fighting for their homeland; the Red Army is an aggressor; morale is on the Finnish side....”²⁶

By January 1940 Izzy's freelance idyll was over. A planned book on the Associated Farmers never materialized. Nor did a project on “man's warlike nature”—though he and his brother Lou did spend some happy hours in research at the New York Public Library. Still, the time wasn't completely wasted. Several of

his Nation pieces written during this period display a newfound frankness toward the Socialist motherland. He describes Rumanian efforts to head off “an expected Soviet offer of ‘mutual assistance’ in which Bulgaria, Hungary, and Russia will mutually assist each other to slice off those sections of Rumania which were taken from them after the last war.”²⁷ Reviewing a recent biography of feminist pioneer Fanny Wright, he compares “her starry-eyed” Views of Society and Manners in America with Beatrice and Sidney Webb's Soviet Communism: A New Civilization—the fellow-traveler’s Baedeker.

His essay on Wright contains an implicit rebuttal to those who argued that, having been wrong about Stalin’s foreign policy, the Popular Front should simply fold its tents in disgrace: “the handsome, headstrong, and sometimes giddy Fanny ... played a leading role in the period during which the common man in America won the right to vote and free schooling for his children. She helped organize American labor for the first time for political action. She occupies an honorable place among the pioneers of modern socialism.... Fanny, like many social pioneers, often slid into the faddist. Sometimes she seemed the social worker. It is not difficult to sneer. But it is not the sober or the prudent who provide the ferment that precedes and accompanies a great period of change.”²⁸

Stone also grappled, in a rather tentative way, with two themes that were to preoccupy him for much of the next five years. “Portrait of a Dollar-a-Year Man” inaugurated a whole rogues’ gallery of muckraking profiles exposing the self-dealing reality behind the self-serving rhetoric of the new breed of businessmen-administrators. The rise of the dollar-a-year men,

who in many cases replaced New Dealers forced out by the red scare that swept Washington after the pact,²⁹ filled Izzy with dismay. But their business-as-usual mentality made them easy targets, and this particular Treasury advisor's resignation was only the first of many official scalps to Izzy's credit.

Unfortunately, his attack on the Evian conference, "Mercy and Statesmanship," was far less effective.³⁰ Despite heroic efforts by Freda Kirchwey and the Nation, it would be several years before Washington awoke to the perils facing "non-Aryan" refugees from the Third Reich.³¹

Like many coalitions formed in the confused months after September 1939, the American Investors Union, Izzy's new employer, would soon fracture along ideological lines. The idea was simple enough: to provide America's small investors with the same independent, in-depth analysis available to Wall Street insiders. Each month the AIU magazine, Your Investments, promised to examine the financial reports of companies held by AIU members. The AIU staff also promised to analyze new issues on the market, and to campaign for legislation to protect small investors. But with a staff of two—Editor I.F. Stone and a business manager—each issue was an exercise in cutting corners.

The AIU's parent, the Consumers' Union, was a classic Popular Front organization, formed in 1936 by employees of Consumer's Research after a strike over union representation ended in a lockout.* AIU Executive Director Bernard J. Reis had

* It can be argued that the present-day consumer movement is one of the more durable legacies of the Popular Front. Consumers' Union and the League of Women Shoppers, founded about a year earlier, were "front" groups in exactly the double sense explicated by Michael Denning, i.e. though organized by a Communist core, the broader membership, who formed the "front" in the

resigned from the board of Consumer's Research during the strike; he'd also written a book whose call for a union of investors had been endorsed by Isidor Feinstein.³² Reis was an accountant, and by the time the first issue of Your Investments appeared his own board of directors—an amalgam that included Communists, fellow travelers, Socialists, muckraking author George Seldes and America First supporter (and New Republic editor) John T. Flynn—were content to leave the details to Reis.

“When Bernie was interested in a particular company he would gather up all the information he could get, give it to Izzy, who would spend a day or so analyzing it and then (he was already quite deaf at that point) he would dictate to me a first draft that required no editing whatsoever,” recalled Shirley Kasdon, the magazine's business manager.³³ The pace left little time for investigative reporting, but according to Kasdon this arrangement was deliberate.

“Reis was involved with an attorney who filed a lot of stockholder suits,” she said. “When you subscribed you were sent a letter saying that since we were following what was happening in the corporate world, if they would tell us what securities they owned we could advise them if something was happening that was of interest to them. As a result, we had a file of thousands of

sense of façade, soon found themselves part of a battlefield or political alliance. In the groups that survived for any length of time, that “front” often took the members into positions far from party control or even party interest. Though the League, whose founders included novelist Josephine Herbst, reporter Leanne Zugsmith and Mrs. Stephen Wise, was a casualty of the postwar red scare, both Consumers' Union and Consumer's Research survive, at least in letterhead form—Consumers' Union as publishers of the respected and successful journal Consumer Reports, and Consumer's Research under the wing of the National Journalism Center, a project of the American Conservative Union.

people and what stocks they owned, and as you know, to bring a stockholder suit you need to be a stockholder.”

“I suspect that Izzy suspected [Reis’s motives],” said Kasdon, “because he was a very shrewd guy.”* If Stone had suspicions, he kept them to himself. What he did reveal to Kasdon was a sense that his relationship with Esther was under some strain. One evening after work, Izzy came to Kasdon’s apartment for a few drinks. “He made a pass at my roommate,” she recalled.³⁴

Stone’s unhappiness also showed up in his prose. He wrote the whole of each issue himself, and though he could be lively at times—no mean feat when writing about corporate governance or steel capitalization—his attempts at punchy copy often descended to a kind of parody of Time-ese: “Revealing was the address of Dr. Benjamin M. Anderson before the California Bankers Association.... Pessimistic are the conclusions he advanced....Highest are the temperatures....”³⁵

His immersion in corporate balance sheets would prove useful. So would his closer acquaintance with “grand larceny as practiced by the better classes.”³⁶ But when tenor Lawrence Tibbett asked Stone to come work as his speechwriter in the summer of 1940—with a salary of \$250 a week—he didn’t have to think twice.

Tibbett, head of the American Guild of Musical Artists, was in the midst of a vicious battle with James Petrillo, newly-elected president of the American Federation of Musicians. The dispute centered over who had the right to represent instrumental soloists—a group neglected by the AFM, who focussed on

orchestra and band players. But there were political overtones as well. The AFM's powerful New York Local 802 had long been a fiefdom of organized crime.³⁷ Efforts to clean up the local, spearheaded by Communists, were only partially successful.† And Petrillo's autocratic style of leadership, though in the classic AF of L mold, was a godsend to the opposition. "They stole my people and I'm going to get them," he declared. "They're musicians and they belong to me."³⁸

Petrillo issued an ultimatum: If the soloists didn't join the AFM by Labor Day, his musicians would boycott any venue where the soloists appeared. Such tactics, scolded the Nation (in an unsigned editorial written by Izzy) "played into the hands of labor's worst enemies."³⁹ By the time matters came to a head, Tibbett had been elected president of the American Federation of Radio Artists.⁴⁰ His speechwriter had moved on as well. Freda Kirchwey, finally making good on her promise of a full-time job, asked Stone to set up a Washington bureau for the Nation. At \$90 a week plus \$15 for expenses—to be reduced to \$75 a week once he'd established himself as a freelancer—the salary was less than half his speechwriter's pay.⁴¹ But with Washington in the grip of third-term fever, the offer put him right in the center of the action. On September 9, Celia's eighth birthday, the Stone family moved to Washington.

III.

*Reis later achieved fame—or infamy—as the executor of Mark Rothko's estate.

† Resentment at the Party's efforts to influence the Union led two brothers, Jack and Harry Thorne, to form the Christian Front—the group whose streetcorner provocations were applauded by Social Justice.

“As an appendage and ward of the government,” the writers of the 1942 WPA Guide proclaimed, “Washington lives and has its being in an atmosphere predominantly political.”⁴² Though he, too, had taken up residence in an atmosphere predominantly political, I.F. Stone never became either an appendage or a ward of the government. He was, of course, no stranger to the capital. Indeed, one of Stone’s qualifications for the job was his extraordinary access to the New Deal. Creekmore Fath, a Texas lawyer who’d come to Washington to work for California Democrat John Tolan’s committee on migratory labor, recalls Izzy and Esther as fixtures of the capital’s New Deal dinner circuit. “At any one time you’d see 15 or 20 of them at Hugo Black’s house, or Virginia Durr’s house, or the Stone’s house.”⁴³

Politics would make him a pariah, but in the early 1940s Stone’s natural gregariousness and left-wing views made him particularly congenial company for the group of young, mostly Southern liberals whose doyenne was Virginia Durr. Between her husband Clifford Durr, an Alabama native who’d come to Washington in 1933 to work for the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, and her brother-in-law, Senator and later Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black, Virginia Durr’s connections covered most of New Deal Washington. Over drinks at Seminary Hill, the Durr’s house in Alexandria, Izzy and Esther often encountered Clifford’s colleague Abe Fortas, Clark Foreman from the Department of the Interior, National Youth Administration head Aubrey Williams, and his assistant, a young Texan the others called “the drugstore cowboy” because of his affectation for boots. His name was Lyndon Baines Johnson.⁴⁴

Though the President himself wouldn't acknowledge it for another three years, by the time the Stones arrived in Washington Dr. New Deal was already being elbowed aside by Dr. Win-the-War. Tommy Corcoran, whose efforts on behalf of F.D.R.'s policies made him a lightning rod for New Deal critics, and who resigned his position at the RFC to concentrate on the 1940 campaign, found himself exiled from the government. Ben Cohen was similarly, though less brutally, marginalized.⁴⁵ Izzy's friendship with the Durrs and their circle afforded him continuity of access to an administration very much in transition. It also did something else for his career as a reporter: it allowed him to remain an outsider in Washington.

This seems paradoxical—especially in light of the later careers of such consummate capital operators as Abe Fortas and Lyndon Johnson. But in the early 1940s the group that gathered at Seminary Hill constituted yet another of Washington's interlocking conspiracies. Though culturally southern—and proud of it—these men and women were mostly liberal on race, sympathetic to the CIO, and unanimously opposed to the poll tax, the very bulwark of Bourbon power in Washington (Virginia Durr was chair of the National Committee to Abolish the Poll Tax). In time, some of them would succumb to the blandishments of power. But when Izzy first met them, they were acutely conscious of their heretical status, and welcomed kindred spirits with a uniquely southern mix of personal warmth and evangelical fervor.

Another thing that Stone had in common with his new friends was a disdain for the fresh wave of anti-Communism that passed through Washington in the wake of the Pact. "My husband

thought the Communist Party was ridiculous,” Virginia Durr recalled. “It was so badly run.”⁴⁶ But in the deep south even a hint of wavering on race was enough to get you labelled a Communist—a tactic that men like Theodore Bilbo, Martin Dies and John Rankin had recently imported into the halls of congress. So when the American Civil Liberties Union decided it could no longer tolerate the presence on its board of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, a Communist who’d been one of the organization’s founders, the fact that I.F. Stone leapt to her defense did him no discredit as far as the Durrs were concerned. The coalition that Stone put together to protest the ACLU’s action was testimony to the range of Stone’s contacts across the whole left of the political spectrum. Issued in the name of Robert Morss Lovett, Governor General of the Virgin Islands, the open letter “to defend civil liberties in the Civil Liberties Union,” which Stone had drafted, was signed by Wechsler, Gardner Jackson, Columbia University professors Franz Boas and Robert Lynd, Carey McWilliams, and Theodore Dreiser.

Yet the same traits that drew the Durrs and their friends to Izzy also marked off the limits of intimacy. “Tex” Goldschmidt and Abe Fortas may have been Jews, but they were southerners born and raised. To his Washington friends Izzy was a New Yorker, the actual circumstances of his birth and education overshadowed by his metropolitan aura. “I remember particularly,” said Virginia Durr, “a dinner party at the undersecretary of the interior’s, who was Mike Straus... Izzy was so brilliant, so funny, so bright.”⁴⁷

Operating more like a foreign correspondent than a bureau chief, Stone was able to set his own agenda. Working for a weekly

also gave him the luxury of time—to dig up scoops, develop new contacts, or simply to satisfy his intellectual curiosity. His attempts to pay a courtesy call on the Soviet Ambassador in October and November were rebuffed.⁴⁸ He had better luck at the Washington Cooperative Bookshop, which manager Larry Hill ran as a combination emporium, community center, debating society and literary salon. A visitor to the Bookshop might run into anyone in Washington from the New Deal to points left-wards, and Izzy soon became a habitu  .⁴⁹

Nothing illustrates how quickly Izzy found his niche in Washington—and how adroitly he leveraged access as a reporter into influence on policy—than his role in what became known as the Reuther Plan.

By the end of 1940 everyone in Washington knew that the United States needed to produce more airplanes. President Roosevelt had been saying as much for years: in November 1938, just after *Kristallnacht*, the president, believing that only air power would deter Hitler, told his advisors he wanted an airforce of 12,000 planes with the capacity to produce a further 24,000 planes a year.⁵⁰ In May of 1940 Roosevelt asked congress for 50,000 planes a year. The fall of France the following month, and the Battle of Britain, which was still raging as the Stone family moved to Washington, only made the need for planes more obvious.

But in 1940 the American aviation industry was still in its infancy, and as infants go, aviation was a spoiled brat. Curtiss-Wright, the largest domestic manufacturer, produced well-built, handsome aircraft—at the rate of 10 a day! Organized around high-quality boutique production, in its entire history from the

Wright brothers' flyer to the latest Boeing the aircraft industry still hadn't managed to produce 50,000 planes. After the lean years of the depression, aircraft manufacturers were now revelling in a 5-year backlog of orders, and had neither the incentive nor the ability to produce at anything like the rate needed to catch up with the Nazis.⁵¹

Only the automobile manufacturers had the machinery, and the expertise, to deliver the volume needed. That, presumably, was why the president had appointed William Knudsen, president of General Motors, as head of the Office of Production Management. "The [auto] manufacturers," wrote New Deal economist turned journalist Eliot Janeway, "were willing to take on any and all jobs thrown at them—but as contractors outside their own plants, not as manufacturers inside them. Inside their plants they proposed to continue making automobiles...."⁵² The year 1941 was shaping up to be the most profitable in the history of the automobile industry, and no one was in a hurry to leave the banquet. Nor did anyone in Washington have the political will to force them from the table. In 1940 Roosevelt had an election to win. In 1941 the administration still treated its dollar-a-year men with the same delicacy it displayed towards the French Navy, where it was feared that any failure of tact might prompt a shift from hostile neutrality to active sympathy with the enemy.

"To the manufacturers' astonishment and anger, the answer came not from Washington, but from Detroit. It announced the debut of Walter Reuther."⁵³ With his brothers Victor and Roy, Walter Reuther had been an activist in the Socialist Party and a supporter of Norman Thomas's 1932 presidential campaign. A

skilled tool and die maker, Walter spent 1933 with Victor working in Gorki, the auto factory Henry Ford had built for the Soviets.

Reuther's suggestion was as simple as it was bold: allow the auto makers to continue building 5 million cars a year, but put the industry's excess capacity to work producing aircraft using assembly-line methods. The scale of Reuther's ambition was evident in his plan's name: "500 Planes a Day."

If one strand of Reuther's scheme came from his firm machinist's grasp of Detroit production possibilities, another aspect was rooted in Rome, where in 1931 Pius XI had issued his encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*. Within the largely Catholic leadership of the CIO, the Pope's vision of corporatist collaboration among workers, employers, and the state was hugely influential. CIO President Philip Murray was particularly enthusiastic about what he called "Industrial Councils," which he envisioned as made up of an equal number of representatives from management and labor, chaired by a government representative, and put in charge of each vital industry.⁵⁴ But where the Murray proposals were abstract and vague, the Reuther Plan offered a "detailed blueprint" for producing desperately needed fighter planes—and for putting defense industries on a firmly social-democratic basis.⁵⁵

Though a Jewish ex-New Yorker might make an unlikely mouthpiece for such a vision, Stone had long been thinking along similar lines. In 1938, when he was still at the Post, Izzy argued that any "long view" of air defense must begin from the realization that "the real weapon is the plane factory, not the plane."⁵⁶ Just before he'd moved to Washington, he'd written a

three-part series in the Nation on “Aviation’s Sitdown Strike” exposing the aircraft industry’s devotion to lengthy backlogs (and windfall profits) rather than increased production. The last installment, “How to Build 50,000 Planes,” called for nationalization of the industry.

It was Edward Levinson, the former Post labor editor now working as Reuther’s political lieutenant, who brought Stone and Reuther together. Part of the interventionist wing of the Socialist Party, Levinson had been sent to Detroit by Sidney Hillman to help Reuther maintain his balance with the CP, which was still a major force in the UAW.⁵⁷ Reuther’s argument was simple: instead of waiting until new, purpose-built aircraft factories like Willow Run could be completed and brought on line, why not use automobile plants, which had already been forced to make drastic cuts in production, to start producing planes right away? Murray urged the government to treat each industry as a series of plants rather than separate corporations. Now Reuther was calling for a detailed, plant-by-plant inventory of surplus capacity to be matched with specific plans for retooling idle machinery to make Spitfire parts. Given a six month delay in retooling for the 1942 model year, Reuther was confident Detroit could turn out 500 planes a day.

The Reuther Plan, revealed first to Nation readers in December 1940, also made the front page of the New York Times.⁵⁸ But Stone’s scoop was only half the story; as he admitted four decades later, the plan itself “went through my typewriter.”⁵⁹ With Stone’s authorship a secret, Reuther became the toast of New Deal Washington. Jerome Frank hosted a breakfast at the Cosmos Club so the union leader could drum up

support from an audience that included Lauchlin Currie, Tommy Corcoran, and Leon Henderson, an economist who'd fought his own battles with the auto industry at the National Defence Advisory Council's price division. Hailed by "all-outers" such as Harry Hopkins, Treasury Secretary Morgenthau and Sidney Hillman (in his capacity as co-director of the Office of Production Management), the plan was also endorsed by Under Secretary of War Robert Patterson and, more cautiously, by Donald Nelson, the former Sears, Roebuck executive who chaired the Supply Priorities and Allocations Board.⁶⁰

"There is only one problem with the program," Morgenthau told Reuther. "It comes from the 'wrong' source." Most of the opposition to the Reuther Plan was couched in technical grounds: the impracticality of converting civilian plants, or the fine tolerances needed for aviation, or the impossibility of pooling production facilities.⁶¹ It didn't help that William Knudsen, the real power at OPM, had been president of General Motors when Reuther, as head of the UAW's GM department, led several successful strikes against the auto giant. "We had to stall," Knudsen later admitted, "and say it couldn't be handled." Knudsen's successor, GM President Charles E. Wilson* was more frank, complaining that Reuther's proposal to give labor an equal say in production would "destroy the very foundations upon which America's unparalleled record of accomplishment is built."⁶²

Reuther and his supporters kept the plan alive for over a year. According to Bruce Catton, who worked as Nelson's press

* Known as "Engine Charlie" Wilson to distinguish him from General Electric chairman Charles E. Wilson, who was known as "Electric Charlie" Wilson.

aide, right up to January 1942 it still “seemed quite possible that the Reuther plan might win by simple default. And if it did.... This was not labor standing by the edge of the desk, hat in hand, gratefully accepting the opportunity to make a suggestion here and there; this was labor declaring that it had just as much responsibility for winning the war as management had and asserting that, on the whole, it possibly had just about as much to contribute. It was a revolutionary proposal.”⁶³

Pearl Harbor ended Reuther and Stone’s push for “democracy in the economic sphere” even as it vindicated the practicality of their vision. Instead of partial conversion, the auto industry was entirely converted to military production, retooling with a speed that not even Reuther would have imagined possible. Within a few months the industry was sharing manpower, and even factory space, to a degree far greater than anything called for in Reuther’s supposedly utopian scheme. True, these plants were mostly turning out tanks and trucks, not planes (though by 1943 two thirds of all pre-war machine tools had been converted to aircraft engine production). And at least at first, the dollar-a-year men and military procurement officers ran the process without much interference from labor.⁶⁴

But the fight on the home front was far from over. In retrospect it is hard to argue with the conclusion that “instead of an active participant in the councils of industry, the labor movement had become, in effect, a ward of the state.”⁶⁵ At the time though, for I.F. Stone and many others, the social and economic transformations imposed by the war seemed to offer a chance to redeem the thwarted promise of the New Deal. If

organized labor hadn't yet won a seat at the table, the unions were still very much in the game. As was Izzy.

Stone was also in the front row of the Social Security Building auditorium on the day, in late December 1941, when Leon Henderson finally announced the end of domestic car production. With car sales booming, car makers were still reluctant, and so Henderson agreed to allow a few more weeks of production even after Pearl Harbor. John Kenneth Galbraith, who was on Henderson's staff, recalled that "the excuse was that this delay would allow the using up of components that would otherwise be wasted. The decision being indefensible, Henderson went over his defense in detail...." At the press conference "Henderson was detailed, voluble, persuasive. There was silence when he had finished," until Izzy raised his hand. "Henderson tried not to see him, tried again, and failed. Stone asked, 'Mr. Henderson, may we assume that this was a deal?'"⁶⁶

How could Stone be so sure? Because a few days earlier there had been a showdown between Wilson and Knudsen in the same building. That meeting was closed to the press, "but in the hallway outside was a small group of reporters, including I.F. Stone, who wore a hearing aid, then constructed with a separate receiver to be clipped to a coat pocket and a wire running up to an earpiece. Stone pressed his receiver flat against the conference room door [and] turned up the volume.... [Stone] heard [Wilson] say Detroit had a seventy-five million dollar inventory of engines and bodies and drive shafts and chromium bumpers, and at least they should be able to assemble these existing parts into new cars."⁶⁷

IV.

The Reuther Plan might not have had much impact in Detroit, but it did get I.F. Stone one place he was very eager to be: on the front page of PM.

It is not known whether, during the period he contested his dismissal from the New York Post, Stone ever made his way to the Publications Research suite at the Plaza Hotel. Even if he did, it is unlikely that the man to see, novelist Dashiell Hammett, would have offered him a job. Stone was an experienced newspaper man, and experienced newsmen were exactly what Ralph Ingersoll, the man behind Publications Research, didn't want. At least not at first.

Ingersoll believed that American newsrooms were filled with "young men and old hacks, worked too hard for them either to become well-informed or to improve themselves.... There are men of talent writing news," he recognized, "particularly amongst the younger men," but generally speaking, they are "not allowed to use their talents."⁶⁸ Ingersoll was going to change all that.

A graduate of Hotchkiss and Yale in an era when a few semesters of college marked a reporter as suspiciously intellectual, Ralph McAllister Ingersoll worked briefly for Hearst's New York American, quitting when an editor changed his copy to fit the owner's politics. Hired by the New Yorker largely on account of his social connections (his uncle, Ward McAllister, coined the phrase "The 400" to denote the number of people who could fit into society hostess Mrs. William Astor's ballroom),

Ingersoll made the magazine's "Talk of the Town" section a must read for café society. Lured by Henry Luce to Time, Inc., Ingersoll quickly turned Fortune (where he hired James Agee) into a showcase for fine writing and penetrating reportage on American industry. When Luce's first marriage fell apart Ingersoll held the reins at Time; as a reward Luce put him in charge of launching Life, where he inaugurated a new era in photojournalism.⁶⁹

Declaring himself the enemy of "the curse of newspaper writing," with its rigid formulae and "tortuous tell-all" lead paragraphs, Ingersoll set out to redeem "the spiritual degradation" of reporters forced to toe an owner or advertiser's line. Instead of semi-literate "legmen" whose chief qualification for the job was a shared social (and sometimes family) background with the policemen and firemen who were their primary sources of information, and who phoned in their reports to office-bound "deskmen," Ingersoll wanted writers who would be able to take advantage of an unprecedented freedom to report what they saw, and felt--and thought. Commercial pressures wouldn't be a problem, since Ingersoll's paper would accept no advertising. Instead, the new paper would sell for a nickel—two cents more than the competition—because, pledged Ingersoll, "it will be worth it." When he asked Hammett and Lillian Hellman, friends who'd been members of Ingersoll's Marxist study group, to help him screen potential staffers, Ingersoll hoped to recruit about 150 people. Over 11,000 applied.

Ingersoll's new hires were expected to write vigorous, colorful, compelling narratives. City room veterans were at a distinct disadvantage. Instead, Ingersoll raided the slick magazines, poaching Louis Kronenberger from Time to serve as

drama critic, Cecelia Ager from Variety to review movies*, as well as New Yorker writers Dorothy Parker and James Thurber (not to mention Lillian Ross, whose career as a New Yorker profile writer lay ahead of her). With Hammett sitting in at the copy desk, and Ben Hecht himself writing features, the young, literate but unformed Ivy Leaguers and cub reporters who made up the bulk of the staff could be forgiven for thinking they'd taken "the fast elevator" to newspaper heaven.⁷⁰

To Penn Kimball, former chairman of the Princetonian and a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, "it sounded like the dream paper."⁷¹ Kimball joined James Wechsler, former editor of the Columbia Spectator, who in turn recruited Arnold Beichman, his successor at the Spectator. Ken Stewart quit his job at the New York Times to work for the new paper—one of many who sacrificed salary and security to join Ingersoll's bold experiment.† Hodding Carter wasn't just the editor of the Mississippi Delta Democrat-Times—he owned the paper. But Carter, who'd carried a gun after writing articles critical of Huey Long for his hometown paper in Hammond, Louisiana (and had been fired by the Associated Press for "insubordination") couldn't resist a good fight and in the summer of 1940 he, too, found his way to the hot, cramped, dirty offices Ingersoll rented above the Munyer Printing and Engraving Company on the corner of Sixth Avenue and Bergen Street in Brooklyn.

* Ager's daughter, Shana Alexander, got her start at PM.

† Arthur Gelb, who rose to become managing editor of the Times, may be the only person who got his job at The New York Times through PM. A college drop-out and graduate of DeWitt Clinton High School in the Bronx, Gelb was a disappointed candidate for PM when the kindly woman in charge of personnel offered to recommend him for a night copy boy's job at the Times.

What made PM so exciting? Freedom from editorial straightjackets was just the beginning. The name itself had a kind of hard-boiled mystique. Even today, nobody really knows whether PM was an abbreviation for “Picture Magazine,” or “Photographic Material,”--or simply referred to the time of day the first edition rolled off the presses Ingersoll shared with the Brooklyn Eagle. There was no doubt what PM stood for, though: “We are against people who push other people around, just for the fun of pushing, whether they flourish in this country or abroad.” Ingersoll had no patience with gray-ladylike pretensions to objectivity: “We shall hardly be unbiased journalists. We do not, in fact, believe unbiased journalism exists....”⁷² At a time when even J. David Stern thought the CIO was a threat to the republic, PM was unabashedly pro-labor. Also pro-FDR, pro-civil rights for blacks (James Baldwin was a copy boy), pro-consumer (one of many types of journalism pioneered by PM) and very vocally pro-war. From the first issue in June 1940, when the *Daily Worker* and the Republican right were still harmonizing on “The Yanks Aren’t Coming,” Ingersoll waged a relentless campaign exposing Nazi aggression with the repeated, page-one refrain “What are we going to do about it?”⁷³

One answer, promoted by the paper as “the most important defense-production development of the present emergency, and the most important labor story as well,” came on December 22, 1940 under the byline I.F. Stone. Every day for over a week Stone kept PM’s readers up to date on the Reuther Plan: what was in it, how would FDR respond to it, who opposed it, why the British liked it.⁷⁴ Curiously, the only detail omitted from this chronicle was the reporter’s own role in formulating the plan. Instead

Stone, foot now firmly in the PM door, branched out with an exposé of government favoritism towards the Ford Motor company, particularly in the contract to build the army's new "midget car" (better known to posterity as the Jeep). By January 1941 Stone was billed as a PM "special correspondent"; in February his succession of exclusive stories broadened to editorials as well, including a stinging attack on the House Committee on Un-American Activities and its chairman, Texas congressman Martin Dies: "In Germany one dare not reflect on Hitler. In Russia one dare not reflect on Stalin. In Italy one dare not reflect on Mussolini. Shall it be said that in America one dare not reflect on Dies?"⁷⁵

By the time Stone came aboard, PM had already weathered its first near-death experience. Ingersoll's original intention was to raise \$10 million. On advice from his bankers he lowered his sights to half that. But when the first issue—which sold out in a matter of hours—went to press on June 18, he'd only managed \$1.5 million. Ingersoll's backers were a mix of the Social Register—Harry Cushing, John F. Wharton, John Hay Whitney and the heirs to the A&P supermarket (Huntington Hartford II, who bought himself a cub reporter's job) John Deere tractor, and Wrigley chewing gum fortunes--and Dun and Bradstreet. Ad men William Benton and Chester Bowles took shares, as did publisher M. Lincoln Schuster, Julius and Lessing Rosenwald (of Sears, Roebuck), and Mrs. Louis Gimbel.

"If we are half as good as we think we are," Ingersoll told his investors, PM "will make us rich." The former Fortune editor cast his crusade as a paying proposition: "we do not believe we can call ourselves a success in this civilization if we cannot

persuade [the public] to make us as rich, say, as the men who manufacture ... Life Savers....”⁷⁶ In his own terms, Ingersoll was in trouble almost immediately. Daily sales of PM plummeted to less than half the 200,000 needed to break even, and though 60,000 New Yorkers sent in advance subscriptions, the forms were only discovered, months later, rotting in a storeroom.⁷⁷ Luckily one of Ingersoll’s backers had no need for greater wealth. Marshall Field III owned a townhouse in Manhattan, an estate on Long Island, racing stables in England and Kentucky, and a 13,000 acre hunting preserve in South Carolina.⁷⁸ He also shared Ingersoll’s dream of a paper that “would say the things that needed to be said,” the kind of paper reporters fantasize about at “bull sessions over glasses of beer.” When Field bought out the other shareholders in September 1940—at 20 cents on the dollar—he declared, “I’m not supporting a newspaper, I’m supporting an idea.”⁷⁹

As a newspaper, though, PM changed forever the way newspapers looked—and read. Before PM newspapers didn’t run complete radio (or television or movie) listings. Nor did they cover the press. Until PM asked him to chronicle the life of his patient “Baby Lois,” Benjamin Spock was an unknown pediatrician. Jimmy Cannon was a private at Fort Dix when PM published his tales of army life.

Printed on coated paper with special quick-drying ink, PM could run pictures bigger, and more boldly, than any other daily. Margaret Bourke-White, another of Ingersoll’s hires from Life, joined Arthur “Weegee” Fellig to record not just the naked city but the whole spectacle of metropolitan life, from Coney Island to Carnegie Hall. Artist Ad Reinhardt drew for it, as did Saul

Steinberg, and cartoonist Crockett Johnson, whose “Barnaby”^{*} made the paper a daily necessity even for readers who loathed PM’s politics.⁸⁰ On the editorial page a young illustrator, whose only previous claim to fame was his work for “Flit” bug spray, lent his pen to Ingersoll’s campaign to prod the U.S. out of its isolationist lethargy: “Said a bird in the midst of a Blitz/` Up to now they’ve scored very few hitz,/So I’ll sit on my canny/Old Star Spangled Fanny....’/And on it he sitz and he sitz.” Theodor Suess Geisel’s attacks on Hitler, Tojo and their American apologists weren’t subtle. When North Dakota Senator Gerald Nye endorsed fascist Gerald L.K. Smith’s magazine The Cross and the Flag, “Dr. Seuss” drew Nye as a horse’s ass. But they were funny—and as memorable in their way as the Cat in the Hat or the Grinch Who Stole Christmas (a character whose look owes a lot to Suess’s Hitler cartoons for PM.)⁸¹

V.

In the spring of 1941 PM declared war on the Axis powers. Any staff who objected, said Ingersoll, could become “non-combatants” exempt from war-related assignments. What Ingersoll didn’t say was that this was actually the paper’s second front. PMers had already been at war for months—with each other. Weeks before the first issue appeared, an anonymous

* Tallulah Bankhead called PM a “filthy, rotten, Communist” rag, but admitted she sent her maid to buy it so she could keep up with “Barnaby.” Bankhead’s reading obviously never extended to The New Masses, where Johnson, beloved to generations of parents as the creator of Harold and his purple crayon, served as one of the magazine’s editors. Reinhardt also worked for New Masses, both as art director and illustrator, including a December 1940 attack on PM’s pro-war policy.

“blind” memorandum made the rounds of the city’s newsrooms describing Ingersoll as “an adventurer on the make” who, though “not sold on any political ideology ... appears to have fallen in with CPers, and to have become impressed by their energy and ability ... to get things done.” The memo named names, with staffers described as either Party members (coded CP) or sympathizers (coded S). There were some mistakes. Wechsler, who in the months since the pact had become vociferously, even obsessively anti-Communist, was listed as a sympathizer. But his fellow labor reporter Amos Landman, who joined PM from the Daily Mirror, was indeed a Party member, as were investigative reporter Leanne Zugsmith, her husband, New York Newspaper Guild president Carl Randau, and most of the others listed.⁸²

Conceived during the palmiest days of the Popular Front, PM’s actual birth coincided with the low ebb of Communist influence. Perhaps for that reason, Ingersoll saw little to fear from the party or its adherents. Besides, some of Ingersoll’s best friends were Communists. They never held his membership in the Racquet Club against him. “If what is meant by a Communist sympathizer is a man who sympathizes with some part but not all of the Communist Party line,” Ingersoll wrote in a memo to his staff, “then I would be willing to state unequivocally that I have not knowingly hired a man who is not a Communist sympathizer. What PM is not,” Ingersoll declared, is a party organ, adding “if I catch” anyone “doctoring PM” to reflect any party line “I will put him out on his ear as fast as I can throw him.”⁸³ Just to show his red-baiting critics he wasn’t spooked, Ingersoll ran a summary of the blind memo in PM--with all the names included.⁸⁴

I.F. Stone shared Ingersoll's assessment of the Red Menace. Stone had contempt for the CPUSA's attempts to paint Stalin's *realpolitik* in heroic colors, but what really worried him were far more influential obstacles to his—and Ingersoll's—main priority, preparing Americans for the fight against Nazism. Dollar-a-year men like shoe coordinator Francis Murphy whose favoritism to his own company cost the army millions of dollars—and consumers tens of millions. Or the Mellon trust, whose determination to preserve Alcoa's monopoly on aluminum, even if it kept the RAF waiting for planes, was the subject of a double-barreled exposé by Stone in PM and The Nation.⁸⁵

Not everyone at PM agreed with Stone's—or Ingersoll's—priorities. Indeed Stone arrived at the paper just as the first major battle on the internal front reached its climax. The central figure was Leo Huberman, and the incident reveals both the high stakes and the low cunning that doomed the financially beleaguered paper to perpetual sectarian sniping. Four years older than Stone, whom he knew from the New Beginnings group, Huberman was, at least on paper, the ideal man to head PM's pioneering Labor desk. The author of We The People (1932), one of the first examples of history-from-below, and Man's Worldly Goods (1936), a critical history of capitalism, Huberman developed extensive union contacts while writing The Labor Spy Racket (1938). But his difficulty meeting a daily deadline—exacerbated by his inability to type—made him an obvious target during Ingersoll's first round of layoffs in December 1940. Since everything at PM was instantly interpreted in political terms, the dismissal of Huberman, an avowed Marxist (though not a Party member) was seen as a

victory for the anti-Communist forces, particularly since Huberman's deputy (and fellow New Beginnings activist) James Wechsler, leader of the paper's anti-Communist caucus, now became labor editor.

"We all thought that young Wechsler ran to Ingersoll, lusting after [Huberman's] job," recalled Penn Kimball, who as chair of the Newspaper Guild grievance committee "became front and center the defender of Leo Huberman."⁸⁶ Wechsler himself felt his appointment was "intended ... to dramatize that anti-communists were at last taking over the paper," and bolstered his position by bringing his cronies Beichman and Harold Lavine under his wing.

With Stone writing from Washington, and not yet formally on staff, the affair could easily have passed him by but for one further complication: union politics. Ken Crawford, PM's Washington bureau chief, was also president of the American Newspaper Guild, and a staunch member of the union's anti-CP wing, (as was his successor as president, PM Washington correspondent Milton Murray). Meanwhile Tom O'Connor, the paper's National editor, and former president of the Los Angeles Guild, and Carl Randau, PM's deputy foreign editor and president of the New York Guild, were equally active on the union's left (as was Randau's New York successor—and PM's radio editor--John T. McManus.)⁸⁷ With matters so finely balanced, control of both the New York Guild and the national office hinged on the outcome of the battle over the Guild unit at PM.

The political battle-lines were blurry, and the overlay of journalistic and commercial competition makes it even harder to disentangle the strands of hostility aimed at the new daily. The

editorially reactionary Brooklyn Eagle, for example, had the largest Communist cell in the New York press*, which led anti-Communists to see dire significance in the fact that PM used the Eagle's downtime. And though the New York Post was the anti-Communist Guild faction's main base, Post staffers also viewed PM as their paper's only rival for liberal readers.

Himself a Guild stalwart, I.F. Stone played no part in the Huberman affair (which was resolved in a face-saving deal that gave Huberman back pay from when he was fired, in May, to when he "voluntarily" resigned in December).⁸⁸ Stone had, in any case, no appetite for ideological infighting†, preferring, as he wrote in an October 1941 eulogy for Justice Louis Brandeis, "the power of a fact." Like many of his obituaries over the years, Stone's description of Brandeis is also an essay in self-portraiture: "the Attorney for the People" derived his strength, Stone wrote, from his "vast appetite for the concrete details of any situation or problem, and his intellectual patience. [Brandeis] believed in the reasonableness of human beings and the possibilities of reaching them by persuasion."⁸⁹

Izzy's refusal to be drawn into PM's internal warfare didn't mean he was aloof. Leon Edel, who left the war desk of the Canadian Press Association to become PM's night editor, recalled Stone as "gregarious, and curious, and very popular with the

* At the time most of the city's papers had party cells, as did Time, Inc., where the cell put out a shop paper, Better Time, critical of Luce's pro-Fascist bias. However Amos Landman, who was vice president of the PM Guild unit, and had been recruited into the party when he worked at the Daily Mirror, told me that PM never had a cell.

† Unlike Richard Rovere, who in his memoir Final Reports described Huberman as returning "to the Stalinist fold" but who at the time wrote at least two letters to Ingersoll declaring his "high regard for Huberman's knowledge and integrity."

staff.... His figure gave an effect of roundness; one would have caricatured him by drawing a series of circles.” Stone’s roundness, Edel added, “wasn’t obesity; he had considerable bounce in him.” On his visits to the New York office Stone often joined the future biographer of Henry James for a sandwich. “He knew the neighborhood, and took me to the old equivalent of good fast food places. He gave me the sense then, and always, of a person who took possession of everything that interested him.... Washington was his kingdom; yet he knew the byways” of New York. In the summer of 1941 Stone invited Edel to join him and Esther and the children at a house he’d rented on Fire Island. “We didn’t talk of the current news which absorbed him, but about novelists—Proust, James Joyce.... Even then Izzy liked to talk about the Greek philosophers,” recalled Edel.⁹⁰

Washington on the eve of war was a “30-ring circus,” Izzy told Michael Blankfort; he was “busier than all hell ... but having such fun!”⁹¹ Keeping his distance from his bosses in New York and Brooklyn suited Izzy. But his evident detachment from office politics made him enemies as well. If Leon Huberman was hurt by Stone’s failure to rally to his cause he never showed it. For James Wechsler, though, his former Nation colleague’s lack of dedication to the anti-Communist crusade was the beginning of a life-long animus.

Wechsler had won his skirmish. But “when the Nazis invaded Russia in June, 1941,” Wechsler grumbled, “Ingersoll really got the old Popular Front gleam in his eye.”⁹² Ingersoll wasn’t the only one.

The morning of FDR’s third inaugural PM’s front page showed a line of ragged, jobless men. Eleven years after the Wall

Street crash, four years after the Roosevelt recession, and the promise of American prosperity still rang hollow. In the first half of 1941 a fresh wave of strikes hit heavy industry, and on June 5 the entire California CIO came out in sympathy with a Communist-led strike at the North American Aviation plant in Inglewood. On June 9, Roosevelt sent in 2,500 troops with fixed bayonets to seize the factory; Secretary of Defense Henry Stimson ordered California draft boards to cancel the deferment of any striker who refused to return to work.⁹³ Despite its push for war, PM defended labor's right to strike—a position it maintained throughout the war. But the party's overnight switch from industrial militancy to lockstep loyalty certainly made Ingersoll's life easier.

For Wechsler and other ex-Communists, the American party's battlefield conversion was just another grotesque example of its subservience to Moscow. But by the summer of 1941 most Americans had come to accept the inevitability of war. When the Almanac Singers literally changed their tunes, with Woody Guthrie now asking:

*What were there names, tell me, what were their names?
Did you have a friend on the good Reuben James?*

there were plenty of people happy to sing along. "Since the Fall of France," Stone wrote to Mike Blankfort back in January, "I have become a warmonger." As far as he was concerned, the Russians had joined his fight.⁹⁴

"The involvement of Russia," thundered Dwight McDonald and Clement Greenberg, "does not change the issues."⁹⁵ Only the Communist Party claimed it did. What changed was the distribution of forces—at home and abroad. Operation

Barbarossa meant that domestic opposition to the war was now limited to the Republican right, John L. Lewis, pacifists like Norman Thomas and the Trotskyist groupuscules which lingered on after Trotsky's assassination the previous August. As for the war in Europe, Stone pointed out that "by his attack on the Soviet Union [Hitler] has 'landed' a huge anti-Nazi army on the Continent... Hitler had hoped that dislike for Stalin's ideological table manners*—and, conversely, Soviet dislike for ours—would keep the leadership of of the Western free countries from effective united action, and it may."⁹⁶

The view that anti-fascism once again trumped anti-communism—elementary Popular Front common sense—found adherents far beyond the narrow circle of Nation and PM readers. Time magazine may have been entertained by the prospect of "two vast prehistoric monsters lifting themselves out of the swamp." The New York Times might quote Harry Truman: "If we see that Germany is winning, we ought to help Russia, and if Russia is winning, we ought to help Germany, and that way let them kill as many as possible."⁹⁷ Franklin Roosevelt pledged immediate aid to the Soviet Union. And in London, George Orwell changed his tune, too: "The Russians acknowledge seven hundred thousand casualties.... I never thought I should live to say 'Good luck to Comrade Stalin,' but so I do."⁹⁸

So determined were American communists to prove their good citizenship that Party leader Earl Browder—still in jail for passport fraud—issued a no-strike pledge. And in July 1941,

* As his language here suggests, while Stone considered opposition to Fascism a moral imperative, it is probably fair to say that in his view a hatred for Stalin was more "a matter of taste."

when the Justice Department indicted 29 Minneapolis Teamsters on conspiracy charges under the newly-passed Smith Alien and Sedition Act, the party uttered not a word in protest—though that may have been because the Dunne brothers, who led Teamster Local 544 (and balked at the no-strike pledge), were also mainstays of the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party. It fell to I.F. Stone to note that on the Justice Department’s estimate, “1/260 of 1 percent of the people of this country belong” to the SWP, yet according to the indictment the Trotskyist leaders, “unless placed in jail, may overthrow the government of the United States, a task which would seem to call for more than a handful of men.” Stone made two serious points: the arrests were a political favor for Dan Tobin, president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and a Roosevelt ally.* They were also a dangerous precedent. He took particular delight, though, in reporting what the conspirators actually did when observed at union headquarters. “They went to the Gaiety, a local burlesque house,” Stone quoted the prosecutor. “He said each admission cost 75 cents and the government wants to know who paid for the tickets.”⁹⁹

On Sunday mornings Izzy liked to slip out of the house while Esther and the children were still sleeping and read through the Sunday papers in his office at the National Press Building. On that December 7, he “first heard the news from the elevator man.... The ticker at the Press Club, normally shut off on

* The Dunnes’ real crime, said Izzy, “was leaving the A.F. of L. for the C.I.O.” In his assault on the refractory local Tobin made use of a rising young tough named Jimmy Hoffa.

Sunday, carried the first flash telling of the Japanese attack.” The long wait was over.

As he shuttled from the War Department to the Navy Department, Stone “encountered a sense of excitement, of adventure, and of relief that a long expected storm had finally broken. No one showed much indignation. As for the newspapermen, myself included, we all acted a little like firemen at a three-alarmer.”

“This is really world war,” he told Nation readers, “and in my humble opinion it was unavoidable and is better fought now when we still have allies left.”¹⁰⁰

VI.

The outbreak of war brought I.F. Stone something that had previously eluded him: respectability. He’d had influence in New York from the day he joined the Post; in Washington, New Dealers considered him an important ally. And over the years his contacts had widened considerably. Garry Van Arkel, his oldest friend, was general counsel to the NLRB. Francis Biddle, who’d denied Izzy’s bid for severance pay, was now Attorney General. Abe Fortas was Undersecretary of the Interior. And through Freda Kirchwey Stone was soon on familiar terms with Fortas’s boss, Harold Ickes, as well. Nor had his old friends forsaken him. He still had lunch with Felix Frankfurter, still saw Tom Corcoran regularly. Out of office, Corcoran was the busiest influence peddler in Washington; his ability to funnel donations to helpful congressman from Boston merchant Lincoln Filene or Samuel Zemurray, president of the United Fruit Company, ensured his calls were still returned promptly.¹⁰¹

Victor Reuther had kept Stone's name off the Reuther Plan. But when the CIO leadership published a pamphlet on The CIO and National Defense they put I.F. Stone on the cover with his co-authors Philip Murray (President of the CIO), James Carey (Secretary of the CIO) and John Brophy (Director of CIO Industrial Union Councils). The pamphlet's aim, Stone wrote, was "to correct the impression that the labor movement is opposed to national defense," an impression fostered in part, he added, by the actions of unions "reputed to be influenced by Communists during the 18 months when the umbrella flew over the Kremlin." The Russians have now "learned the same bloody lesson in appeasement as the British." In the meantime, "American labor has had graphic illustrations of the meaning and value of democracy." Citing union victories over longtime foes Henry Ford and Tom Girdler of Republic Steel, "the cave-men of industry," Stone argued that "Detroit's auto workers know they have something to fight for; they know democracy is not a myth."¹⁰²

Shocked by Pearl Harbor, America finally began to mobilize. And as the leading advocate of radical mobilization, I.F. Stone finally found a national audience. His first book, The Court Disposes, was published too late to influence the court-packing fight. His second book Business as Usual, was, if anything, a bit premature, coming out in the fall of 1941. Yet it was precisely the book's urgency that lent it power—and credibility. For PM and Nation readers Stone's facts were familiar: the lag in aircraft production, Alcoa's all-out effort to protect its monopoly, the sit-down strike of capital to block an excess-profits tax. "Democracy has lost one battle after another trying to appease its enemies and by antagonizing its friends," warned Stone. What was new,

particularly after Pearl Harbor, was the sense of crisis. “Only by building a new America can we save America.”¹⁰³

Reading these lines with what E.P. Thompson called “the enormous condescension of posterity” it is almost impossible to recognize what Stone was doing. By 1941 Izzy was no wide-eyed romantic. He was a hard-bitten newsman who had first-hand knowledge of Franklin Roosevelt’s unerring instinct for expedience and temporization. Stone’s good friend Clifford Durr, recognizing that private capital wasn’t interested in expanding defense capacity, carved out, from his office in Jesse Jones’s empire, a Defense Plants Corporation to finance, build and own new manufacturing facilities. Knowing the whole idea would be anathema to his boss, a one-man bottleneck when it came to government spending, Durr simply didn’t tell him. “Each morning the War Department would telephone its latest applications to Durr... the legal staff would begin reducing the daily batch to contract form before lunch; the papers would be ready for transmission to the War Department by the end of the day; and the company with the contract would have its construction-and-tooling-up money the next day. No team of administrators,” wrote Eliot Janeway, “has achieved as much. This conspiracy of administrative efficiency--it was nothing less than a conspiracy--was three months old before Jones discovered what had been going on.” When he did, Durr had to resign.¹⁰⁴

The DPC, though, survived to become “the most important source of capital investment in the nation during the war.... As early as 1943, the government had invested over \$15 billion, nearly two-thirds of it through the DPC, to build some of the newest and most efficient manufacturing facilities in the

United States. DPC plants controlled virtually all the nation's synthetic rubber and magnesium production, nearly three quarters of the aircraft production, more than half the aluminum production ... and important segments of steel, pipelines, barge production and other industries.”¹⁰⁵ Stone’s view that winning the war would require a social revolution wasn’t wishful thinking. He’d seen it happen. Whether it would continue—whether the inevitable expansion of American wealth and power and productivity could be controlled, and channeled in the public interest—that was the home front on which I.F. Stone would fight his war.

Michael Straight, editor of The New Republic, saluted Stone’s “admirable analysis.” Lewis Corey, a co-founder (with Reinhold Niebuhr and A. Philip Randolph) of the interventionist Union for Democratic Action, said Business as Usual was “timely” and written “with superb journalistic skill.” Even Dwight Macdonald was moved to praise: “Mr. Stone is an excellent reporter; his Washington letters for months have been the only bit of journalistic *terra firma* in that slushy mushy quagmire of liberal yearnings the Nation has become. His long account of the Mellons’ aluminum monopoly and its extraordinary—even to a hardened Marxist—record in the ‘defense’ effort is the best thing in the book.” What bothered Macdonald was Stone’s belief that Dr. Win-the-War could serve progressive ends. “How much longer can you continue to believe that Messrs. Churchill and Roosevelt are on your team?”¹⁰⁶

If Macdonald only knew. The most significant comment on Business As Usual came not in a review, but on the back cover: “This is the first book to show the way in which monopoly

practices and big business control hamper mobilization.... This book is absolutely essential in the public interest.—Senator Harry S. Truman, Chairman of the Senate Committee Investigating Defense.”

PM, which serialized Business as Usual, now offered Stone steady work—which was just as well. In the weeks after the book came out the paper suddenly stopped taking his pieces, citing budget problems. Stone’s own finances were dire—he’d gone so far into debt writing the book he told Freda Kirchwey he was trying to sell an article to the Reader’s Digest. His mother, hospitalized in Philadelphia, had also taken a turn for the worse. Kirchwey was sympathetic: “I respect profoundly your need to make money,” she wrote, advising him to “be sure to strain out” of his article “any hint of leftness.” But she didn’t offer to give back the \$15 a week the Nation cut from his salary when he’d started writing for PM. Nor was she, despite repeatedly badgering Roosevelt’s secretary, Stephen Early, able to get the Nation’s Washington correspondent White House press credentials.¹⁰⁷

On January 2, 1942 Izzy had lunch with Harold Ickes. Ickes had written to thank him for an inscribed copy of Business As Usual, and although it wasn’t mentioned in the note, Ickes was pleased with the way Stone handled the aluminum story, for which he’d been the prime source. A former investigative reporter himself, Ickes had been a Bull Moose Republican and a Gifford Pinchot supporter before leaving the GOP to become one of the original New Dealers. A deadly bureaucratic infighter (as his long tenure in office attests), Ickes, as Freda Kirchwey told Izzy, was “full of dope [and] absolutely unrestrained in his speech—as long as you protect him.”¹⁰⁸ Ickes was also an empire

builder, and as Petroleum Administrator helped launch Stone on one of the biggest stories of his career.

“Stone is a clever little Jew who has to wear an acousticon,” Ickes recorded in his Secret Diary. “He seems to know pretty well what is going on here in Washington and is a fearless writer.... I told him about the rubber set-up.”¹⁰⁹ Back in the 1930s, the German cartel I.G. Farben entered into a series of partnerships with Standard Oil. One of the arrangements concerned tetraethyl lead, a gasoline additive essential to the production of high octane aviation fuel. Standard, which owned half of the patents on lead production, agreed to build a plant for its German partners. Before the new plant was ready—at a time when there could be only one customer for large quantities of aviation fuel in the Reich—Standard sold I.G. 500 tons of the additive just in time for the seizure of Czechoslovakia. In principle, the cartel agreement was a two-way street. And though war was fast approaching, Standard gave its German partners the rights and technical know-how to a new synthetic rubber process. But when the Americans asked for the rights to I.G.’s more advanced Buna synthetic rubber process, Hermann Goering’s Air Ministry balked. The Nazis also made sure I.G.’s American partners were never informed of German breakthroughs in producing synthetic oil.¹¹⁰

These cartel arrangements first became public when Thurman Arnold, who’d just signed a consent decree with Standard on an antitrust action, was summoned to testify before Senator Truman’s committee. Primed by Ickes, Stone was ready with a series of exclusives. So incendiary were Stone’s reports that his Nation editors made cuts “in the interest of protecting us from libel.” Freda Kirchwey also warned Izzy against

“editorializing.”¹¹¹

Ralph Ingersoll felt no such qualms.¹¹² On April 5, PM published an open letter from Izzy to John D. Rockefeller, Jr. reminding him that during the Teapot Dome scandal “you stepped in and forced the resignation” of Standard Oil’s chairman. “We think it your duty,” Stone told Rockefeller, to remove the current chairman, president and vice president of Standard for “acting as international economic collaborators of the Third Reich.” The next day, Stone was back: had Standard’s officers “been acting in Germany for us, rather than here for Germany, they would consider themselves lucky to be interned. The Nazis would have been more likely to inter them.” In all, PM ran six letters from Stone in a single week. “Mr. Rockefeller, you owe no explanation to an obscure scribbler in the press,” Izzy conceded in the final installment. “But ... there are people who have lost their sons because the Japanese are well supplied with oil. There are people who may lose their sons because we are so inadequately supplied with rubber.”¹¹³

The general manager of Esso marketers told Rockefeller that gasoline sales were down as a result of Standard’s poor image. Rockefeller himself was so distressed by the PM series he hired pollster Elmo Roper to survey public opinion. And in case Standard’s chief stockholder thought Stone was finished, the Senate Committee on Patents, whose chief investigator was Izzy’s friend Creekmore Fath, announced hearings on the synthetic rubber patents. “Izzy was there for every session of the committee,” said Fath. By the end of the year, Standard had a new president and a new chairman.¹¹⁴

Harold Ickes was delighted with the outcome of Stone’s

rubber series. But he was less thrilled when, over lunch in June, Izzy told him he was taking three months off to write a book on "Big Oil." Ickes was no puritan. His affair with an Interior Department employee was an open secret in Washington. But he abhorred corruption, and the suggestion that any of "his" men, many of whom still had their salaries paid by the big oil companies, might be anything other than devoted public servants struck Ickes as the height of impertinence. So when Izzy returned from his hiatus, and compared Ickes's staff unfavorably to the dollar-a-year men at the War Production Board, Ickes wrote saying "I resent this deliberate slur." And when Izzy, in *PM*, wrote a series on "the run-around given our Russian allies on aviation gas," and then took credit for prodding Ickes into action, the Petroleum Administrator exploded.

"At last Col. Robert Rutherford McCormick, the tin soldier expert of the CHICAGO TRIBUNE, has a rival," Ickes wrote in a blistering letter to Stone. "McCormick claims he 'introduced ROTC into the schools'; he 'introduced machine guns into the Army....' But all these modest claims are as nothing compared with the front page of *PM* for September 29, where, in big black print, one may read: 'PM Expose Gets Action On Aid To Russia in Eighteen Minutes.' If you could accomplish so mightily within what, in effect, is a split second, you are being wasted where you are. I am going to suggest to the President that he draft you who knows so well how badly things are being done here..... I hope that the President will not delay in putting this incomparable 'go-getter' to work before the Russians get him...."¹¹⁵

In his diary, Ickes admitted "I have no doubt we could have expedited this transaction very much indeed," but when

Washington congressman John Coffee introduced a bill calling for an investigation of PM's charges Ickes "cautioned him not to rely too implicitly upon what he might get from Stone. I pointed out that Stone was more interested in tearing down than in building up; that he is not so much a newspaper reporter as a muckraker."¹¹⁶

The problem wasn't Izzy's approach to evidence. He didn't always have all the facts—nobody who writes to a daily deadline can afford to wait that long—but he was as careful as any reporter, and more willing than most to admit his errors in print.

As for his take-no-prisoners approach, when turned on targets like Jesse Jones or Eugene Cox, "a beneficiary of Georgia's poll tax," Izzy's ferocity was part of his effectiveness. Cox was a member of Speaker Sam Rayburn's "Board of Education" and a power in the House. To Stone, Cox was "one of the intellectual hookworms who infest the Southern end of the Democratic Party," and when Izzy learned that the Congressman had taken an illegal \$2500 fee from a Georgia radio station--at the same time he'd launched an attack on the Federal Communications Commission—Izzy broke the story in PM.¹¹⁷ Cox retaliated by naming himself chairman of a committee to investigate the FCC; he also proposed an amendment eliminating the Commission's funding. But the FCC, one of the New Deal's last redoubts, fought back in a campaign organized by commissioner Clifford Durr, who'd joined the agency after he was forced out of the DPC. Durr sent the evidence of Cox's illegal fee directly to Rayburn. Izzy's attacks in PM were repeated—and amplified—by the Washington Post, whose publisher Eugene Mayer was no fan of Cox. When Cox was forced to resign from the investigation in October 1943 Izzy

had another scalp on his belt—and the New Deal chalked up another victory.¹¹⁸

The problem was that Izzy was just as willing to attack his friends. Despite the inauspicious start to their relationship, he genuinely admired Francis Biddle, who was not only a liberal but, as Freda Kirchwey reminded Stone, an important supporter of the chronically cash-strapped Nation. Yet when Biddle approved an order to deport Harry Bridges, the Australian born leader of the West Coast longshoremen's union, Stone went after him with such fervor that the Nation lopped the end off his piece. "I am not trying to protect Biddle," Freda Kirchwey wrote to Izzy. "I do think however that we should give the guy a chance."¹¹⁹

Kirchwey also spiked Stone's critique of the War Department's push for anti-strike legislation—this time on the advice of her friend Eddie Greenbaum, a New York lawyer serving as a Brigadier General attached to the department.* And she found his on-and-off feuding with Harold Ickes distinctly unnerving. When Izzy bridled at Ickes's sacred cow status, Kirchwey warned him not to make Ickes a "sacrificial goat" either: "Don't make him into one of those little images that primitive people stick pins into to express their hatred of somebody. Just because he is a liberal," she added, "you naturally expect more of him than of an ordinary officeholder.... This is a humanly understandable feeling. But it is politically foolish."¹²⁰

* What Kirchwey didn't know was that Greenbaum's partner, Morris Ernst, who'd led the fight to expel Elizabeth Gurley Flynn from the ACLU, was not only an enemy of Stone but a personal friend of J. Edgar Hoover and a longtime confidential source for the F.B.I.

Stone simply refused to be governed by prudence—or to be silenced by considerations of loyalty. And with editors he didn't particularly respect, he could be extremely touchy about his copy. He clashed continually with Robert Bendiner, managing editor of the Nation. Bendiner, who quit the magazine in 1943, was moving out of the left, but their constant bickering was usually personal rather than political, and on Bendiner's side aggravated by the knowledge that Izzy had gone after his job.¹²¹ With Kenneth Crawford, PM's Washington editor, he took a different tack, and simply ignored him, filing his stories directly to the paper's National desk in New York. Crawford didn't like it, but since Izzy wasn't on staff there wasn't much he could do about it. Managing editor John Lewis, who took over running the paper after Ralph Ingersoll joined the army in late 1942, did finally put Stone on a regular salary—but he still filed directly to New York.

Ingersoll had also written most of PM's editorials. Lewis hired Max Lerner to replace him in New York, with Izzy, who had done guest editorials in the past, now writing regularly from Washington. Perhaps surprisingly for two such famously abrasive personalities this irregular arrangement never broke down. Izzy was delighted to have his old friend on board, and though their political paths would diverge, he was also genuinely respectful of Lerner's ability. "I know I will enjoy working with you," he wrote Lerner. "I want you to enjoy working with me.... But I am sometimes gauche, tactless, overeager.... I'm not a sensitive plant. You are a good teacher. You're a better writer than I am... I can take criticism and I like it. I know you could teach me a lot, and you'll find me very willing to be taught."¹²²

VII.

Izzy was now working the equivalent of two full-time jobs. He wrote a Washington letter for the Nation, plus one signed and at least one unsigned editorial in the magazine most weeks—on top of three columns a week for PM. At home, Izzy “was *le roi soleil*, recalled his daughter Celia. Her father was happy to share his passions. “When I was ten,” he gave me “some Robinson Jeffers to read, saying ‘To be a great poet is the greatest thing in the world’.” Most of the time, though, his family had to accept that Izzy’s work took priority. “We were all of secondary importance. When father napped, we tiptoed; when he was hungry, we ate; when he needed an outing we were packed into the car (we children, carsick; mother, exhausted from the preparations) and driven off for long hot rides to the beach accompanied by his cheery calls to the back seat, ‘Isn’t this fun, kids?’ If the teacup wasn’t filled to the brim he raged as though he had uncovered a plot to destroy him.”¹²³

Sometimes he spread himself too thin. Bendiner complained bitterly that he was “duplicating coverage This trailing after PM is getting serious.”¹²⁴ At the same time, Izzy was simply becoming too big for the Nation. His journalism led to more and more frequent speaking engagements. In October 1942 he spoke at Carnegie Hall for the Artists’ Front to Win the War. Orson Welles was the master of ceremonies. The keynote speaker was Charlie Chaplin. That December Izzy chaired a Union for Democratic Action forum on the first year of the war. He gave frequent talks at the Washington Cooperative Bookshop.¹²⁵

He was also willing to stand up for unpopular causes. In the spring of 1942 New Masses announced that Izzy would chair the Washington rally of the Citizens Committee to Free Earl Browder. Stone's 17-year-old sister Judy, an activist in her high school chapter of the American Student Union, came down from Philadelphia to hear her brother speak. Her high school friends were even more impressed when he turned up at a meeting of the American Youth Congress that same night.¹²⁶ After Roosevelt commuted Browder's sentence at the end of May, Stone wrote "there remains only the prosecution of the Trotskyites in Minneapolis to haunt our speeches about free government."¹²⁷

What about Executive Order 9066? Signed by the president in February 1942, the order led to the internment of over 110,000 first and second generation Japanese-Americans. And I.F. Stone wrote not a single word in protest—indeed, his remark about Browder suggests that at the time, this intrepid reporter didn't even notice the most massive violation of civil liberties by the federal government in American history. Or was it that the internment was partly organized by his friend Abe Fortas, and rationalized by their mutual friend Hugo Black? Black's December 1944 opinion upholding the constitutionality of the order (to which Felix Frankfurter concurred) on the grounds that "time was short" and "military authorities feared an invasion of the West Coast," drew only a mild demurral from Stone.¹²⁸

Far from being a First Amendment fundamentalist, Izzy repeatedly chided the Justice Department for its failure to prosecute such "pro-Axis termites" as Gerald L.K. Smith and Elizabeth Dilling, author of The Red Network, who had been

indicted on sedition charges. Nor, in his many quarrels with Freda Kirchwey, did he ever object to her efforts to curb the fascist press in the U.S.; he was equally untroubled by Ralph Ingersoll's campaign to ban Father Coughlin's Social Justice from the mails. Even his defense of Harry Bridges rested "on the fact that he and the Communist Party, whatever their motives, are now doing their best to support the government in its war effort.... If its position changes, its legal position will also change."¹²⁹ Stone believed that Francis Biddle was willing to deport Harry Bridges out of "weakness"—a reluctance to confront conservatives. So it is probably worth recording that it was Biddle, not Stone, who spoke up against interning the Japanese.¹³⁰

Fascism—at home and abroad—still scared Stone in a way that communism never would. To Izzy, Martin Dies or John Rankin or J. Edgar Hoover were all clear and present dangers. He happily defended the Socialist Workers Party not out of political sympathy, but because these "Ishmaelites of the left" could "hardly have mustered sufficient force to seize the dog pound in Minneapolis."¹³¹ He had more affection for the American Communist Party—after all, not just some of his best friends, but some of his relatives were party members. The party, too, had very little power (and seemingly used what influence it did have to enforce national unity. In April 1942 the Daily Worker attacked Izzy's cartel and patent revelations for sapping corporate morale.)¹³² The Soviet Union was a different story. Unlike the Collier's writer who in December 1943 pronounced it a "modified capitalist set-up ... evolving ... toward something resembling our own democracy," Stone never pretended our wartime allies were democrats. He would probably have agreed

with Douglas MacArthur's view in February 1942 that "the hopes of civilization rest on the worthy banners of the courageous Red Army."¹³³ He certainly believed that if the Soviet Union were defeated, as many in Washington expected—or hoped—Britain would be unable to hold out until America was able to mount an effective European campaign. And he turned his pen against anyone who would deny the Russians adequate supplies. But when Harold Ickes, Mrs. Ogden Reid and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Lamont joined Paul Robeson, Charles Chaplin and Edward G. Robinson (and 100 other notables from Louis Adamic to Dr. Vladimir Zworykin) at the Congress of American-Soviet Friendship in November 1943 to celebrate "American-Soviet Cooperation," they had to do without the presence of I.F. Stone.¹³⁴

So did the National Press Club. One day in April 1943 Izzy sat down in the club dining room with a guest. Elmer Davis, director of the Office of War Information, was giving a speech in the auditorium and the club was crowded. A page came up and told Izzy he was wanted on the phone. This turned out to be a ruse. William H. Hastie, Izzy's luncheon guest, was a former federal judge. He was also black, a former dean of Howard University Law School, and had recently—and noisily—left a job as aide to Secretary of War Henry Stimson. "Reactionary policies and discriminatory practices," Hastie told the Chicago Defender, "were the immediate cause of my resignation."¹³⁵ The club manager told Izzy "that we would not be served. I said that as a member of the club I insisted on service for my guest and went back to the table. There we sat unserved until two o'clock, when we left for a Chinese restaurant."

“It takes a little while,” Stone wrote, “to catch on to the extent that Washington is a Jim Crow town. Although the Negro press reaches 4,000,000 readers every week, its correspondents are barred from the House and Senate press galleries and from White House press conferences.” I.F. Stone may have overlooked the injustice done to Japanese-Americans. He sent his children to the District’s segregated public schools, and when he and Esther bought a house in Washington, their deed contained a restrictive covenant preventing the property “being sold to, or occupied by or used for residence or any other purposes by negroes, or persons of negro blood, commonly called colored persons....” He had no close black friends. But the mistreatment of fellow journalists galled him, and that a man like Hastie should be snubbed by “the third-rate advertising men and fourth-rate politicians who belong to the [press] club” filled him with rage.

“Under the constitution of the club special meetings must be called on petition of twenty-five members.” When Izzy only managed “to obtain nine signatures, and a diverse collection of arguments from well-meaning people who agreed with me but...,” he resigned his membership.¹³⁶

VIII.

His sense of solidarity with the oppressed may well have been awakened by an incident a few months earlier. I.F. Stone never found press conferences particularly rewarding. The general clamor often rendered his hearing aid useless, and, particularly at the State Department, the words themselves were liable to be opaque at the best of times, and frequently designed

to convey a false impression. But at Freda Kirchwey's behest he'd put a lot of time into understanding the Department's various factions, and though he never produced the survey she'd hoped for,* since the earliest days of the war he'd taken a particular interest in the Free French. When the State Department demanded "the so-called Free French navy" hand back liberated territory to Vichy, Stone's language was far from diplomatic: "Cordell Hull, [with] a stupidity that calls for his removal from office ... could not have chosen a better way to undermine the confidence of oppressed peoples everywhere.... Some way should be found to let the world know in decisive fashion that the undemocratic little clique of decayed pseudo-aristocrats and backsliding liberals who dominate the State Department do not speak for the American people."¹³⁷

Criticizing the Department was bad enough. Praising the upstart Office of Strategic Services, which at least seemed willing to work with the French resistance, was worse.¹³⁸ But what was finally unforgivable was Izzy's uncanny ability to report what was really happening inside the Department. In February 1942 his exposé of secret deals to ship oil and mining equipment to Franco's Spain sent the diplomats scurrying to plug the leak—until Joseph Rauh, a young lawyer in the Bureau of Economic Warfare, confessed that he had been Stone's source.¹³⁹ When Izzy reported the U.S. Ambassador to Bolivia's efforts to scupper a new code guaranteeing workers' rights the Secretary of State denied the story; when Izzy then published a summary of

* a chore Stone eventually fobbed off on a resentful Robert Bendiner.

Hull's own cabled instructions to the ambassador, investigators were again called in—this time without success.¹⁴⁰

Izzy had also been a merciless critic of the “Darlan deal”—the agreement to recognize Admiral Jean François Darlan, former Vichy foreign minister and military commander in North Africa, as High Commissioner in return for his cooperation with the Allied invasion. Darlan's assassination in December 1942 and his replacement by General Henri Giraud, a sworn foe of De Gaulle, brought little respite. PM was particularly outraged at the State Department's delay in renouncing the Nuremberg Laws affecting French and North African Jews in the area now under Allied control. Izzy also faulted Hull for allowing the appointment of Marcel Peyrouton, who as Petain's Interior Minister introduced the Nuremberg laws in France, to be Governor General of Algeria.¹⁴¹ So when Izzy turned up at a State Department press conference in January 1943 to ask Hull whether the President had personally approved the Peyrouton appointment, he was hardly an unknown quantity.

Yet when Izzy rose to speak, the Secretary of State interrupted him. “What is your name?,” asked Hull. “Stone,” Izzy replied. “I thought it was. You have some other name, too, have you not?” Izzy answered again: “That is my name, Mr. Secretary.” Unabashed, Hull said simply, “I thought so. Go ahead.”

Shaken, Izzy asked his question, which Hull refused to answer. Then, recovering, Izzy asked “Would you care for a statement on my name?” To Hull's response that he was not interested in his name, Stone replied “I think you stepped out of bounds.” Nor did he accept Hull's claim that he was “trying to find out to whom I am talking.” Instead he continued, “I said my

name is Stone. You made a further remark that I think was uncalled for and untrue.”¹⁴²

On the floor of the House, Mississippi demagogue John Rankin denounced Stone twice on successive days, first for inciting “crackpots” critical of Hull, and then as “Bernstein or Feinstein ... one of the pen pushers on this communistic publication known as PM.”¹⁴³ Michael Straus, press aide to Harold Ickes, saw a chance to initiate a thaw in his boss’s relations with Izzy. Though wary at first, Straus had come to consider Stone “one of the most useful, courageous, and hard-socking correspondents in this town.” Back in October, Izzy had run into Straus and complained “his life is miserable because you [Ickes] disdain his respects.” Straus urged his boss not to let Izzy “suffer any delusions of persection.” But at that very moment Ickes was writing yet another long letter of complaint to Freda Kirchwey. After Izzy’s run-in with Hull (whom Ickes detested), Straus sent his boss another memo. Ickes wrote the very next day, never mentioning the incident but simply expressing wry gratitude for a recent Nation piece Izzy had written praising his department “without a single ‘but,’ ‘however,’ or intimation ... ‘I could do it even better if...’ ” Stone was pleased: “You know I think you are a wonderful guy. But you insist on that ‘love me love my dog’ attitude.... So, like Ivory Soap, my affection and admiration remain only ninety-nine and fourty-four one hundredths per cent pure.”¹⁴⁴

Izzy’s penchant for embarrassing the State Department also brought renewed attention from the F.B.I. He had come to the Bureau’s attention in the traditional fashion for a journalist—by writing something critical of J. Edgar Hoover. As early as 1936 an

eagle-eyed agent had identified Stone as the author of a New York Post editorial intimating “that the FBI is carrying on OGPU tactics [and] that the Director is anti-labor and anti-union.” His efforts in support of the Spanish Republic were duly noted, as was an informant’s description: “The Director will recall that Stone is not his correct name. He is of Jewish descent and [redacted] advises that he is very arrogant, very loud spoken, wears thick, heavy glasses and is most obnoxious personally.”¹⁴⁵

In July 1943 the Nation published two articles that ensured Stone’s place on J. Edgar Hoover’s private enemies list. The series was titled “Washington Gestapo,” and the author was identified as “XXX,” a “minor government executive helping to run one branch of a war agency.” XXX argued that “the Civil Service Commission and the F.B.I. ... are undermining Washington’s strength and will to fight” through ham-handed character investigations. By taking affirmative answers to questions such as “Does he think the colored races are as good as the white?” or “Does he seem to have too many Jewish friends?” as evidence of subversion, these investigators were “being used as a club ... to beat liberals out of town.”¹⁴⁶

In an editorial note, the Nation said that XXX’s “identity has been revealed only to our Washington editor, I.F. Stone, who as a friend of long standing is able to vouch for his absolute reliability.”* That was enough for J. Edgar Hoover to send

* In fact Robert Bendiner and Freda Kirchwey both repeatedly asked Stone to trust them with XXX’s identity. Stone sent Bendiner a telegram saying that if his own guarantee was “unsatisfactory, please mail them [articles] back.” A handwritten note on the bottom of Izzy’s reply to Freda Kirchwey suggests XXX was Edward F. Prichard, an official in the Office of Economic Stabilization who had been Felix Frankfurter’s first clerk on the Supreme Court. The F.B.I. never did discover who XXX was, but Hoover may have had his suspicions. In 1945

handwritten “action” memos asking “Who is this guy? H” and “What is his name? H” prompting a full-scale biographical summary whose mix of fact, gossip, and misinformation (Stone “whose true name is Isadore Finklestein”) would be reiterated dozens of times in the coming years*. Hoover also got his friend Morris Ernst to write a letter to the Nation “to let you know that I have yet to hear of a single violation of the basic civil liberties. This is close to a miracle.... The position of J. Edgar Hoover with respect to wiretapping sets a new high standard for the constabulary of the United States.”¹⁴⁷ Izzy was not convinced. “Like most miracles,” he said, replying on behalf of XXX, “this does not stand up too well under examination.”¹⁴⁸

IX.

Izzy’s rapprochement with Harold Ickes produced another string of scoops, including one, an exposé of how Jesse Jones built a hydroelectric dam for Alcoa in Canada using U.S. government funds, that allowed him to smite two favorite targets at once. Ickes, who leaked the material to both Izzy and Drew Pearson, author of the syndicated “Washington Merry-Go-Round” column, was especially pleased when Jones blamed Milo Perkins, a bureaucratic rival, for the leak.¹⁴⁹ But the Interior Secretary’s

he put a wiretap on Prichard, persuading President Truman he was both a New Dealer and an inveterate leaker. When Truman fired him Prichard returned to his native Kentucky, where after he admitted stuffing ballots in the 1948 election Hoover took personal charge of the investigation. Prichard, his marriage and career destroyed, was sentenced to two years at the Federal Penitentiary in Ashland. (see Tracy Campbell, *Short of the Glory: The Fall and Redemption of Edward F. Prichard Jr.*)

evident delight in his own deviousness lead to a final breach with Stone. In May, Ickes told Stone he had another scoop for him.

“He knew I hated the oil trust,” Izzy recalled, and “I hated the State Department. He slipped me a document, a very good story about an aviation gas plant in Mexico, but I just was leery of it, so I went down to the State Department, as much as I hated them, to check it out, and discovered that ... [Ickes] was really grinding the axe of Ed Pauley, a California oil promoter. So I printed the fact that he tried to plant the story on me. He was sore as a bull.”¹⁵⁰ Ickes was so angry, he summoned Stone to his office, then threw him out. He wrote later to apologize, and Izzy took back “the charge of ‘planting’ ... I must have sounded like an insufferable Pharisee and prig.” But the damage was done. Stone never really trusted Ickes again, and the next time Ickes had a complaint about one of Stone’s stories he took it to John Lewis, the managing editor of PM.¹⁵¹

Izzy’s attitude towards Franklin Roosevelt was much more forgiving. He forgave the President his dilatory approach to race relations, his endless compromises and concessions to the right, even his apparent contempt for his allies on the left. Roosevelt’s refusal to back Henry Wallace in his feud with Jesse Jones brought Stone’s language to a white heat: “Franklin D. Roosevelt has again run out on his friends.... In 1937 this craven tactic drove from progressive ranks one who might have been America's ablest labor leader instead of the dark menace that he is today. In 1944 it will probably cost Henry Wallace the Vice-Presidency, the New Deal its most promising leader. When the

* One error which was eventually corrected was the remark, noted in Stone’s file at the time of the “Washington Gestapo” controversy, that “Isidor Feinstein

firing grew hot in the Little Steel strike, Roosevelt turned impartially on the workers who believed in him and those who shot them down.... The man who created the New Deal seems intent on destroying it before he leaves office.”¹⁵²

But when it became apparent that Roosevelt had no intention of leaving, Stone’s anger cooled. “In the field of social and economic reform,” he conceded, Roosevelt barely “enabled us to catch up with the England of Lloyd George and the Germany of Bismarck's Monarchial Socialism.... It was only war that saved the second Roosevelt Administration and world capitalism from a new depression.” Even so, he counseled, “it is our job to push the President, but not to push him over a political precipice.... Maybe I'm wrong, but I think the place for us to push between now and election is the common man's doorbell.”¹⁵³

Izzy knew very well the President’s power to cloud men’s minds, and struggled hard to resist. What he couldn’t resist, and didn’t want to, was the belief that as long as Franklin Roosevelt was in the White House the causes he held most dear were far from lost. Roosevelt was infuriatingly unreliable, but that very inconstancy enabled his supporters on the left to hold on to the hope that should the political wind shift, should they be able to rally their forces sufficiently to appeal to the President’s sense of expediency, if not idealism, he might abandon his tack to starboard. “It is easy,” Stone reminded Nation readers, “to identify ourselves emotionally with ‘the people.’ At the moment the people are not identifying themselves with us.”¹⁵⁴

had applied for a Special Agent's position in October 1935.”

“Is the outlook for liberals hopeless?” Izzy wondered. “Not at all.” For keeping his hopes alive Stone was prepared to forgive the President almost anything. He forgave his Machiavellian maneuvering in North Africa (about which Izzy was exceptionally well informed thanks to Garry Van Arkel, now working for the OSS as Arthur Goldberg’s deputy in North Africa. When Van Arkel, who thought America’s French policy was “disastrous,” found his complaints about the Giraud regime falling on deaf ears at Allied HQ, he simply passed the details on to his old classmate).¹⁵⁵

He forgave Roosevelt’s perverse (and uncharacteristic) loyalty to Cordell Hull—and when in the fall of 1944 Hull emerged as a strong backer of the Dumbarton Oaks treaty, Izzy was even inclined to forgive Hull. “At this moment in our national history,” Izzy wrote in *PM*, “Hull is in many ways an indispensable man.... *PM*, as its readers know, does not like Hull.” But Izzy argued that precisely because the Secretary was “the idol of the right-wing Southern Democrats,” and because “by now, the Republican Party is so committed to Hull,” these traditional isolationist blocs “could hardly refuse [to] support ... any treaty of international co-operation he advocated.”^{156*}

Izzy even, though it stuck in his throat, forgave Roosevelt his failure to aid the Jews of Europe. For most of the American

* However temporary, Stone’s grant of absolution to Hull was too much for James Wechsler, *PM*’s new Washington bureau chief. Wechsler called John Lewis in a fury, shouting that the editorial “contradicted everything *PM* had said and stood for... He said that it was more of Izzy Stone operating behind his back and getting things into the paper on his own.” Wechsler was mortified, saying the editorial “raised the question in Washington: Which page of *PM* do you read? Do you read Wechsler or do you read Stone?” Sadly for Wechsler, his editors believed more people read Stone. Wechsler’s demand

press, the fate of the Jews under Nazism was “beyond belief”—when details did emerge they were often dismissed as Zionist propaganda or recycled atrocity stories from World War I.¹⁵⁷ To this chronicle of willed indifference, the Nation and PM are among the most distinguished exceptions. In December 1942 PM published a lengthy summary of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise’s account of the Nazi program of extermination. Wise’s dossier, which PM reported had been presented to Roosevelt at a White House meeting with American Jewish leaders, included detailed information on the liquidation of the Jews of Warsaw, the murder of 24,000 Latvian Jews, and the establishment of “extermination centers” at Mauthausen and “at Ozwiencim [Auschwitz] near Cracow,” where eyewitnesses reported the building of “giant crematoriums.”¹⁵⁸ A month later the Nation began a series “The Jews of Europe,” intended to “impress on the conscience of free men the vastness and the ghastliness of the Jewish tragedy in Europe.”¹⁵⁹

A few weeks later Izzy weighed in: “The Jews of occupied Europe could do with a little less pity and a little more help. We are tired of statements from Washington and London deploring the mass murder of the Jews by Hitler and declaring the moral conscience of the world is shocked. The truth is that the moral conscience of the American and British governments, always flexible, is not so much shocked as blunted. For when definite measures are proposed to help the victims of these horrors, the State Department and the British Foreign Office, though ever so politely, turn away.”¹⁶⁰

that Izzy be fired was simply ignored. Instead, Lewis nominated Stone’s work for a Pulitzer Prize. (Stewart ms., pp. 88-91.)

In March 1943 Freda Kirchwey was at her most eloquent: "Seven or eight thousand Jews a week are being massacred. The ghetto of Warsaw, two years ago the dumping ground for Jews from all over occupied Europe, is now depopulated. Every Jew is dead. In Cracow, where 60,000 Jews lived, 56,000 have been killed..... In this country you and I and the President and the Congress and the State Department are accessories to the crime and share Hitler's guilt. If we had behaved like humane and generous people instead of complacent, cowardly ones, the two million Jews lying today in the earth of Poland and Hitler's other crowded graveyards would be alive and safe."¹⁶¹

When Stone went to the State Department, or to the British Embassy, he saw men with blood on their hands. Not only Jewish blood. He hammered away at Britain's refusal to release Gandhi and Nehru from prison, and at our own failure to send food aid to India's millions, starved by their imperial masters.¹⁶² But the world's indifference to the murder of European Jewry was something he took personally. In case there was any doubt of what was at stake, in August 1943 PM published a chart, "What Has Happened to the Jews of Europe," showing an estimated 1.7 million murdered Jews. The paper also published a detailed report on the crushing of the Warsaw Ghetto revolt, and an account of the gas chamber at Treblinka.¹⁶³ So when the chance presented itself to save the remaining Jews of Hungary, Stone put whatever influence he had on the line:

"This letter, addressed specifically to fellow-newspapermen and to editors the country over, is an appeal for help.... I have been over a mass of material, some of it confidential, dealing with

the plight of the fast-disappearing Jews of Europe and with the fate of suggestions for aiding them, and it is a dreadful story.

“Anything newspapermen can write about this in their own papers will help. It will help to save lives, the lives of people like ourselves....

“The essence of tragedy is not the doing of evil by evil men but the doing of evil by good men.... It is a question of Mr. Roosevelt's courage and good faith. All he is called upon to do, after all, is what Franco did months ago, yes, *Franco*. Franco established “free ports,” internment camps, months ago for refugees who fled across his border....”¹⁶⁴

For all its passion, Stone's plea went largely unheard amid the news from Normandy. “D-Day served to remind us,” Izzy wrote, “that we are heavily in debt to the man in the White House as well as to the boys on the beaches.”¹⁶⁵ Once again, Roosevelt was forgiven, though in August, when the President expressed his “abhorrence” at the plight of Hungary's Jews, Izzy remarked tartly, “There is something more abhorrent than evil.... It is an unwillingness to do more than indulge in a sentimental gesture when confronted by human suffering.”¹⁶⁶

Roosevelt's inability to see the Jews' suffering outside the political calculus he used for everything else drove Izzy to the brink of despair. But only to the brink. If Dr. Win-the-war had forced Dr. New Deal into hiding, at least Izzy was perfectly at home among the conspirators. “In some ways a liberal newspaperman in Washington today is a kind of guerilla warrior,” he wrote, “watching for a chance to get at the truth.”

Describing “a kind of underground ... made up of left-of-center newspapermen and officials,” he revealed both a strategy

and a rationale: "The underground carries on in ways well known to sophisticated Washington newspapermen. It operates on well-placed leaks to trusted correspondents, to progressive members of Congress, to New Dealers employed by Congressional investigating committees. Victories that could not be achieved by normal administrative processes ... are often achieved by leaks."¹⁶⁷ So long as Roosevelt remained in the White House, Izzy and his band of shadow warriors felt they had a fighting chance.

Exactly a week later, on April 12, Stone was in PM's new office, on Duane Street in Manhattan, when the bells signalling a "flash" rang on the United Press machine. "There was a commotion in the newsroom. A copy-boy ran out of the wire room.... That first flash, 'The President died this afternoon,' seemed incredible; like something in a nightmare, far down under the horror was the comfortable feeling that you would awake to find it was all a dream. The Romans must have felt this way when word came that Caesar Augustus was dead."

PM put out an "Extra," and ran Izzy's editorial on the front page. "It is hard to believe that fighting heart is stilled, that bouyant spirit quenched..... Not a few of us cried yesterday when the first flash came over the wire."¹⁶⁸

Chapter Six

Underground to Palestine

For a man whose world was about to collapse around him, I.F. Stone entered the Truman era in remarkably high spirits. “Those newspapermen who have had personal contact with Truman (this writer among them) have confidence in him,” he assured PM readers. “I talked with Mr. Truman several years ago and liked him immediately and instinctively.... He is a good man, an honest man, a devoted man...”¹ In part, Stone’s affectionate tone was merely one element in a national outpouring of goodwill towards the former haberdasher from Missouri who suddenly found greatness thrust upon him. During his first three months in office Truman’s approval rating reached 87 per cent—higher than his predecessor’s had ever been. And though Izzy was far from a confidant, he actually did know Truman, who as both Senator and Vice President had been one of the most accessible politicians in Washington.

President Truman would be much harder to see, and Stone may have been making a bid to stay in a former source’s good graces. But it is equally possible that Stone’s faith in Truman’s intentions, his assurance that Truman “will surprise the skeptical,” was entirely sincere. The world in the spring of 1945 offered ample grounds for optimism of the will. Fascism was in

retreat: “The Red Army, like an avenging juggernaut in a cloud of clamorous smoke and flame, is advancing toward the final destruction of Nazism, the overthrow of Hitler, the end of the Third Reich,” Izzy exulted.² However faltering at first, four years of war production under the aegis of the Wagner Act and the War Labor Board had seen union membership double in the U.S. In August 1945 a Gallup poll found that 79 per cent of Americans now thought the “law guaranteeing collective bargaining” was a good thing.³

Though still a faithful member of the Newspaper Guild, Stone himself had long passed the point of needing anyone else’s help in salary negotiations. His Nation pay remained \$75 a week; he also earned \$150 a week from PM—more than any other writer on the paper except theatre critic Lewis Kronenberger.⁴ Managing editor John Lewis, who found Izzy “a *prima donna* and a difficult man to get along with” nonetheless valued him as “a money player.” To Ralph Ingersoll he was simply indispensable—a steady pro amidst the paper’s sectarian snipers and a “journalist whose reputation is respected in Washington.”⁵ Increasingly in demand as a speaker on topics ranging from Indian independence to Nazi war criminals, Stone exchanged tips—and favors—with columnist Drew Pearson, each sometimes feeding the other tidbits in order to give a story the kind of “legs” that would make editors, and government officials, sit up and take notice.⁶ In his long fight against Martin Dies, chair of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, Izzy found an ally in Walter Winchell. When Dies subpoenaed Winchell’s radio scripts, Izzy rushed to defend the gossip columnist. And when the *Daily Mirror*, Winchell’s regular employer, refused to print a column

attacking British interference in Greece—a cause that would soon be Stone’s as well—it ran instead in *PM*, where Winchell, under the thinly disguised byline “Paul Revere II,” soon became a regular contributor.⁷ Financially, politically, and in terms of his access to and influence on more mainstream journalists, the dawn of the Truman era saw Izzy at the height of his powers. But it was Winchell, after all, who observed that “nothing recedes like success.”

Still, when I.F. Stone pushed through the crowds straining against the plush ropes outside the San Francisco Opera House in April 1945 and made his way to the press gallery for the opening of the United Nations Conference for International Organization, he had reasons to be cheerful. The setting itself, with its Maxfield Parrish décor and lofty interiors, was meant to be awe-inspiring—a fitting backdrop for statesmen from 46 nations to decide the fate of the world. Hollywood glamour was also present. “Your correspondent, as goggle-eyed as any movie fan,” he admitted to *Nation* readers, “was introduced to Charles Boyer by a member of the French delegation and later that night ... to Edward G. Robinson. ‘Well,’ Robinson asked, with that overtone of quiet menace for which he is famous, ‘is our side going to win?’ It was definitely an ‘or else’ question, and I hastened to assure him all would be well.”⁸

But who exactly was “our side”? Izzy wasn’t really afraid of Robinson, to whom he’d been introduced by Mike Blankfort, recently demobbed from the army and now a successful Hollywood screenwriter.* Blankfort had flown up from Beverly

* Mike’s cousin, Henry Blankfort, had written *Tales of Manhattan*, a 1942 film that starred both Robinson and Boyer.

Hills to share his friend's room at the Palace hotel, press headquarters for the conference.⁹ But Izzy was increasingly troubled by the sense that this conference, held while the world was still at war in order to build the framework for a durable peace, was in terrible danger. Looking around at the delegates, Stone saw "those same old codgers to whose fumbling we owe World War II.... These men lost the last peace, and unless they are replaced they will some day lose the next one."

Even more troubling than incapacity and incompetence was the sense that certain members of the American delegation regarded the conference less as an organization to safeguard the peace than an opportunity to prepare for the next war—this time against the Soviet Union.¹⁰ With Yalta only two months in the past, and Potsdam still two months in the future, San Francisco took place at a time of disillusionment on both sides. Isaac Deutscher was probably right to describe the wartime alliance as a "marriage of convenience" in which "the thought that divorce was inevitable had been in the mind of each partner from the beginning." But for those, like I.F. Stone, who'd danced at the wedding feast, and who desperately hoped the partnership could endure, the idea of a breakup was almost unbearably painful. When Stalin ordered the arrest of 16 Polish leaders—a story broken by PM in the middle of the conference—Stone advised "American progressives to keep their shirts on."¹¹ Similar patience was prescribed regarding Tito's claims on Trieste. Izzy was less detached, however, when it came to "my own people, the Jews, millions of whom still want and need a national home in Palestine." Whether out of distilled resentment over Britain's obstructive behavior towards Jewish refugees or political hostility

to Churchill's efforts, in Greece, India and the Middle East, to maintain Britain's imperial grip, Izzy had little sympathy with British claims. Instead he warned that unless Truman "is prepared to take up Mr. Roosevelt's role and mediate between the Russians and the British" the new president was in danger of becoming "the tail to Mr. Churchill's giddy new kite."¹²

Stone's concerns about Churchill's eagerness to force a show down with Stalin were shared not just by numerous other journalists, or activists on the left, but by a significant number of American diplomats as well. Whether this group ever amounted to more than a small minority of State Department opinion is unclear, but the early spring of 1945 marked a high point of internal conflict within the American political establishment. On one side were those who urged forbearance towards the Soviet Union, particularly regarding Stalin's determination to ensure a buffer of "friendly" (if not outright puppet) governments on Russia's western and southern flanks. This same group also tended to favor a "hard peace" for Germany and Japan, and were skeptical if not hostile towards Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Nationalists. Their internal opposition, on the other hand, advocated a "soft peace" for Germany and Japan, tended to oppose calls to prosecute German industrialists for war crimes or to break up the Japanese *zaibatsu*, and were much more dubious about Stalin's interest in peaceful coexistence with the West.

It was this internal struggle, and how it was being played out at San Francisco, that preoccupied I.F. Stone and his companions at dinner one evening in April 1945. "I first met Izzy at Julian Friedman's house during the San Francisco conference," recalled Sidney Roger. "Julian worked at the State Department

with another man in setting up the conference. The other man was Alger Hiss. At the time I was one of the two or three main Voice of America commentators for Asia, and Julian invited a bunch of us to come meet I.F. Stone.”¹³ Friedman was an assistant in the China affairs division; his boss, John Carter Vincent, was one of the most vociferous critics of Joseph Grew, who had been ambassador to Tokyo at the time of Pearl Harbor and was a leading advocate of a “soft peace” for Japan. Vincent, like Owen Lattimore, Sidney Rogers’s boss at the Office of War Information, was part of a group of Far East hands who before the war had called for a tilt towards China, then under the rule of the Nationalists, and who now argued that the U.S. needed to recognize the key role played by the Chinese communists in resisting the Japanese occupation.¹⁴ In February the Nation had run an attack on Grew and his former assistant, Eugene Dooman, now head of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs, saying they had been guilty of an “execrable mistake in judgement” in minimizing the threat posed by Japan in 1941 and were just as off-base now when they urged the U.S. to rely on the same Japanese business leaders and bureaucrats to make peace. Entitled “Dangerous Experts,” the Nation screed ran under the byline “Pacificus,”—an anonymous government official who, like “XXX,” made contact with the magazine via I.F. Stone.¹⁵

If many of the China hands he met in San Francisco were old friends, Izzy found another circle at the conference who would become increasingly important to him in the months and years to come. These were the Zionists. Though Stone was acutely sympathetic to the plight of Europe’s Jews, in 1945 he was, “like most American Jews, neither a Zionist nor an anti-

Zionist.”¹⁶ His old boss, David Stern, had become one of the chief backers of the Committee for a Jewish Army, a Philadelphia-based group devoted to the establishment of a Jewish militia to help defend the Middle East from the Germans. The CFJA’s founder, Peter Bergson*, was a member of the Irgun, an underground Zionist group who advocated using armed force to push the British out of Palestine. In 1943, when Bergson founded The Emergency Committee to Save the Jews of Europe, Stern was again an enthusiastic supporter.¹⁷

Stone himself had repeatedly drawn attention to the terrible fate of Europe’s Jews. But up until San Francisco he had been an observer, not a participant, in the debates over Zionism which had riven American Jewry, splitting the American Jewish Committee from the American Jewish Congress. Both these groups sent several representatives to San Francisco, some of whom were accredited as advisors to the American delegation—which was as close as the Jews came to official status at the conference. Instead each of the 20 groups claiming to speak for the Jews, from Irgunists to the staunchly anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism, formed a constantly shifting kaleidoscope of conspiracy and conflict as they shuttled from hotel to conference hall, buttonholing delegates and trading information.

Even for Izzy, a veteran traveler through the sectarian minefield of the American left, navigating among the World Jewish Congress, the Jewish Labor Committee, the American Jewish Trade Union Committee for Palestine, the Hebrew

* Bergson, whose real name was Hillel Kook, was a nephew of Avraham Kook, who became the first chief rabbi of Israel.

Committee of National Liberation, the New Zionist Organization, the World Zionist Organization, and both AJCs required considerable tact. Jesse Zel Lurie, executive director of Americans for Haganah (a support group for the mainstream but still underground Jewish militia in Palestine), introduced Izzy to Teddy Kollek, the future mayor of Jerusalem but at the time Haganah's man in New York.¹⁸ Izzy also met frequently with Eliahu Elath, a representative of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. Russian-born and educated at both the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and the American University of Beirut, Elath explained the behind-the-scenes politicking around the issue of United Nations trusteeships. Elath's own mission was to try to head off changes to the Palestine Mandate which had been proposed by the Arab League—a campaign in which **PM** was happy to assist.¹⁹ But as Izzy talked late into the night with Elath, who had himself worked as a journalist in Beirut, his colleague Gershon Agronsky, editor of the Palestine Post, or Si Kenen, who handled public relations for the American Jewish Conference, the American newsman began to feel himself personally drawn towards these men and their cause.

Returning to Washington after six weeks Izzy was bouyant. I've "fallen in love with the U.S.A. all over again," he told **PM** readers. The United Nations organization itself is "not much to write home about, but ... it is a beginning." There was, he thought, "a fighting chance to maintain peace"—especially since so many of his own reservations about events in San Francisco were echoed by commentators in the very heart of the foreign policy establishment.²⁰

“We cannot police the Soviet Union and we must not flirt with the idea,” warned Walter Lippmann, whose denunciation of America’s “steamroller tactics” in support of admission to the UN for Peron’s Argentina was as strong as anything in the pages of PM or the Nation. Like Izzy, Lippmann called for the U.S. to “mediate” between Britain and the Soviet Union, and to resist Churchill’s attempts to get Truman to “underwrite” the British empire, particularly in Greece, where the Herald Tribune columnist was a persistent critic of British efforts to restore the monarchy. It was Time magazine, not I.F. Stone, who condemned the U.S. for playing “a straight power game” over Latin America “as amoral as Russia’s game in eastern Europe.”²¹

Izzy’s sense of benevolence, of being profoundly in tune with his country and his times, extended all the way up the the White House. “Reading over the papers, talking with old friends, catching up on the press releases, give one the impression—which is also in part a hope—that the new President has begun to get his bearings and to chart his course.” Reviewing Truman’s moves to lower tariffs and to provide unemployment insurance for workers displaced by the end of hostilities in Europe, Izzy saw “an emerging pattern of policy that promises well for the future. If Truman can begin to chart as skilful a course in foreign as in domestic policy, he will serve our country well.”²²

II.

I.F. Stone’s first warning that the political ground rules were about to change came on the afternoon of June 6, 1945. Six

people connected with Amerasia, a fortnightly foreign policy journal published in New York city, were arrested under the Espionage Act. The arrests, which made front page news across the country, were the culmination of an investigation begun in February after an officer of the OSS noticed one of his own classified reports, on British policy in Thailand, reproduced almost verbatim in the pages of the magazine. When OSS agents broke into the Amerasia offices a few weeks later they discovered a large cache of government documents, many stamped "Top Secret." The F.B.I. bugged the home of Amerasia's editor and publisher, Philip Jaffe, a self-made businessman who used the fortune produced by his greeting card company to fund his interest in left-wing causes. Jaffe, who'd travelled to Yenan with Owen Lattimore in 1937 to meet Mao Tse-Tung and Chou En-Lai, had long nurtured scholarly as well as political ambitions; besides Lattimore, Amerasia's editorial board included such prominent China hands as Edwin Reischauer and Kenneth Colegrove.²³

From Jaffe and Kate Mitchell, his assistant editor, the F.B.I. surveillance operation grew to employ 75 agents in round the clock shifts. The sheer size of the operation made it difficult to conceal. Federal agents broke into the Amerasia office on six separate occasions; in addition to Jaffe and Mitchell, the F.B.I. also tapped the phones of Emmanuel Larsen, a State Department employee, Navy lieutenant Andrew Roth, and Mark Gayn, a journalist who wrote under contract to Collier's magazine and the Chicago Sun. On May 28 Jaffe took a room at the Statler Hotel in Washington. The F.B.I. bugged the room. The following day Jaffe was visited there by Roth and his wife Renée. Jaffe and Andrew

Roth were in the middle of an argument when Renée interrupted to say that she'd discovered something that looked like a hidden microphone. Both men ignored her, but the F.B.I. agents listening decided it was time to move in. Roth, Gayn, Larsen and John Stewart Service, a young State Department China expert Jaffe had been wooing for his magazine (and whose meeting with Jaffe had also been picked up by the bug at the Statler) were all arrested with Jaffe and Mitchell on June 6. Bail was set at \$10,000 apiece, and though Jaffe put up the money for himself, Mitchell, and Gayn (all arrested in New York) the other three (who'd been arrested in Washington) were on their own.

As it happened, the argument picked up by the F.B.I.'s hidden microphone was over I.F. Stone. Jaffe had received a tipoff that the U.S. was about to loan \$186 million in gold to the Nationalist Chinese government. Hoping to "squash" the deal, Jaffe wanted to leak the story to Drew Pearson, but was having trouble reaching the columnist. Roth suggested he give the story to his friend Izzy Stone. Jaffe objected: "Stone doesn't get that sense of defending the Soviet Union all the time. How can a real radical, or liberal even, not have that ...?" To Jaffe, whose self-importance was inextricably linked with the Soviet cause, Stone was far too critical of Russia. "It's the workers' government, the one shining star in the whole damned world, and you got to defend that with your last drop of blood and Izzy Stone hasn't done it all the time and there is no excuse for it!"²⁴

Roth, who spent four days in a D.C. cell waiting for his mother to raise his bail money, may still have had Jaffe's harsh words in his mind when his jailers announced he had a visitor. "It was Izzy. His was the first friendly face I'd seen in days," Roth

recalled. A graduate of CCNY, Roth had arrived in Washington in December 1942 shortly after the Navy sent him to Harvard for an intensive Japanese course. Outspoken, energetic, and extremely gregarious, Roth soon numbered Drew Pearson, Izzy, and PM reporter Frederick Kuh among his friends. “The first thing Izzy said was, ‘When you get out of here we’ll get together and talk about how to fight this.’ Izzy got me my lawyer, Bill Rogers, who’d lost a son in the war and practically adopted me.”²⁵

Stone’s assistance didn’t end there. Before he’d even visited Roth, Izzy went on the offensive. “The first point to be kept in mind,” he wrote in an editorial signed by “I.F. Stone for the Editors of PM,” is that, “although these six are charged under ... the Espionage Act, they are not accused of acting as spies.” Roth, for example, was charged as a civilian, rather than by a court martial. The defendants may well have been in possession of classified documents. “The State Dept.,” Izzy argued, “is constantly leaking material to favored reporters.... Progressives in that Department (a very tiny handful) leak to ... people like yours truly. Naturally the Department regards leaks in the former class as legitimate discussions of facts and policy. But so does the other side. Is the leak to be a right-wing monopoly?”²⁶

In the Nation later that week Izzy argued that the Amerasia defendants were merely “engaged in ... the favorite Washington pastime of letting ‘confidential’ information leak out. If this is a crime, all but a hopelessly inefficient minority of Washington’s officials and newspapermen ought to be put in jail.”²⁷ Thanks to the Freedom of Information Act we now know that while most of “the Six” were playing inside baseball according to well-established rules, scoring points by assisting their allies in

government and leaking information designed to discredit the opposition, Jaffe apparently did have Mitty-esque fantasies of becoming a Soviet Agent.* (That Jaffe was somewhat deficient in tradecraft can be deduced from the fact that, after being approached by a man claiming to be working with the Soviets, Jaffe's next move was to drive to the Yonkers home of CPUSA chairman Earl Browder—shadowed every step of the way by the FBI.) At the time, though, even the rock-ribbed Herald Tribune followed Izzy's lead, dismissing the arrests in an editorial entitled "Red Baiting."

Press sympathy for the Amerasia defendants grew by an order of magnitude after Joseph Grew, now Acting Secretary of State, told the New York Times that the arrests were just the first fruit "of a comprehensive security program which is to be continued unrelentingly in order to stop completely the illegal and disloyal conveyance of confidential information to unauthorized persons."²⁸ Though it had no factual basis—the arrests were actually the result of several illicit burglaries and some wiretaps of equally dubious legality—Grew's statement certainly represented his fondest wish. His protégé, Eugene Dooman, told John Carter Vincent (who would face his own ordeal by slander in the 1950s) he hoped Service's friend—and Vincent's subordinate—Julian Friedman would soon be under arrest as well.²⁹ Patrick Hurley, who as American ambassador to China had long been convinced that a cabal of Communists in the

* Any historian who works with FBI files knows the caveats, but I personally found Klehr and Radosh completely persuasive on Jaffe's eagerness to spy for the Russians (who, it should also be noted, were American allies at the time).

State Department had been plotting against him, announced a “clean out” of the embassy in Chungking.³⁰

In August a grand jury voted to indict Jaffe, Larsen and Roth on the lesser charge of illegal possession of government documents; the other three defendants were never charged. Jaffe, who agreed to pay a fine, argued that at most he had been guilty of “an excess of journalistic zeal”—a claim accepted by the Justice Department.³¹ Larsen, whose name and notes were on many of the documents, pleaded no contest.* By February, when the government quietly dropped all charges against Roth, “America’s Dreyfus Case,” as Drew Pearson called it, appeared to have fizzled. Roth’s “excellent new book, Dilemma in Japan,” was commended to PM readers by Izzy. And with Dean Acheson replacing Grew as undersecretary of State, John Carter Vincent now heading the Office of Far Eastern Affairs, and John Stewart Service cleared for reassignment and back in Japan, the tide of fear seemed to have turned. When Patrick Hurley surprised Truman by resigning as ambassador, blaming a “Hydra-headed” conspiracy at the State Department, Truman was furious, denouncing the “son-of-a-bitch” at a Cabinet meeting.³²

As long as Americans still faced combat in the Pacific, the claims of common sense, even popular front common sense, were hard to refute. “It is true” admitted I.F. Stone, “that the Chinese Reds are---Reds. But this is a war,” he continued, neatly turning the “effete” charge against the right, “not a weekend house party. It cannot be fought in priggish accord with the *Social Register* of politics. There is no more reason for shying away from the help

* Jaffe paid his \$500 fine as well.

of the Chinese Reds in the war against Japan than there was shying away from the help of the Russian Reds in the war against Germany.”³³

The Stone family was spending a long weekend at Ocean Beach on Fire Island when the news came from Hiroshima. Like most Americans, Izzy’s first response was relief. Even PM’s editorial cartoonist allowed himself a gleeful one-panel drawing of a completely blank landscape with a speech bubble saying “So Sorry.” Within less than a week, though, Izzy was voicing misgivings: “The atomic bomb was the logic of war carried to an extreme which many people (the writer included) felt abhorrent.”³⁴ He hoped Russia’s entry into the war against Japan meant not just a swift end to the fighting but “closer ... unity among the Big Three.” But the timing of the announcement led him to suspect the bomb had taken Stalin by surprise. Was Truman’s decision to use the bomb intended to send a message to the Soviets as well? One thing was certain: if America no longer needed Russian--or Chinese--assistance in the East, a key brake on the juggernaut towards a new world war had just been removed.³⁵

III.

“To judge from the cables I read before I came here ... [the] Negev shouldn’t have been a healthy area for a wandering American correspondent of obvious Jewish lineage to have met an Arab chieftain,” I.F. Stone told the readers of PM. “The Jews are in a sense invading [the] Negev and by all accounts there should have been tension, especially since I encountered the

Sheikh—and mounted his camel—outside the most westerly of the new Jewish colonies, Gevulot.”³⁶ The Zionist contacts Stone made at the U.N. conference pressed him to come to Palestine and see for himself. But there was still a war on, travel was difficult, and Izzy’s post was on the home front. By the end of October, though, with the fighting over and Washington seemingly returning to politics as usual, he was on board the Queen Elizabeth bound for London, Cairo, and Palestine.

Stone’s departure was prompted by Earl Harrison, an acquaintance from his Philadelphia days and dean of the University of Pennsylvania Law School. A former U.S. Immigration commissioner, Harrison had been sent by President Truman to investigate the condition of displaced people in Europe, “particularly the Jews.” Harrison’s conclusion: “As matters now stand, we appear to be treating the Jews as the Nazis treated them, except that we do not exterminate them.” Harrison found 100,000 Jews living in German and Austrian camps—in many cases their former concentration camps--subsisting on a diet “composed principally of bread and coffee.” He also reported that most of these survivors wanted to go to Palestine.³⁷

Stone spent five days in London, staying in a Bayswater flat and talking with everyone he met, from cabbies to cabinet ministers. He heard “an undercurrent of feeling about America. Perhaps resentment is too strong for it. But world power has passed from London to Washington.... The role of a dependent and suppliant is never a pleasant one.” He liked Britain, “both the land and the people... a fair-minded, courteous, humane and patient folk.... I have some harsh things to say of British official

policy and some British officials, but that and they are not the same as the British people.”³⁸

The sheer pleasure of reporting seemed to invigorate him. Nearly everyone he meets—“a very fine young Palestinian Arab” barrister in London, an Egyptian publisher in Cairo, a Sephardic Jew in Greece, a Maronite politician in Beirut, a British engineer in Haifa, Mohamed el Organi (the Negev Sheikh), and “above all the young men and women of the Jewish colonies I visited, the grandest young folk I have ever met”—calls forth a sympathetic response.³⁹

“My first impressions of Jerusalem were the whiteness of the buildings, the stone and stucco cleanliness, the streets crowded with folk of every kind—Chassidic Jews with ear locks and fur hats; European Jews, some obviously German, with horn-rimmed specs; dignified town Arabs with red tarbooshes; country Arabs with flowing kaffiyeh head dress and desert robes; monks in cowls and Ethiopian Christian prelates in tall, black hats, like magi. And everywhere peace.”⁴⁰

“I did not go abroad to write what I might have written at home,” he promised. Instead he recounted a series of surprises. Though a confirmed atheist, “I found myself immensely attracted by the life of the Yishuv, the Jewish community of Palestine. It is the one place in the world where Jews seem completely unafraid.... In Palestine a Jew can be a Jew. Period. Without apologies, without any lengthy arguments as to whether Jews are a race, a religion, a myth, or an accident. He need explain to no one, and he feels profoundly at home; I am quite willing to attribute this to historic sentimentality,” the former Isidore

Feinstein wrote, “but it remains nonetheless a tremendous and inescapable fact.”⁴¹

Equally inescapable, at least to I.F. Stone, were the rights of the Arab inhabitants of the land: “There are more than a million Arabs in Palestine. Palestine is their home. They love their country. Any equitable and lasting solution of the Palestine problem must take these Arabs and their feelings into account.” He acknowledged the truth of Jewish claims that, materially, the Arabs of Palestine had benefitted from Jewish immigration. However “I did not find a single Arab who favored a Jewish state, and I did not find a single Jew who claimed to know an Arab who favored a Jewish state.” The result was “deep political disagreement, but ... no hatred between Arab and Jew.”⁴²

Whether this “huge reservoir of goodwill” could be harnessed depended largely on the British—and here Stone’s own optimism ran dry. “To talk with Coptic Christians in Egypt or Maronite Christians in the Lebanon is to begin to understand that what Britain is playing in the Middle East is not an Arab, but a Moslem game, with the dual hope of keeping India divided and the Arab world united (under British control).... But just as the desire to build a Moslem bloc does not deter the British from shooting down Moslems in Indonesia, so its highly advertised fear of Arab uprisings do not deter it from the firmest stand against Arab aspirations wherever Britain’s own interests are at stake.”⁴³ Stone had seen British rule in Egypt—and been revolted: “In the Muski, the ancient quarter of Cairo, I saw a sight one cannot forget—flies feasting on the corrupted eyes of little children.... The *fellah* [peasant] lives on the Nile and the *pasha* lives on the *fellah*.”⁴⁴

Yet Stone reserved his harshest language—and his biggest surprise—for his fellow American Jews, warning of “the blind alley into which Palestinian Jewry is being led by the failure to achieve any political understanding with the Arabs. And I wish to say just as strongly that political agreement will be impossible so long as a single Jewish state in Palestine is demanded. We have been carrying on a campaign in America on the basis of half-truths, and on this basis no effective politics can be waged and no secure life built for the Yishuv.”⁴⁵

“It is painful to me to write what I am writing,” he confessed. “I am a Jew. I fell in love with Palestine. I want desperately to help the homeless of Central and Eastern Europe to find a home there.... I do not blame them for refusing to accept minority status in an Arab state. Under present circumstances that would leave all their magnificent accomplishments to the kind of *pashas* and *effendis* who rule Egypt.... But equally I do not blame the Arabs of Palestine for fighting against minority status in a Jewish state.”⁴⁶

Stone’s solution—a bi-national state inside a broader Arab federation, in which the Jews who wanted to leave Europe could find a home, but whose Arab citizens would retain their own religious, civil and political rights, and where neither people would dominate the other—was, he admitted, not what most Palestinian Jews wanted. Despite his deep sympathy for their cause, “I felt myself painfully impelled to disagree with majority opinion in the Yishuv.” He also recognized the proposal had still less support among Palestinian Arabs. Undeterred even by “the cost of unpopularity in the American Jewish community,” Stone insisted a bi-national state was not a compromise, but “the only

just solution.... The Arab problem is the central problem for the Yishuv.”⁴⁷ It was a theme the coming years would give him ample occasions to develop.

IV.

He may not have become a Zionist in the conventional sense, but I.F. Stone’s trip to Palestine gave him something he thought he’d lost forever in August, 1939—a cause. Over the next several years, Izzy’s political and emotional solidarity with the young pioneers he’d met there would lead him—an overweight, near-sighted, practically deaf, middle-aged father of three—to leave his comfortable home in Washington and risk his life, repeatedly, to tell their story. It would also, at a time when the audience for radical journalism, or radicalism of any kind, was increasingly beleaguered and beset, give Stone’s readers a reason to stick with him, and provide entrée to an audience far beyond the concentric circles of PM and The Nation.

At PM the effect was more immediate: Stone’s reports from Palestine lifted the paper’s circulation to profitable levels for only the second time in its history.* Izzy’s stunning debut as a foreign correspondent also may have helped Ralph Ingersoll make up his mind about how to handle James Wechsler. Like his boss, PM’s national editor had been a reluctant draftee, and as a returning veteran was entitled to his old job back. But Wechsler also demanded a raise, and the right to hire two reporters “of his own

* The first was during a 17-day newspaper strike the previous summer—immortalized for a generation of New Yorkers by the image of Mayor La Guardia reading the funny pages over the radio—when PM, which reached an early agreement with the unions, had no real competition.

choosing.” When Ingersoll pointed out that the paper still lost \$5000 most weeks, and proposed trimming the Washington bureau, Wechsler “made savage personal attacks on ... Stone, with whom he disagrees politically.” Ingersoll then “informed Wechsler we could meet none of his demands.”⁴⁸ Wechsler didn’t go quietly, charging “although not himself a Communist, he [Ingersoll] has continuously yielded to Communist pressure....” Wechsler’s friend Arnold Beichman, who’d been fired for incompetence a few months earlier, levelled a similar charge in the pages of The New Leader, a Socialist Party organ now consumed by anti-Communism.⁴⁹

In early 1946 Ingersoll could still laugh off his detractors. He even considered asking Izzy to fill-in as national editor, but balked “because he is not an executive.” Besides, Stone was now making news as well as reporting it. When Truman nominated Ed Pauley, the California oil man who’d helped engineer his nomination as Vice President, to be Under Secretary of the Navy, Harold Ickes resigned in protest at “government by crony.” Izzy’s column pointing out Ickes’ selective blindness to oil men in his own department made his old sparring partner apoplectic. At his farewell press conference Ickes labelled the column “psychopathic” and “untruthful.” As Time magazine recorded, “chubby I.F. (‘Izzy’) Stone, of the Nation and Manhattan’s hyperthyroid PM,” had the last word: “though not always a devotee of the Marquis of Queensbury,” Ickes was “the best all-round brawler in the public interest the town has seen in many years.”⁵⁰

Stone’s admiration for Ickes was unfeigned; so was his regret at the departure of one of the two remaining New Dealers

in the cabinet. “Mr. Truman and the little band of mediocrities who have become his advisers are trying to follow the New Deal program in a kind of fog,” he complained. “The present White House crowd talks the New Deal language, but as though it were a foreign tongue, imperfectly understood.”⁵¹ By September, when Izzy again made news, his attitude toward Truman was even more doubtful. And this time the head on the block belonged to Henry Wallace, the last New Dealer in the Truman administration and, to his supporters, the rightful heir of Franklin Roosevelt.

As Secretary of Commerce, Wallace lent the weight of his own considerable political following to Truman’s efforts to maintain full employment during peacetime. If the leader of American “progressives,” as the not-quite-a-coalition of labor unions, popular front groups, civil rights campaigners, Communists, fellow-travellers and anti-Communist liberals now called itself, had doubts about the wisdom of Truman’s threats to seize striking coal mines, or to use the Army to break a railroad strike, he kept them to himself. On foreign policy, though, Wallace felt compelled to speak out.⁵² In March, with Truman looking on benignly, Winston Churchill made his famous “Iron Curtain” speech at Westminster College in the president’s native Missouri. Billed as a frank resume of Soviet conduct in eastern Europe, the speech was also an invitation to form an Anglo-American alliance which Wallace—and I.F. Stone—viewed as a dangerous departure from Roosevelt’s determination not to get embroiled in defending British imperialism.

His experiences in the Middle East would have been enough for Izzy to discount Churchill’s lofty rhetoric; in Cairo he’d also spent time with George Polk, a young CBS correspondent who’d

been reporting on Britain's brutal suppression of the Greek resistance. A decorated veteran of Guadalcanal, Polk was in Athens in December 1944 when the shooting started between the British and EAM*, the Greek National Resistance, whose Communist-led ELAS† partisans had borne the brunt of the fighting against the Nazi occupation. Though the republican EAM would have won any fair postwar election, Churchill was determined to restore the Greek monarchy (cousins of Britain's royal family) to the throne. By 1946 British troops were fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with the Security Battalions—a collaborationist militia established by the Germans—and Polk was broadcasting “the roundup of persons even vaguely suspected of not approving the government and not loving the king.”⁵³ Churchill, who during the war hailed “those gallant guerrillas” of ELAS, now condemned them as “miserable banditti.”⁵⁴ The Tory leader had been out of office since the previous summer, but in America his influence seemed to have actually increased.

So when Henry Wallace, speaking at Madison Square Garden on September 10, warned that “to make Britain the key to our foreign policy would be the height of folly,” Izzy heard only common sense. Wallace's fear--“the British imperialist policy in the Near East alone, combined with Russian retaliation, would lead the United States straight to war”—was one he shared. And the Commerce Secretary's assurance that “just two days ago, when President Truman read these words, he said they represented the policy of his administration,” was something Izzy

* *Ethniko Apeleftherotiko Metopo*

† *Ethnikos Laikos Apeleftherotikos Stratos* (People's National Army of Liberation).

desperately wanted to be true. Indeed according to I.F. Stone's reporting on the ensuing crisis the President *had* gone over Wallace's speech, "page by page and line by line," which was why Truman endorsed it in a news conference before Wallace spoke. Only a frantic cable from Paris, where Secretary of State James Byrnes and Senator Arthur Vandenberg had just launched a "get tough" policy in dealing with the Russians, prompted Truman to back away from Wallace, claiming he'd only meant to endorse the Commerce Secretary's "right to speak," not the contents of his remarks. Here Truman stumbled over the truth—helped by Izzy. Far from being taken by surprise by Wallace's views, Truman had known about them since July, when Wallace had written the President that U.S. actions "must make it look to the rest of the world as if we were only paying lip service to peace at the conference table." The text of that letter, leaked first to Drew Pearson but published in full by Izzy in *PM*, pushed Truman into demanding that Wallace take a vow of silence on foreign policy questions. When Wallace refused, Truman fired him.⁵⁵

As Izzy predicted, the loss of Henry Wallace was a key factor in the Democratic rout that November, when Republicans took control of both houses of Congress for the first time since Herbert Hoover was elected; among the Republican freshmen were Richard M. Nixon and Joseph R. McCarthy. Wallace's departure also cleared the way for a "bi-partisan foreign policy" which, at the moment, didn't yet have a name. It did, however, have a theorist. In February 1946 George F. Kennan, chargé d'affaires at the U.S. embassy in Moscow, sent his famous "Long Telegram" to the State Department arguing that Soviet

Communism represented “a political force committed fanatically to the belief that with the U.S. there can be no permanent *modus vivendi*; that it is desirable and necessary that the internal harmony of our society be disrupted, our traditional way of life be destroyed [and] the international authority of our state be broken.”⁵⁶ Kennan elaborated his ideas in the journal Foreign Affairs in July 1947, suggesting that, far from accepting a stable share of power with the U.S., the Soviet Union was an inherently aggressive regime which could only be “contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points.”⁵⁷

In the fall of 1946 “containment” was still just a theory. Indeed so wide open was the debate that when Sava Kosanovich, formerly Tito’s minister of information and now Yugoslav ambassador to the United States, appeared on a radio program meant to represent the spectrum of American opinion, I.F. Stone was one of his interrogators. Broadcast on Friday evenings over the Mutual network, “Meet the Press” featured “four of the country’s ace reporters ... gathered around the press table.”⁵⁸ Martha Rountree, the show’s producer, tried to have “somebody for the guest, somebody against the guest, someone middle of the road, and somebody from a wire service who was neutral.” With a panel that included Ken Crawford, a fervent anti-Communist who’d gone from PM* to Newsweek, and Lawrence Spivak, publisher of the increasingly right-wing American Mercury, Izzy

* It was Crawford, Wechsler’s predecessor as national editor, who, under the pseudonym “Karl Collins,” had written an account of Wechsler’s departure in the New Leader. A veteran of the New York Post and the Philadelphia Record Crawford had a long-simmering antipathy to Izzy, who he said “compensated

had his work cut out for him providing “balance.” Invited initially thanks to his role in the Wallace debacle—his first broadcast was on the day Wallace resigned—Stone soon became part of the program’s regular rotation. “If we had somebody who was a conservative on, we’d put Stone on, because he was a good needler,” said Rountree. “He was a good newspaperman, he did his homework.”⁵⁹

V.

I.F. Stone was no apologist for Moscow—indeed his championing of Tito’s “deviationist” government in Yugoslavia was condemned by the Daily Worker, which had previously attacked his reporting from Palestine as pro-Zionist*. He was, however, becoming increasingly convinced that the greatest danger to American liberties came from Washington, and more particularly from J. Edgar Hoover. When Hoover told the American Legion convention to be on guard against American Communists’ “sly propaganda and false preachments on Civil Liberty,” Izzy dismissed the speech as “melodramatic bunk by a self-dramatizing dick.” Noting that the FBI chief had never roused himself to denounce “the menace of racism, or anti-Semitism,” Izzy argued that it was “hysterical nonsense to build up the Communist Party, which can’t elect a dog-catcher outside New York City, into Public Enemy No. 1. The party’s been on the

for minor deviations by re-embracing the [Communist Party] line before his condition could be diagnosed as chronic.”

* The party line at the time was to oppose Zionism as a form of bourgeois nationalism, though of course when the Soviet Union recognized the State of

decline ever since the Nazi-Soviet pact, and its intellectual antics descend to lower levels daily, as evidence by the Moscow-style purge of Ruth McKenney recently for 'Heresy'."⁶⁰

Once again Izzy's personal criticism of Hoover brought renewed attention from the FBI. In a series of memos dating from immediately after the article, the Bureau summarized his contacts with groups such as the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee (formed to aid fugitives from Spain), the CIO Maritime Defense Committee and the Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences and the Professions.^{*61} But being one of the very few journalists willing to publicly take on Hoover also had its benefits. Izzy and Esther were invited to dinner with Mr. and Mrs. Harry Dexter White. With his British counterpart John Maynard Keynes White had drafted the blueprints for the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank—the pillars of the postwar economic order. Flattered by the invitation, Izzy never knew that the entire dinner took place under FBI surveillance.⁶²

The target this time wasn't Izzy but his host. An assistant secretary of the Treasury under Roosevelt and appointed by Truman as American director of the IMF, White had been named by both Whittaker Chambers and Elizabeth Bentley, two former Communists who'd confessed to spying for the Soviet Union. Although Chambers made repeated attempts to warn American officials about a Communist underground operating in Washington, his credibility was hampered by the fact that his

Israel in May 1948—mainly in order to undermine British influence in the Middle East—Zionism suddenly became a progressive force.

* Organized by Hannah Dorner, a Broadway publicist, during the 1944 presidential campaign, the ICC-ASP acted as a talent agency to provide

story seemed to change with each telling.⁶³ Bentley, an alcoholic who turned to espionage out of passion for a Russian lover, not ideology, was also originally suspect.⁶⁴ But the FBI, noticing the overlap between their accounts—and possibly encouraged by the Truman administration’s less conciliatory stance toward the Soviet Union—instituted surveillance on Bentley’s former contacts. Besides White the list included presidential aide Lauchlin Currie and economist Nathan Silvermaster—both longtime sources for Stone. William Remington, another of those named by Bentley, told investigators she’d initially pretended to be a researcher for PM, asking him if he “knew Izzy Stone or [Kenneth] Crawford.” Remington replied that he’d heard of them.⁶⁵

I.F. Stone was of course blissfully unaware of the extent of Hoover’s interest in him. But the changes in Washington’s political climate were impossible to miss. In January 1947 Carl Marzani, an ex-OSS officer, was charged with perjury for having fraudulently denied former membership in the Communist Party. Marzani admitted lying, but said his superiors were well aware of his past—hardly a surprising claim in view of the fact that Col. William Donovan, head of the OSS, had personally approached Milton Wolff a month before Pearl Harbor and asked him to recruit veterans of the Spanish Civil War to serve with British commando units being prepared for operations in occupied Europe. Wolff was commander of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade; when the US entered the war Donovan took Wolff’s recruits into the OSS.⁶⁶ As Izzy pointed out in PM,

Hollywood and Broadway stars for progressive causes—many of whom were later blacklisted because of their association with the group.

Marzani was arrested after he'd left government service, and hence posed no possible threat to security. He had however, recently set up a company making films for the labor movement. Deadline for Action, an expose of banking and cartels made in cooperation with the United Electrical Workers, had, Izzy reported, made Marzani a target in the Hearst press.⁶⁷

When five union officials were fired from their jobs at the Aberdeen proving grounds a week later without being granted either a hearing or a chance to see the evidence against them, and told only that they were suspected of being Communists, Izzy wrote a "Portrait of a Witch Hunt."⁶⁸ He didn't dispute the Army's right to fire them if they were Communists—he merely insisted that "accused persons in loyalty cases [have a right] to know exactly what they are supposed to have done and when."⁶⁹ This may not have been a popular stand, but it was not yet an act requiring political courage. Secretary of War Robert Patterson responded to Izzy's series on the Aberdeen firings by inviting the reporter over to the War Department for an exclusive interview.⁷⁰

As Stone recognized, however, it was the arrest of Gerhart Eisler that marked the first hard frost in the long winter of American repression. A German intellectual who'd visited the U.S. in the early 1930s as a representative of the Comintern, Eisler fled the Spanish Civil War to France, where he spent two years in a Vichy concentration camp. Granted political asylum in Mexico, Eisler, a German national, was detained as an enemy alien by U.S. Immigration at Ellis Island while en route to Mexico in the summer of 1941. Refused an exit permit by the State Department, Eisler spent the war years in Queens living on the generosity of

his brother Hanns, a composer working in Hollywood*, and on the meagre stipend he received from the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee. In 1946 Eisler finally received his exit permit and was about to set sail for Germany when Hoover, convinced he was a “key figure in Communist activities in the United States” got his permit revoked. But charging Eisler with a crime was not so simple. Instead he was summoned to testify before the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC). A steady diet of tidbits from the FBI kept press interest high. Newsweek called Eisler “the Number One Red agent” in the U.S.; his estranged sister, Ruth Fisher, wrote a series of five articles for the Hearst press on “Gerhard Eisler: The Career of a Terrorist.” Two days before he was scheduled to testify Eisler was arrested, charged with conspiracy to overthrow the U.S. government, perjury, passport fraud, and tax evasion, and imprisoned again at Ellis Island, where he was denied bail. When he did appear in front of HUAC Eisler refused to testify unless he could first read a sworn statement. In his maiden speech in House, Rep. Richard Nixon moved to cite Eisler for contempt; the motion passed 370-1.⁷¹

Interestingly, I.F. Stone did not immediately leap to Eisler’s defense. Though he ridiculed the government’s attempts to link Eisler to the Canadian atom spy ring recently in the headlines, “that the rest is a frame-up I am not convinced....” Fascinated by “this fierce family quarrel between Stalinist brother and Trotskyist sister,” Stone felt the stakes too high for pretense: Eisler’s partisans in the Communist press “can’t make a

* Hanns Eisler’s score for Hangmen Also Die was nominated for an Oscar. The film, an account of the 1942 assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, was the only Hollywood screenplay by Eisler’s longtime friend and lyricist Bertholt Brecht. Their fellow refugee Fritz Lang directed.

revolution,” he warned, “but they can certainly set off a counter-revolution that will smash civil liberty and the whole progressive movement in America.”

“No politically sophisticated person,” he continued, “believes that the Comintern has been abolished in more than name. The Russians cannot have the cake of conspiracy and the penny of cooperation at the same time. That is an issue the Kremlin must face.” Stone’s advice to American comrades was similarly brusque: “Here in America the conspiratorial habits of a petty handful of Communists may soon provide excuse and occasion for a repetition, on a far more dangerous scale, of the Red scare that followed the last war. It would be better for all concerned if the Communists came fully into the open, ended all the penny-dreadful ... playing at revolution and then fought, as free men in a country still free, for the maintenance of legal standing as another legal minority party.”⁷²

“I can hear the screams from Union Square already,” he predicted, and Joseph Starobin rose to the bait, denouncing Izzy in the Daily Worker.⁷³ Such subtleties were lost on Hoover, however. A clipping from PM of an I.F. Stone article later in the year arguing that by targeting federal employees the government risked “destroying the realities of freedom without touching its forms” bears the FBI director’s handwritten scrawl: “The theme song of Eisler when he spoke in N.Y. Thursday night. I wonder who writes whose material! H.”⁷⁴

On March 12, 1947 President Truman told a joint session of Congress “it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressure.” Whom did the president have in

mind? “Athens alone - Greece with its immortal glories - is free to decide its future at an election,” Churchill had proclaimed in Missouri. But Attlee’s government was broke; British aid to Greece, Truman was told, would end on March 31. Now Truman wanted \$400 million to prop-up the governments of Greece and Turkey. Dean Acheson warned congressional leaders that if Greece went Communist “like apples in a barrel ... the corruption would infect Iran and all the East.” Afterwards Arthur Vandenberg told Truman: “If that’s what you want, there’s only one way to get it ... scare hell out of the country.”⁷⁵ Containment, now the official policy of the United States government, got a new name: the Truman Doctrine.

Nine days later the President issued Executive Order 9835 establishing the Federal Employees Loyalty and Security Program. This was the measure I.F. Stone described as “an experiment in American fascism.” Providing for dismissal “on reasonable grounds for belief that the person is disloyal,” the order never defined what “disloyal” meant. Nor did it allow the accused the right to confront the evidence—or their accusers. By May the F.B.I. had begun “name checks” on two million federal workers, from stenographers to cabinet secretaries. Any finding of “derogatory information”—a disgruntled co-worker who remembered a sympathetic comment about Spanish Loyalists, membership in the National Lawyers Guild, attendance at a wartime rally saluting Russian troops—lead to a “full field investigation.” Clark Clifford, Truman’s special counsel, would later admit the entire program was drafted with the 1948 elections in mind. “It was a political problem,” he told Carl

Bernstein. "We did not believe there was a real problem. A problem was being manufactured."⁷⁶

What was real was the fear. "I flew down to Washington," Izzy reported in July, "to see what I could learn about the firing of 10 employees last week by the State Department. To go back to Washington is like going back into a country under the shadow of a terror. It's not the heat that makes Washington so uncomfortable these days, it's the hysteria."⁷⁷

VI.

"I yield to no man in the variety and number of my objections to Henry Wallace's Progressive Party. I don't like yogis and I don't like commissars. I condemn the way Stalin combs his hair and I disapprove the way Molotov blows his nose. I can't help cheering for Tito, and when socialism comes I'll fight for the right to spit in the nearest bureaucrat's eye. I own a house in Washington and I don't want proletarians trampling my petunias on their way downtown to overthrow the government by force and violence. I wouldn't want my sister to marry a Communist, and force me to maldigest my Sunday morning bagel arguing dialectics with a sectarian brother-in-law."⁷⁸

When I.F Stone returned from Palestine in the summer of 1948 he entered a political landscape so transformed as to be barely recognizeable. PM, the newspaper that made him a household name, printed its last issue on June 22.* Ralph

* Only a few months earlier, at a State Department press conference, a correspondent from one of the big New York papers was a little persistent in his questioning when there came a stage whisper from the rear: "Who does that fellow think he is? The rich man's Izzy Stone?"

Ingersoll had resigned two years earlier after an exasperated Marshall Field, tired of PM's losses, reversed the paper's no-ads policy. Now Field himself bailed out, practically giving the paper to Bartley Crum, a California attorney, and Joseph Barnes, a foreign correspondent for the New York Herald Tribune. Crum, a pro-FDR Republican, was a lawyer for some of the Hollywood Ten, a group of writers and directors, all current or former Communists, who, when summoned before the House Committee on Un-American Activities in 1947 had refused to cooperate on First Amendment grounds. The new paper, published from the same building at the corner of Duane Street and Hudson Avenue, with a substantially identical staff to PM, was called the New York Star.

"I had known Crum through some Communist connections," Stone told Andrew Patner. Crum and his wife Gertrude "Cutsie" Bosworth hosted numerous parties at their San Francisco home during the United Nations conference where Izzy's fellow guests often included longshoremen's union leader Harry Bridges, screenwriter Dalton Trumbo (a future client), actor/singer Paul Robeson—and Adlai Stevenson, a young diplomat acting as press secretary at the conference.⁷⁹

But it was Palestine, not politics, that cemented Stone and Crum's mutual regard. As a member of the Anglo-American Committee on Palestine and part author of a report that prompted President Truman to urge the British to admit 100,000 Jewish refugees without delay, Crum was an influential voice among supporters of the Jewish cause. Equally pertinent to I.F. Stone, it was Crum who, in his rave review of Underground to Palestine in the Nation, urged that the book be sent to "every

member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.... The publisher should [also] see that Ernest Bevin and Clement Attlee have copies.”⁸⁰

Crum was also a prominent backer of Henry Wallace’s third party candidacy for the presidency. Despite all his reservations, so was I.F. Stone: “In thirty minutes, cross-legged, saying ‘Oom’ with alternate exhalations, I can conjure up a better third-party movement than Wallace’s.... Yet with only seventy shopping days left until elections, I find I’m still for Henry Wallace.”⁸¹

Stone admired the former Vice President enormously, and considered him “the heir to Roosevelt, a giant in the pygmy world of the Left.”⁸² He also hoped that a significant vote for Wallace might restrain the rush to military confrontation with the Soviets. He recognized, however, that with the Red Army blockading West Berlin, and “an old-fashioned Russian orgy of suspicion of foreigners, intellectuals, and any kind of dissent” unleashed by Stalin inside the Soviet Union there was scant hope of any immediate thaw.⁸³ Nor was Stone an admirer of the American Communists who “are doing the major part of the work of the Wallace movement, from ringing doorbells to framing platforms.”

“I know that I’m a dupe,” he admitted, “and ought to have my ideological tires checked at the nearest FBI service station. I know that if the Communists came to power I’d soon find myself eating cold *kasha* in a concentration camp in Kansas *gubernya*.” It was not the Progressive Party candidate’s dubious allies who prompted Stone to rally to his standard, but “Wallace’s opponents [who] supply the best sales talks in his favor.”⁸⁴ For I.F. Stone the 1948 election offered more than just a choice of

delusions—though there were plenty of delusions to go around. Nor was it a simple matter of solidarity, though, again, for Izzy the revival of a Popular Front ethic, if not of the Popular Front itself, made possible by the demands of the war and perpetuated in Wallace's "Century of the Common Man" was doubtless an attraction. But what the election really offered Izzy was a choice of enemies.

I.F. Stone had had his differences with Henry Wallace, most recently over the Marshall Plan, which Stone hailed as "a program in which every thoughtful American may take pride." Wallace expressed reservations—arising, according to Stone, not over principles but simply owing to "the attitude of the Communist Party The Communist position is to fight the Marshall Plan, period; to condemn it in advance, and to decide no good can come of it." Izzy, who argued that the plan deserved "the fullest support of all progressive elements" was deeply disappointed by Wallace's failure to provide leadership. And he was scathing about American Communists' "attempts to read the mind of Moscow and to achieve a kind of theological consistency in their international movement."⁸⁵ But nothing he'd seen in the past decade had caused him to waver in his conviction that the real threat to American freedoms came from the right.

"Washington under Truman is a capital of confusion, incompetence, and reaction," Stone had told Nation readers during a brief return to the magazine's pages at the end of 1947.⁸⁶ Six months later the outlook was darker still: "I cannot for the life of me, hard as I have tried, see what difference it makes at this stage whether the Democrats win or the Republicans."⁸⁷

It may have been the Republican Congress that passed the Taft-Hartley Act, forcing labor union officials to take a non-Communist oath or lose the protection of the NLRB. (Gerhard Van Arkel, co-editor of the Progress and Izzy's oldest friend, resigned as NLRB General Counsel in protest. Van Arkel also helped draft Truman's veto message.)⁸⁸ But Democratic votes over-rode Truman's veto, just as Democrats controlled many of the thirty state legislatures who in 1947 passed their own laws restricting the rights of organized labor.⁸⁹ Even when the President meant well he was too weak to make a difference.⁹⁰ And though the Republicans might seek to make anti-Communism their issue, the impetus behind the Federal Loyalty Security Program came from the man whose signature gave Executive Order 9835 the force of law: Harry S. Truman.

The choices facing anyone who still believed in the ideals of the New Deal in the fall of 1948 were neither simple nor attractive. On one side were the "liberals"—many of them men and women Stone had worked with in the past. Some of them people whose integrity and commitment he admired and whose good opinion he valued highly. When the anti-Communist Union for Democratic Action reformed itself as the Americans for Democratic Action Izzy's former source, Joe Rauh, and his old sparring partner, Leon Henderson, were among those who joined Reinhold Niebuhr, John Kenneth Galbraith, Victor Reuther and Eleanor Roosevelt in the new organization. On the other side were the "progressives"—including old friends like Clifford and Virginia Durr, sculptor Jo Davidson, actor Zero Mostel, attorney Robert Kenny (co-counsel with Bartley Crum for the Hollywood Ten), Lillian Hellman and FDR's sons James and Elliot.⁹¹ Behind

the Progressive Party stood the Communists who, as Izzy noted publicly, supplied the organizational muscle and did their best to manipulate the party's platform. Behind the liberals stood a less occult, but in retrospect arguably no less sinister alliance of northern kleptocrats, southern bigots, and the kind of Chamber of Commerce patriots who viewed the New Deal itself as Communist-inspired and for whom Taft-Hartley and the Truman loyalty program were just a beginning.

The liberals barred Communists from their ranks; progressives, who refused as a matter of principle to impose such a ban, risked becoming "dupes." Clearly Izzy thought the risk worth running. After all, the other side endorsed Truman's intervention in Greece, and though they might express alarm at J. Edgar Hoover's methods, they shared his premise regarding the Red menace and could hardly dissent from his aims. Perhaps most important was the relative freedom Izzy's identification with the progressive cause offered him. As James Wechsler would learn, for former radicals "loyalty" was provisional, needing to be affirmed and re-affirmed. Nor was the liberal's habitual posture—pious nods to the right, anxious glances over the left shoulder—conducive to forward progress.

As if to make sure his comrades knew just what kind of dupe they were getting Izzy threw himself into the cause of James Kutcher, a \$42-a-week clerk in the Veteran's Administration in Newark. Kutcher, who had lost both legs to a German shell in the battle of San Pietro, was fired under the Loyalty Program for his membership in the Socialist Workers' Party. Izzy pointed out that as a Trotskyist, Kutcher was unlikely "to steal the atom bomb and ship it to the Kremlin, except perhaps with mechanism attached

to make it go off when Stalin turned the spigot on the office samovar.”⁹² Whether it was his unforgiveable *lèse majesté* or Stone’s willingness to serve on the Kutcher Defense Committee with such unorthodox characters as A.J. Muste, Max Schactman, C. Wright Mills and Norman Mailer*, the West Coast party organ Daily People’s World was predictably offended: “What is being touted as the ‘case of the legless vet’ and a ‘test case’ for civil liberties hasn’t the remotest connection with the defense of civil rights.”⁹³

At another time the Party’s crass contortions might have been funny, but in the summer of 1948 the federal government indicted 12 leaders of the CPUSA under the Smith Act, which made it a crime “to knowingly or willfully advocate, abet, advise, or teach the duty, necessity, desirability, or propriety of overthrowing or destroying any government in the United States by force or violence.” As Izzy had predicted years earlier, the burlesque farce of the “G-String Conspiracy” was now deadly serious. “The fundamental question,” he warned of the prosecution unfolding in Judge Harold Medina’s Manhattan courtroom, “is the effect on this trial not on the Communist Party but on freedom in America. If a guilty verdict is returned and stands on appeal, the Communist Party will have been made illegal. Then, as it dissolves or goes underground, the real terror will begin.”⁹⁴

For liberals, the 1948 election offered a chance to prove their anti-Communist *bona fides* by attacking Wallace and the Progressives. The goal may have been to dissociate the New

* Mailer’s first novel , The Naked and the Dead, had been published a few months previously.

Deal—and, not so incidentally, their own careers—from the taint of the Popular Front. The effect was to lend aid, comfort, and moral authority to the inquisitors. Arthur Schlesinger, for example, opposed the Smith Act—because it was insufficiently direct. “The government,” he argued, “should name the Communist Party as a criminal conspiracy, serving notice that all who remain associated with it would be subject to prosecution as co-conspirators.” As for fellow travellers like Izzy, “they are the Typhoid Marys of the left, bearing the germs of infection even if not obviously suffering from the disease.”⁹⁵

The republic fought off the infection. Wallace polled just over 1,150,000 votes, but unlike Strom Thurmond, the South Carolina segregationist who led the Dixiecrat revolt and won 39 electoral votes in four southern states, the Progressive candidate didn't carry a single state. For I.F. Stone Truman's victory was part of a season of mourning. In August Harry Dexter White had died of a heart attack two days after appearing before the House Committee on Un-American Activities to defend himself against accusations of spying for the Soviets.⁹⁶ In May the body of George Polk, Izzy's friend from Cairo, had been found floating in the waters of Salonika Bay bound hand and foot and with a bullet hole through his head.

For many on the left, it was a season of fear. But Izzy carried on, backing Simon Gerson, a reporter for the Daily Worker, in his futile campaign to succeed the late Peter Cacchione, a Communist elected by the voters of Brooklyn to the New York City Council. Gerson lost, too.⁹⁷ The Washington Cooperative Bookshop, an early addition to the Attorney General's list of subversive organizations (making membership

alone sufficient to render a federal employee's loyalty suspect), held a reception for Izzy and Esther to mark the publication of This Is Israel, a coffee table book documenting the country's birth with text by Izzy and photographs by Robert Capa. According to the FBI, one hundred guests attended.⁹⁸ It was an appropriate conjunction. "I learned in Israel," Izzy wrote, "what men here once learned at Lexington—not to scare easily."⁹⁹

Chapter Seven

The Great Freeze

The following rules are to be observed in order that we may hold the opinions that we should hold in the Church militant:

(1) We should put away completely our own opinion and keep our mind ready and eager to give our entire obedience to our holy Mother the hierarchical Church....

(13) To arrive at complete certainty, this is the attitude of mind that we should maintain: I will believe that the white object I see is black if that should be the decision of the hierarchical Church...

--Ignatius of Loyola, The Spiritual Exercises,

When I.F. Stone arrived at the Connecticut Avenue studio of radio station WQQW in early January 1949 the telephone was ringing. "Izzy walked in," recalled Mairi Foreman, host of the Washington D.C. station's morning interview program, "and the first thing he did was shout 'Have you got any coffee?' He didn't even seem to notice. I picked up and it was Esther. 'Is Izzy there?' Yes he is. Do you want to speak with him?" Esther said there was no point in speaking to Izzy as he'd left the house without either his glasses or his hearing aid. "He won't be able to do anything," Esther shrieked, her Minnie Mouse voice even higher than usual.

The Stones and the Foremans were old friends. Mairi had been women's editor of the *Toronto Star*. Her husband Clark was a grandson of the publisher of the *Atlanta Constitution* who joined the New Deal as FDR's Special Advisor on the Economic Status of Negroes*, and had also been head of the Power Division of the Public Works Administration, and an assistant secretary of the Interior under Harold Ickes. In 1938, along with a group of black and white activists including Mary McLeod Bethune, Eleanor Roosevelt, the Durrs, Frank Graham of the University of North Carolina, and Myles Horton, Clark Foreman helped to found the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, serving as the group's president from 1946-1948. More recently he'd been national treasurer of the Progressive Party. Both Foremans were regulars at Virginia Durr's Sunday afternoon "teas."¹

"Since I couldn't interview Izzy—he couldn't hear a word I said—I just turned the microphone over to him. For the next ten minutes he spoke non-stop, denouncing 'this lousy government,' the Smith Act prosecutions—I was sure we were going to get cut off. I was a nervous wreck."²

She needn't have worried. A star of the Progressive Party's rubber chicken circuit—only a few weeks earlier Izzy had joined writer Lillian Hellman, sculptor Jo Davidson, and his friend Clifford Durr as speakers at a dinner honoring Henry Wallace—Izzy was also, thanks to his reports from Israel in the *Nation* and *PM*, one of the most popular attractions on the

* Foreman took the post on the condition that he be allowed to recruit a black assistant and then "work myself out of a job." His assistant, Harvard-trained economist Robert Weaver, went on to become the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in the Johnson administration—the first black to hold a cabinet post.

kosher chicken circuit as well. Nor had his deafness prevented him from becoming a polished performer on “Meet the Press.” An exchange between Izzy and Henry Cabot Lodge illustrates what producer Martha Rountree meant when she said the newspaperman was “a good needler.” The Massachusetts Republican had been asked whether he favored recognizing Franco’s Spain:

Stone: ... what is your opinion as an American citizen?

Lodge: My opinion as an American citizen and a U.S. Senator is--and I can't forget that I am a citizen and a Senator--is that we should not do anything unilaterally about Spain.

Stone: I think you're ducking the question.

Lodge: No, I'm not ducking the question. You asked me what I think we should do, and I've told you I think....

Stone: And you haven't answered.

Lodge: Well, I'm going to--that's all the answer I'm going to give you, Doc!

Despite the appearance of mutual exasperation, Izzy’s encounter with Lodge had been cordial enough—perhaps because the patrician Senator had begun by describing himself as “a liberal” in favor of civil rights and even federal housing for the poor.³

Not all of Izzy’s radio antagonists were so amicable. In November 1949 he asked Congressman Walter Judd, a former missionary to China, if “Chiang Kai-Sheck and his gang of crooks” hadn’t made the Communist victory (Mao-Tse Tung proclaimed the People’s Republic of China on October 1) inevitable. “That’s the line that’s always been taken all these years by people of your persuasion,” Judd replied.⁴

Koumintang corruption was also the spark that set off Izzy’s most explosive appearance on “Meet the Press.” The guest was Major General Patrick Hurley, whose resignation as U.S.

Ambassador to China had so annoyed Truman—and who had his own history with Izzy.* Five years earlier he'd described Hurley in the *Nation* as “an ‘oil general’ Still Harry Sinclair's lawyer and Washington Man Friday, Hurley operates in full military panoply out of his corporation law office in Washington, with his press agent commissioned a major. He is one of those who think Arabian oil too important to be left ‘at the mercy of a local conflict,’ the implication being that the conflict must be ended by liquidating the effort to build a Jewish home in Palestine.”⁵

Hurley was in a testy mood even before Izzy started pressing him, quarreling with panelist Marquis Childs, a columnist for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. But when Izzy intervened, accusing Hurley of “making a long speech instead of answering [his] question” the general snapped: “You people went to Yalta and surrendered every one of those principles.” And when Izzy tried to remind Hurley that he'd never been anywhere near Yalta, he was fixed with a baleful glare: “You are noted. You are not for the United States. You've been for Russia all along. Don't kid an old kidder.”

Which as it turned was merely the preliminary bout. Izzy didn't retreat, or feign outrage. Instead he kept the heat on Hurley's evasions: “Why don't you answer a few questions instead of reading the Atlantic Charter at us?”

“Why don't you put your old party line on—and it's red,” Hurley replied.

* It was also Hurley who, as Herbert Hoover's Secretary of War, gave Army Chief of Staff General Douglas MacArthur the order to evict the Bonus Marchers in the summer of 1932.

Perhaps in an attempt to restore some coherence, the newspaperman, still on the attack, shifted ground to the Koumintang. “We’ve spent three billion dollars on the KMT.... Did you ever see a bigger bunch of crooks than those guys?”

“Quit following the red line with me,” returned Hurley.

“You asked me if I—”

“I was asking you if you ever met a bigger bunch of crooks,” Stone persisted. “You’re an oil man. Did you ever see a bigger bunch of crooks—even in the oil fields of Texas or Oklahoma?”

“You go back to Jerusalem and I’ll go back to the oil fields. If you don’t want to fight then don’t start with me, young man.”⁶

This was too much even for *Variety*, whose arbiters of outrage found Hurley’s remarks “not only off-base but entirely uncalled for.”⁷ The *Herald Tribune* agreed: “One of the great attractions of ‘Meet the Press’ is the liveliness and frequent acerbity of the discussions. But there are limits and Mr. Hurley went quite a distance beyond those limits.” Any *Trib* reader curious about the target of this attack was left to wonder, however, as critic John Crosby managed to report the incident without ever mentioning I.F. Stone.⁸

“Meet the Press” courted controversy. Barely a year earlier *Time* magazine editor Whittaker Chambers appeared on the program and charged “Alger Hiss was a Communist and may be one now”—the first time Chambers had made this claim outside the protection of Congressional privilege, prompting Hiss to sue him for libel. It was in response to this suit that Chambers produced the “Pumpkin Papers”^{*}—evidence, according to

^{*} So-called because the papers, a mix of typed copies of confidential State Department documents and Hiss’s handwritten notes, also included several

Chambers, that Hiss had not only been a member of the Communist Party, but had committed espionage. Penitent “Spy Queen” Elizabeth Bentley was the program’s first female guest. But the Stone-Hurley “slugfest,” as the show-biz bible called it, attracted an unusual amount of attention for one very simple reason: it happened live, on television.

Though it would go on to become the longest running show in television history, at the time “Meet the Press” had been on the air for less than two years. Izzy made his own television debut on the program that June; the guest was Hans Freistadt, a young Communist from the University of North Carolina whose insistence on the sanctity of dissent inside the Soviet Union was greeted sceptically by Izzy. Broadcast live from WNBT in New York, the show went out over the NBC network—at the time barely a handful of stations—reaching nearly 900,000 homes.⁹ By the standards of early television this was a tiny audience, but even compared to Izzy’s heyday at PM an appearance on “Meet the Press” extended his reach by a whole order of magnitude. The radio audience, of course, was larger still. In 1949, his peak year as a panellist, Izzy was on eight broadcasts (four each on radio and television)—all at a time when his print readership was shrinking dramatically.

Back in 1946, when he made his first appearance on “Meet the Press” opposite Sava Kosanovic, Izzy was an obvious choice for a program where “the left, the right, and the middle of the road are all invited to appear and answer questions.” By November 1949, when Izzy and the Yugoslav ambassador sat

rolls of microfilm that Chambers had kept hidden inside a hollowed-out pumpkin on his Maryland farm.

down again—this time in front of the television cameras—a great deal had changed. In 1946 Izzy's fellow panellists tried to paint Kosanovic, nephew of the scientist Nicola Tesla, as Stalin's lackey. In 1949 Yugoslavia had been expelled from the Cominform*, making Izzy, who took the same respectful approach to Kasanovic on both broadcasts, a target for the Daily Worker's wrath. And when Izzy appeared on the show these days he was described as "formerly of PM and the Nation, now of New York's newest daily, The Compass."

The Star, which took over from PM in the summer of 1948, hadn't even lasted long enough to get a mention on "Meet the Press," closing its doors in January 1949. The corpse got mixed reviews. "I liked PM much better than the Star," Izzy wrote. "The trouble with PM was that the men running it lost their nerve in the cold war. The trouble with the Star was that it never had any nerve to start with. The men who ran the Star wanted respectability above all else and subordinated their own radical views to this."¹⁰ A.J. Liebling, the New Yorker's press critic, was kinder—partly, it seems, because he didn't think so highly of its predecessor: "A girl to whom I gave a subscription to PM in 1946 asked me after a time, 'Doesn't *anybody* have any trouble except the Jews and the colored people?' ... I think the Star was making progress towards a successful changeover, although the process resembled changing clothes underwater." Liebling pointed out that the Star was the only New York daily to endorse Truman; he also credited the paper with bringing down the price of milk in

* On November 28, 1948 the Cominform—cosmetically renamed successor to the Comintern—decreed that "the transformation of Yugoslavia from the phase of bourgeois nationalism into fascism and direct betrayal of national interests is complete."

New York City, and with a more lasting contribution to American life made by “a young Star cartoonist named Walt Kelly.”¹¹

Actually the paper’s art director and chief political cartoonist, Kelly launched “Pogo,” his chronicle of life along the Okefenokee, three months before the Star’s final edition.

Izzy had been writing three columns a week for the Star. When Joe Barnes called to say the paper was closing he told Esther “Now I’ll really get a chance to write that book,” and went upstairs to take a bath. Izzy came down from his ablutions to find Ted Thackrey on the phone asking if he would join Albert Deutsch, his former PM stablemate, as a six-day-a-week columnist for the New York Post.¹² A veteran newsman who’d edited papers in Cleveland and Shanghai, Thackrey joined the Post in 1936, and was appointed executive editor by Dorothy Schiff when she and her second husband, George Backer, bought the paper from David Stern. In 1943 Thackrey became Schiff’s third husband, and the Post’s editor in chief. By the time he wooed Izzy back to the paper Thackrey’s own marriage was under strain. (Doubtless there were deeper rifts, but throughout the 1948 presidential campaign Thackrey’s editorial page supported Henry Wallace—except for a column written by his wife, and publisher, who campaigned for Dewey.)

Perhaps sensing the precariousness of his new perch, Izzy put out feelers to Freda Kirchway about returning to the Nation. He also tested the waters at The New Republic, recently moved to Washington by owner/editor Michael Straight.¹³ Izzy’s return was heavily promoted by the Post, which described him as “A Courageous, Crusading Newspaper Man” credited with a number

of scoops but “perhaps best known for his more recent stories on Palestine.”

Though his schedule at the Post left him little time for fresh exposés, Izzy still managed to make news. Opening arguments in the Smith Act trial of American Communists had barely begun when Izzy remarked irreverently: “I wish the defense of the 12 could be conducted with less noise and more sense. The government is making a martyr of the Communist leaders; their lawyers are making a martyr of the judge.” The Daily Worker cried foul, but Izzy’s position was clear enough: unflagging defense of the rights of Communists but no indulgence towards the party’s self-inflicted idiocies. To individual Communists he was often quite friendly, happily accepting an invitation from Daily Worker Washington bureau chief Rob Hall (an old Alabama friend of the Durrs) to a lunch for DW foreign editor Joseph Starobin in February 1949—an occasion when more prudent colleagues found their social schedules unaccountably full.¹⁴ But his sympathy stopped well short of genuflecting before “the brave working class advocates spitting manfully in the eye of the capitalist judge as they are dragged off to the counter-revolutionary gallows screaming defiance on their way.” Such mockery drew a swift (and predictable) response: “Working people,” the Daily Worker warned, “have long since learned not to follow Mr. Stone’s faith in the objectivity of class courts and class justice in capitalist countries.”¹⁵

Union Square was even more agitated by Izzy’s defense of Anna Louise Strong, an American journalist who’d written sympathetically about the Chinese Communists, and reported the Red Army’s progress through Poland, but had just been expelled

from the Soviet Union accused of being an American spy. Comparing her with Agnes Smedley, another publicist for the Chinese revolutionaries who found herself fending off charges of spying by both the Russians and by the U.S. Army, Izzy warned that Communism's compulsion to devour even its friendliest critics would leave it in the hands of "the sycophant, the lickspittle, the yes-man, the apple-polisher, the guy who plays safe."¹⁶ (Smedley herself phoned Izzy in a panic in February 1949. General Charles Willoughby, MacArthur's chief of intelligence, had just accused her of having been a Soviet spy. Ten days later the Army was forced to issue a public apology, but Smedley, who may well have had something to hide*, fled to England shortly afterwards.)¹⁷

None of which prevented writer Dwight McDonald from including I.F. Stone on his list of "Stalinoid" dupes for agreeing to speak at the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace held at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel at the end of March, 1949. Hosted by the National Council of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions, an offshoot of the Progressive Party, the Waldorf Conference was indeed, as *Life* magazine breathlessly reported, "dominated by intellectuals who fellow-travel the Communist line."¹⁸ Though McDonald and Sidney Hook, who was refused a slot in the conference program, organized an anti-Communist counter-conference, McDonald also attended the Waldorf meeting as a delegate, where he found that "the American leaders of the Conference took a very cautious, critical-of-both-sides line." This

* In *The Lives of Agnes Smedley* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), Ruth Price establishes that Smedley had indeed spied for the Soviets, though only

didn't stay McDonald from his denunciations, but it did confront him with a dilemma.

"I got quite a different impression of the Stalinoids," McDonald wrote, "talking to them face to face ... it was possible to communicate, since we had a common cultural and even (oddly enough) political background: that is, we read the same books, went to the same art shows and foreign films, shared the same convictions in favor of the (American) underdog—the Negroes, the Jews, the economically underprivileged—and against such institutions as the Catholic hierarchy and the U.S. State Department. In contrast, I felt very little in common with the pickets who demonstrated against the Conference, who booed me as roundly as any other delegate (since their hatred was directed against all alien-appearing intellectuals) and who marched under the (to me repulsive) banners of religion and patriotism."¹⁹

The next few years posed hard choices for American intellectuals. Should they march under a banner of even the palest shade of pink—or under the banners (so repulsive to McDonald) of religion and patriotism? Some found peace in the church—or made their own peace with the state. An ever-dwindling band kept in step with the Communist Party. Most simply stopped marching altogether. I.F. Stone followed his own course. Within days of the Waldorf Conference Izzy spoke at a "Keep Spain out of the U.N." meeting organized by the Joint Anti-Fascist Rescue Committee—another group on the Attorney General's list. Unbuttoning his shirt as he spoke, Izzy told the audience that when a friend had recently asked him if he was a

against the Japanese and the Germans—a distinction that might have been a shade too fine for HUAC, who subpoenaed Smedley before her death in 1950.

liberal, he replied that he was not. “I’m one of them damned Reds—and I’ve got my red woolen underwear on to prove it!” he shouted. The crowd roared with laughter. The FBI men took down every word.²⁰

II.

The guest on the May 25, 1949 broadcast of “Meet the Press” was Ted Thackrey. Murray Davis, a reporter for the New York World-Telegram, kicked off the questioning: “Mr. Thackrey, are you a Communist?”

Ted Thackrey was not, and had never been, a Communist. Until recently, however, he had been the editor of the New York Post. He was now the paper’s former editor, having recently become the former husband of Dorothy Schiff. Mrs. Schiff issued a memorandum citing “irreconcilable differences on fundamental questions of policy” and appointed 33-year-old James Wechsler, Izzy’s old nemesis from PM, to the editor’s chair.²¹ But Thackrey was not without resources, and on May 15 the first issue of The Daily Compass rolled off the presses. To PM-starved New Yorkers, the Compass was *déjà vu* all over again: the plant, premises, furniture and fixtures of the new paper had been scavenged from the Star—as had most of the staff. As for financial backing, Henry Wallace arranged an introduction to Mrs. Anita McCormick Blaine, heiress to the International Harvester fortune. “In the company of Mr. Wallace, I called on Mrs. Blaine in Chicago,” Thackrey recalled. “After listening to my plans and looking at my budget, she excused herself for half an hour of private vigil.”²²

Mrs. McCormick's prayers may have been answered, but Thackrey's shoe-string financing made Ralph Ingersoll look extravagant. Indeed if Thackrey had managed to retain all of PM's core 150,000 readers the Compass would have been profitable. But it still wouldn't have been much of a newspaper. Reporting the news costs money; investigating the stories behind the news costs even more. Comment, however, is reasonably cheap. From an opening week high of about 60,000 readers the Compass bled circulation like the dying paper it was, settling all too soon at a stubborn (and fatally unprofitable) 30-35,000. At that level even the Associated Press subscription—in Thackrey's words, "our single greatest news asset"—had to be dropped as an extravagance.²³

What the Compass did have was I.F. Stone. Columnist, capital dope-tipster, editorial writer, crusading reporter, Supreme Court spoofer, foreign correspondent—during his first few months at the Compass Izzy did everything but run the presses. "There was always tension in the house," Izzy's younger son, Christopher, recalled. "He worked six days a week trying to get the right story for page one. He was trying to write columns and do a lot of stuff on the side...."²⁴ Soon there would be even more "stuff on the side."

In October 1949 the jury at Foley Square found the leadership of the American Communist Party guilty of violating the Smith Act by forming a conspiracy to "teach the principles of Marxism-Leninism" and advocacy of "overthrowing and destroying the government of the United States by force and violence." Not only were all 11 defendants (William Z. Foster was severed from the trial owing to ill health) sentenced to prison,

every one of their six attorneys* were also cited for contempt of court and given prison sentences as well.

With the Communist Party now effectively an illegal organization the drumbeat of Congressional investigations, which had been gathering force since the end of the war, reached a crescendo. Nevada Democrat Patrick McCarran, powerful chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, held hearings on Communist influence at the United Nations.²⁵ Within a year McCarran would no longer be bound by even the tenuous chain of logic connecting the UN to the US judiciary; instead he would have his own legal charter, the Internal Security Act (or, as it is usually known, the McCarran Act), and his own vehicle, the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee (initially known as the McCarran committee, after its first chairman). The Senate Appropriations Committee delved into Communist influence on the radio. The House Committee on Un-American Activities took a break from its investigation of leftist infiltration in Hollywood to hear public testimony from Elizabeth Bentley and Whittaker Chambers; committee chairman J. Parnell Thomas also focused his attention on American's scientists. And in September 1949, the Committee finally identified the hidden hub of subversion in the nation's capital: "KEY REDS IN CAPITAL REPORTED IN HIDING," was the Associated Press headline of a report that "key Communists in Washington have gone underground and are trying to infiltrate the government." Their home base: The Washington Cooperative Bookshop.²⁶ Izzy's reponse came in yet another of his talks at the bookstore. "I joined the bookstore tonight and have my card here

* One of the six, Abraham Isserman, had represented Izzy in his salary dispute with David Stern.

to show for it,” he told a gathering held to protest the Smith Act verdict. Once again, the FBI faithfully transcribed his remarks.

To his readers on the Compass, Izzy’s insouciance was at least as important as his analysis. New York City school teachers, unionized federal employees, CIO electricians—all were feeling the chill of an American inquisition. I.F. Stone’s response was conditioned by his own history—ever since Congressman John Rankin took the floor of the House to denounce “this Bernstein or Feinstein ... one of the pen pushers on this communistic publication known as PM,” during Izzy’s tiff with Cordell Hull, the newsman had been a frequent target of Congressional red-baiters.²⁷ He’d also seen close friends, such as the physicist Edward Condon, hauled before HUAC on the thinnest pretext (in Condon’s case as a reprisal for the scientist’s forceful advocacy of civilian control of atomic energy. HUAC chairman Thomas wanted the military to remain in charge).²⁸ And he knew, both from his own reporting and from personal experience, that J. Edgar Hoover’s animus against the New Deal and New Dealers long antedated the FBI’s interest in espionage or subversion. In other words Stone knew his enemies.

He also knew that ridicule, not righteousness, was the deadliest weapon in his own arsenal. In April 1950 he spoke at a “Deadline for Freedom” rally on behalf of the Hollywood Ten and the board members of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee who had also been convicted of contempt of Congress. Speaking after Paul Robeson, director Adrian Scott and screenwriter John Howard Lawson, Izzy bounded onto the stage accompanied by a midget hauling a huge red card. “This is one of those card-carrying Communists I picked up at the state department,” he

announced as the audience erupted. When Izzy spoke at a similar rally a few days later the inevitable FBI informant was scandalized: “His total disrespect for people on the national scene is remarkable.”²⁹

Looking back on the transition from the New Deal to Truman’s Fair Deal Izzy painted a depressingly familiar picture: “The composite impression was of big-bellied good-natured guys who knew a lot of dirty jokes, spent as little time in their offices as possible [and] saw Washington as a chance to make useful ‘contacts’.... They were just trying to get along. The Truman era was the era of the moocher. The place was full of Wimpys who could be had for a hamburger.”³⁰

Yet for all his contempt, I.F. Stone never hated Harry Truman. Genuine hatred was reserved for one man in Washington—J. Edgar Hoover—along with a fear that, though Izzy was careful never to let it show, ran through him like an electric current. Because Izzy knew what Hoover could do. In May 1946 Hoover had written a letter to George Allen, a Mississippian who’d gone from desk manager of the Wardman-Park Hotel to director of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (an appointment opposed by I.F. Stone). “Dear George,” Hoover begins, “I thought the President and you would be interested in the following information with respect to certain high Government officials operating an alleged espionage network ... on behalf of the Soviet Government.” Hoover goes on to list the members of this “ring” aimed at “atomic energy” including Henry Wallace, Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson, former Assistant Secretary of War John McCloy, Assistant Under Secretary of State Herbert Marks, Alger Hiss, James R. Newman (head of the Office

of War Mobilization and Reconversion) and Edward Condon.

“The news commentator Raymond Graham Swing ... is utilized for subtle propaganda ...and the same use is made of Marquis Childs.”³¹

Izzy never saw the letter, which lay undisturbed for decades in the Truman Library until Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s Commission on Protecting and Reducing Government Secrecy unearthed it in the mid-1990s. Doubtless, though, Izzy would have agreed with Moynihan’s summary of Hoover’s charges as “baseless corridor talk. There were scraps of truth here, but in the main it was fantasy”—and here Izzy would have had to demur—“and dismissed as such.”³² When HUAC chairman Thomas—probably in response to similar prompting by Hoover--branded Edward Condon, director of the National Bureau of Standards, “one of the weakest links in our atomic security,” President Truman himself came to the physicist’s defense.³³ But the attacks on Condon continued. Condon and Stone’s mutual friend Jim Newman, described by Hoover as “the ringleader of this alleged espionage network” was never publicly scourged—possibly because he’d left government for journalism and Hoover, bully that he was, feared negative publicity.*

Still, the relentless barrage of revelation, accusation, and guilt-by-association was as demoralizing as Hoover intended. Izzy couldn’t have known the evidence against his friends—a peculiarity of the loyalty hearings was that the accused had no

* Newman, who served as Truman’s special counsel on atomic energy, left government service in 1946 to become an editor at the New Republic. His four volume The World of Mathematics, first published in 1956, sold over 150,000 copies. A few years later Newman wrote the introduction to his friend Izzy’s collection The Haunted Fifties. James Newman died in 1966.

right to confront his accuser, or to see the evidence against him—but he knew that what put men like Condon in jeopardy were not only their left-of-center views, but their left-of-center associations. In Condon and Newman’s case it was their friendship with Nathan Gregory Silvermaster, Izzy’s old source from the Associated Farmers investigation and a man whose Communist affiliation had long been an open secret since his student days.³⁴ Izzy also knew that not all of the victims of the new inquisition were innocent.

In the summer of 1949 the Compass ran a series by I.F. Stone defending Edward Condon and attacking Hoover and the FBI for leaking unsubstantiated gossip and innuendo to the physicist’s congressional tormentors. At the same time Izzy also wrote about another government employee accused not just of disloyalty but of actual espionage. Judith Coplon, who worked at the Foreign Agents Registration section of the Justice Department, had been arrested that March after a rendezvous with Valentin Gubitchev, a Russian who worked at the UN. The FBI found secret files in Coplon’s purse, and she was tried and convicted in two trials, one in Washington and one in New York.* Both convictions were overturned on appeal after Coplon’s new lawyer, Leonard Boudin, realised the FBI had illegally wiretapped conversations between Coplon and her original counsel and

* The government’s initial problem was that when they were arrested Coplon had not actually passed any documents to Gubitchev, which made espionage impossible to prove. Instead she was charged in Washington with illegal possession of government documents, but during her first trial it emerged that the FBI, in its haste to arrest her, had neglected to obtain a warrant. She was then charged, in New York, with attempting to pass the documents to an unauthorized person. During this trial she fired her original counsel, whose defense centered on the claim that the married Gubitchev was Coplon’s lover, and hired Leonard Boudin.

exposed this government misconduct in open court.³⁵ Izzy, who only began to comment on the Coplon case when Leonard entered the scene, was naturally pleased by his brother-in-law's triumph—particularly as it caused Hoover enormous embarrassment. But his Compass columns on the case, though indignant at Hoover's "vice squad methods," make no pretense of Coplon's innocence. Echoing appeal judge Learned Hand's conclusion that Coplon's "guilt is plain," Izzy told his readers she had indeed been involved "in some kind of undercover activity inconsistent with her duties."³⁶

Just as significant was Izzy's silence on a case that, from the steamy August afternoon when Whittaker Chambers first stood and took his oath to tell the truth, became a national obsession. I.F. Stone didn't like Whittaker Chambers. "No martyrdom was ever more lavishly buttered," he wrote of the Time editor's manichean melodrama. Izzy was particularly revolted by the spy-turned-informer's public piety: "This man so suffocatingly ostentatious in his new-found Christianity is the kind of martyr familiar in its early annals—the kind who threw others to the lions and retired to a villa."³⁷

But Izzy was not convinced by Alger Hiss, either. He'd known Hiss since the lawyer, a Frankfurter protégé like Tommy Corcoran, walked out of a job at the Department of Agriculture in protest at Henry Wallace's refusal to forbid southern farmers from throwing sharecroppers off their land. This was in 1935, and Pat Jackson and Lee Pressman had walked out as well. Another colleague at agriculture, Nathaniel Weyl, later worked with Izzy at the Post, and may well have told him privately what he later told the McCarran committee, namely that he, Hiss and

Pressman had all been part of the same Communist Party unit led by Harold Ware.³⁸ After Hiss was released from prison he and Izzy became friends of sorts—though looking back on the case decades later Izzy said he'd originally found Hiss a “climber and a snob.”³⁹ Whatever his personal feelings, it seems likely that Izzy's total silence on the matter, during the many months from Hiss's libel suit against Chambers, to Hiss's indictment for perjury, to his hung jury and then a second trial and conviction, arose not out of dislike for the man he'd once described as “youthful Alger Hiss” but because he simply didn't believe Hiss's denials.⁴⁰

III.

“I've had it with those people!” The telephone transcript, recorded secretly by the FBI, doesn't reveal the identity of Izzy's caller (who was apparently the target of this illegal surveillance).⁴¹ But there is no mystery about the cause of his exasperation. In November 1949, a few weeks after his conviction in the Smith Act trial, John Gates, editor of the Daily Worker, appeared on “Meet the Press.” Host Lawrence Spivak was so eager to grill the Communist he relinquished his moderator's chair for the occasion. In the studio, Spivak jumped on Gates with both feet, quoting Lenin: “ ‘We must be ready to practice trickery, deceit, law-breaking, withholding and concealing truth.’ Do you follow that?”⁴²

Izzy, who was also on the panel, got caught in the crossfire. Knowing Gates would soon be in prison, “I didn't have the heart to do more than act as stooge or straight man. The poor guy had about as much chance as a sirloin steak thrown into a lions'

cage.” Gates didn’t make it easy on either of them, though, with his resolute defense of the Moscow trials—when Izzy started to question this Spivak accused him of “trying to break in and take you [Gates] off a limb”—or his claim that opponents of communism in the Soviet Union were treated better than he and his fellow defendants had been.⁴³

Reluctant to join the on-air pileup, Izzy vented his frustration in the Compass. Does the government have to wait “until its throat its being cut” to take action against subversion?, Gates had been asked. That, Izzy pointed out “is exactly the question Moscow relies on to excuse its own war on ‘Trotzkyism.’ The premises are not those of a free and stable society.” As for Gates’s invidious comparison between Moscow and Foley Square, Izzy took a swipe at “the noisy clamor of the defense,” adding “no political dissident in the U.S.S.R. could hope to get as much fair treatment as has been accorded the Communists even in the hysteria-haunted U.S. of this date.”

It was only to be expected that Gates would deny this. “These pious assertions, customary from Communists, are not to be dismissed as lies; they are the passionate embodiment of a will to believe encountered in any system of thought which commands deep devotion. Nevertheless they are contrary to fact, and therefore get in the way of rational action in politics.”

More than the predictable idiocies of either American Communists or a tin-pot Torquemada like Spivak, what really annoyed Izzy was the realisation that his own role on “Meet the Press” had changed. Comparing himself to the “*Hofjude*,” the “court Jew ... kept around for amusement and useful errands” by German princes, Izzy wrote “I seem to be the ‘Hof’ radical”

Whenever some poor Red or near-Red is to be barbecued, I am invited on the program to give it some appearance of fairness, perhaps because there is no one left in the Washington press corps still willing to stick his neck out* in this capital of the land of the free and the home of the brave.” Because “I also like to ask embarrassing questions even of my friends and allies ... I either look like a stooge or an enemy.”⁴⁴

It was an uncomfortable position, and it was about to get worse. Following the collapse of the Wallace campaign the CIO voted to bar Communists or anyone who “consistently pursues policies and activities directed toward ... the purposes of the Communist Party” from serving as union officers.⁴⁵ “I understand the rancors built up in the labor movement by past Communist tactics,” Izzy wrote, “but the more I see of the consequences flowing from the CIO's Red purge the more strongly I feel that it will end by seriously damaging the labor movement and stinking up the whole fight for civil liberties on which labor's own future depends.... The fact that Communists have never been disposed to give their opponents a fair break on civil liberties in the trade union movement or elsewhere is no excuse for the use of similar methods by those who claim to be the champions of ‘democracy’ against ‘totalitarianism’.”⁴⁶ His prophetic bitterness was

* Before dismissing this as self-serving exaggeration we should consider Washington Daily News columnist Tom Donnelly. Under the wry headline “Who’s Afraid of the Capitalist Press?” he reported that Gates “did right well for himself the other night.” When Donnelly’s remarks were themselves quoted approvingly by the Daily Worker, an anxious friend in the State Department phoned to say “You better do something” about it. “I think I understand now,” Donnelly wrote, “why so many people in this town feel you should watch every word, refrain from loitering in front of a certain book shop, keep off committees and never sign your name to anything but a check for a prosaic purchase at a department store.” Donnelly’s second thoughts ran under the headline “Some of my Best Friends are Reactionaries.”

compounded by the fact that Walter Reuther, Philip Murray and James Carey, all old comrades, were leading the purge.

“The Communists are a problem. It is hard for liberals to live with them,” Izzy admitted. “But a liberal organization which makes anti-Communism a major tenet is apt to find itself feeding the hysteria it must—in self-preservation—fight.” Those remarks were aimed at his friends—and former friends—now in the Americans for Democratic Action. His conclusion, though, applied across the whole of the Popular Front: “I still believe that the Left will hang separately if it cannot hang together. I think the cold war is aimed much more at us here at home than at Russia.... I am content to find myself still with the unrespectable, red as well as pink.”⁴⁷

Yet if his allies often disappointed him, Izzy’s enemies never let him down. On February 9, 1950 Joseph McCarthy, a hitherto obscure junior senator from Wisconsin already under a cloud for shady campaign practices, and whose previous bid for national attention had been on behalf of Nazi SS officers convicted of massacring unarmed civilians and U.S. POWs in Malmédy, Belgium, gave the Lincoln Day speech to the Women’s Republican Club of Wheeling, West Virginia. Initial reports of the speech quoted McCarthy claiming he had the names of 205 “card-carrying Communists” in the State Department. The following day the number had fallen to 57—though when McCarthy repeated his charge on the floor of the senate ten days later it had grown to 81. By the end of March McCarthy narrowed his claim to one man, “the top espionage agent in the United States, the boss of Alger Hiss.” His name was Owen Lattimore, and

McCarthy pronounced himself “willing to stand or fall on this one.”⁴⁸

Owen Lattimore had never been a Communist. Nor was he, in any sense, Alger Hiss’s boss. Director of the Page School of International Relations at Johns Hopkins, Lattimore was the most influential China scholar in the U.S. During the 1930s he’d travelled extensively in China, including a visit to Mao in Yanan with Philip Jaffe. But he’d also served as political advisor to Chiang Kai-Shek, and remained a close friend of both the Generalissimo, whom he described as “a great man,” and Mme. Chiang.⁴⁹ Proving that Lattimore had on occasion been naïve—or even been guilty of poor judgement—wouldn’t have been very difficult. In 1944, as a representative of the Office of War Information, he’d accompanied Henry Wallace on a visit to Magadan, a Soviet forced-labor camp in Siberia. Lattimore’s glowing account of the trip in National Geographic, which compared conditions favorably to life in the Alaskan goldfields, included this grotesque encomium to the camp commandant: “Mr. Nikishov ... and his wife have a trained and sensitive interest in art and music and also a deep sense of civic responsibility.”⁵⁰

When Lattimore faced his accusers, however, the issue was his loyalty, not his judgement. The setting may have been a Senate caucus room, but there was no doubt Lattimore was on trial for his life. The charge was treason. I.F. Stone was in the front row: “The Red hearing has become the American equivalent of the bullfight. This is how the crowd must feel in Mexico City or Madrid, waving to friends around the arena, tensely waiting for the bull to appear, the bright sand to be stained with gore.”⁵¹

The main witness against Lattimore was Louis Budenz, former managing editor of the Daily Worker, looking “well-dressed and fatter than in his radical days.” A decade earlier, when Budenz faced criminal syndicalism charges in Chicago, Izzy had come to his defense.⁵² Now he watched as Budenz launched into “his familiar story of the Communist conspiracy with the glibness of a travelling evangelist describing the details of hell.”

There were elements of farce, as when Budenz testified that Communist Party Secretary Earl Browder had put Lattimore in charge of making sure the Chinese Communists were referred to as “agrarian reformers”. Millard Tydings, the conservative Maryland Democrat chairing the special committee investigating McCarthy’s charges, asked if Lattimore had been “present at the meeting where this occurred?”

Budenz: Oh, no sir. He was not there.

Theodore Green (D-R.I.): Do you know Mr. Lattimore.

Budenz: Do you mean personally?

Green: Yes

Budenz: I do not.

Green: Have you ever seen Mr. Lattimore?

Budenz: No sir; I have not.⁵³

In June, just as Lattimore finished his testimony refuting McCarthy’s charges, Izzy left Washington for Alabama. If he needed reminding that there was more to the CP than espionage, orthodoxy, and conspiracy to overthrow the government by force and violence his re-immersion in the desperate drama of the Scottsboro Boys was well-timed. He’d been writing about the nine black youths accused of raping two white women since his days on the Philadelphia Record, so it was hardly surprising that when a “well-known Negro leader” phoned Ted Thackrey and said that one of the Scottsboro Boys had escaped from prison and would

he assign a reporter, he sent I.F. Stone.⁵⁴ “I have him in an apartment in Harlem,” was all Thackrey had been told. Izzy flew to New York, and was taken to meet Heywood Patterson, still on the run from an Alabama prison farm. Also in the room was Earl Conrad, author of Jim Crow America, a muckraking look at life in the South.

Patterson’s tale was gripping--his presence in New York a huge scoop. But “the more I listened, the more I felt it would be wrong to spill Haywood’s story in a hasty series of newspaper articles.... I called Kent McCormick, chief editor of Doubleday.” The cash advance arranged by Izzy made it possible for Patterson to leave town with Conrad; it also financed the months it took Conrad to transcribe and edit the escaped convict’s memoir. The publication of Scottsboro Boy, co-authored by Conrad and Patterson, was what sent Izzy south⁵⁵. Now he was free to tell the whole story—and to confront Alabama officials, from Governor Jim Folsom to the superintendant of Kilby prison—in his quest for a pardon for Patterson, and parole for Andy Wright, last of the Scottsboro defendants still behind bars..⁵⁶

“The South,” Izzy reported on his return, “is a story the white man must write in Old Testament terms; only God and the Negro have a right to be forgiving about it.... There are always excuses. The oppressed always have bad table manners and the oppressors always have their rationalizations.” He had little faith in white liberals. “Nobody feels the cut in somebody else’s skin. There were times when I found the rationalizations of so-called Southern liberals harder to bear than the subhuman savagery of the Negro-hater.”⁵⁷

Izzy's exasperation at the Communist "labor defense" tactics at Foley Square didn't prevent him from acknowledging that without the party's International Labor Defense campaign to save them—however exploitative or inept—the Scottsboro Boys would have long ago been lynched.⁵⁸ Yet he also knew those struggles were part of the past. Now blacks must take the lead themselves. "The Negro must free the white man, and the Negro can only do so if he fights for himself, and we support him." His journey to Alabama had been a revelation—and a partial success. Andy Wright got his parole. "I liked Folsom, and felt that there was no race hatred in him," Izzy wrote after a meeting where, though the governor himself refused to discuss either case, his men let Izzy know that the state of Alabama was "not interested" in Heywood Patterson. No pardon—but no pursuit either.⁵⁹

Izzy returned to Washington just in time to attend the hearing which sent Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee chairman Edward Barsky and novelist Howard Fast, a member of the JAFRC board, to prison for refusing to give HUAC the names of JAFRC contributors. On July 17, the Tydings Committee reported: "We find no evidence to support the charge that Owen Lattimore is the 'top Russian spy' or, for that matter, any other sort of spy." The report, signed only by the committee's Democratic majority, labelled McCarthy's charges "false smears and headlines."⁶⁰ Not that it mattered. That same day the FBI arrested Julius Rosenberg, who was accused of delivering the secret of the atomic bomb to the Russians. Three weeks earlier troops from the Communist Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea had crossed the 38th parallel into the territory of the Republic of Korea. Though termed a "police action" to avoid the

necessity for Congressional approval, the United States was at war.

On August 3, Izzy spoke at the Capitol Hotel in Washington to the same group that had sponsored the Waldorf Conference. “You won’t like to hear what I have to say so better prepare your tomatoes,” he began. “I’m sorry to report to you that I couldn’t find any proof to justify the Communist claim that South Korea started this war.... North Korea started the war and North Korea was well prepared for such a war.... Where did a little power like North Korea get such a strong war machine...? The Soviet Union equipped North Korean Communist forces and the Soviet Union is behind the North Koreans in this war.” Though Izzy also blamed the U.S.—“Wall Street is dreaming of world conquest and the Kremlin is dreaming of world revolution”—his remarks, according to the FBI informants present, “were applauded by only a small number of persons.”⁶¹

Two weeks later Izzy left on an El Al flight to Israel, not knowing whether he would ever return to the United States.

IV.

On the surface, Izzy’s fifth visit to Israel in as many years was just a good reporter working his beat. This time he’d even brought company—his daughter Celia, about to celebrate her 20th birthday. The only one of his children who shared his passion for poetry, Celia was something of a favorite to her father. Given Izzy’s obsession with work, this preference expressed itself mainly as a little extra warmth in the preoccupied smile given to all his children, or a little more indulgence on the rare occasions

when one of them rebelled. But because she was the only girl, or perhaps simply because she was his oldest, Izzy was able to confide some of his fears.

“Father was afraid American intellectuals were going to be put in concentration camps,” she recalled. “He told me that if anything happened he wouldn’t be able to get me out of the country.”⁶² He also revealed that the trip to Israel might not be just a visit.

Ever since he’d first gone to Palestine in 1945 Izzy felt himself strongly drawn both to the land and to the people. The attraction had little to do with religion. He was a staunch atheist, and neither he nor Esther had ever shown any interest in Jewish ritual or observance. They’d never even celebrated Passover at home, going instead to Roisman cousins on the first night and to grandfather Feinstein for the second seder. Then suddenly in 1948, flush with enthusiasm after the establishment of the State of Israel, he insisted the boys, who were still living at home, begin to learn Hebrew. “We had a Hebrew tutor come to the house and teach us,” recalled Christopher Stone, who even joined Young Judea, the youth movement for Reform Jews. Jeremy, narrowly saved from having to prepare for his Bar Mitzvah by the death of the pious relative for whose benefit the ceremony had been intended, remembered only “considering studying Hebrew.”⁶³ But all three children have clear memories of their parents seriously contemplating emigration. And though she had escaped the attentions of the tutor, Celia, too, felt the pressure. When they landed in Tel Aviv Izzy bought her a book of Picasso reproductions. The captions were all in Hebrew.

Izzy took Celia to Ein HaShofet, the kibbutz where Arthur Koestler had once lived and which served as the inspiration for his novel Thieves in the Night. He also took her to Kibbutz Deganya, the first of the Jewish communal settlements, and a hotbed of leftwing Labor Zionism*. But the trip wasn't all holiday—or even personal reconnaissance. The Compass wanted Izzy to find out whether there was any chance that a bloc of countries independent of both Soviet and American influence might be able to mediate an end to the fighting in Korea. In September they asked him to fly immediately to India to interview Jawaharlal Nehru.

The Indian Prime Minister and the Jewish-American journalist did not hit it off. Despite Izzy's long history as an advocate of Indian independence, the country's appalling poverty disturbed him, as did the ruling Congress party's "police-state mentality." There was also Nehru's record as an opponent of Israeli statehood. After two weeks Izzy returned to Celia: "He kept saying 'That Nehru! Phew!' He didn't like Nehru." But his personal distaste didn't prevent him from appreciating the immensity of Nehru's task—or from realizing that if there was ever going to be an alternative to the Cold War polarity it would have to be led by men like Nehru—and Tito.⁶⁴ So when the Yugoslav leader granted the Compass an interview in late October Izzy was on his way to Belgrade.

In his first despatches Izzy is clearly dazzled by the partisan leader, whom he describes as a "hero of the fight against Fascism ... a legendary figure." Indeed he was so delighted to find a

* Also the birthplace and long-time home of Moshe Dayan.

country where Communist Party members were actually willing to freely discuss their ideas, he seemed for a while to have landed in his Jeffersonian Marxist promised land. “Freedom of Speech Found in Yugoslavia,” he assured Compass readers. He was also beguiled by the Yugoslav approach to industrial democracy. But after a couple of weeks, and perhaps a discreet warning from Milovan Djilas—still serving as vice premier but already critical of Tito’s leadership, and a frequent companion during Izzy’s stay in Belgrade—a more skeptical tone crept in. Warning of the emergence of a “new privileged class”—a variation on the thesis that would land Djilas a nine-year prison term—Izzy also lamented the Yugoslav government’s “merciless mendacity” towards so-called deviationists.⁶⁵

The last leg of Izzy’s non-aligned tour took him to Paris to see Claude Bourdet—another anti-Fascist hero. The son of a famous playwright, Bourdet had escaped from a German P.O.W. camp to help found Combat, the underground newspaper of the French resistance. Captured again by the Nazis he’d barely survived Buchenwald. Charles de Gaulle, who had enormous respect and affection for Bourdet, made him director of France’s state radio network, but after a few years Bourdet returned to print as editor of the magazine L’Observateur. When Izzy met him in the fall of 1950 Bourdet, a fervent defender of Tito’s break with Stalin, was perhaps the most advanced thinker in what had not yet become known as the Non-Aligned Movement.* Tall,

* It would be at least four more years before Izzy’s hunch would bear fruit. Nehru coined the term “non-alignment” during a speech in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in 1954; the Bandung Conference, often considered the origin of the movement, was held in Indonesia in 1955. And it wasn’t until 1961, largely at

tweedy, erudite, and nearly as eloquent in English as in French, the fiercely independent Bourdet was a compelling figure. Even more than the man, though, Izzy was attracted by Bourdet's milieu.

Compared to the spartan exigencies of daily struggle in Israel Paris was a feast for the senses. Never inclined toward asceticism, Izzy revelled in the French capital's abundance of tastes, sights, and sounds. In particular he found himself captivated by the freedom to disagree, to debate, and most of all to dissent, which his French colleagues seemed to take for granted. After all, when Bourdet made it clear he was well to De Gaulle's left—and even to the left of the French socialists—no one suggested he should be imprisoned, or blacklisted, or even denounced. Like his successor at Combat, Albert Camus, Bourdet's independence had been hard-earned—and the comparison with America's shabby treatment of its own anti-Fascists made Izzy realise how estranged he'd become from his own country. The recent passage of the McCarran Act made him feel “like a man trying to shout into a hurricane.” Viewed from Paris the United States seemed in the grip of a “Mad Hatter” mentality, rushing headlong “toward Fascism and folly.”⁶⁶

“What really scared me was when Congress overturned Truman's veto of the Internal Security Act establishing the Subversive Activities Control Board, the first thought police in American History,” he recalled. “When that happened, I was afraid America was really going to go turn fascist. I even talked to Ted [Thackrey] about maybe we ought to establish a branch of

Tito's instigation, that the first official summit of the movement would be held.

the Compass abroad, to carry on the cause ... if they really clamped down--and I thought they might.”⁶⁷

“He called up my mother,” Celia Gilbert remembered, “and told her to sell the house and come to Paris.” Esther, whose outward deference to her husband’s wishes masked a quiet confidence in her own judgement, decided to rent, not sell, the family’s house in Washington. Meanwhile Izzy learned that Le Clos de Metz, the former home of Leon Blum, France’s Popular Front Prime Minister, who died in March 1950, was available. “Dad ran into Mme. Blum in Paris,” said Christopher Stone. “The house was in Jouy-en-Josas, near the Ecole de Montcel,” a boarding school where the boys were enrolled as day students.⁶⁸

Stanley Karnow, who somehow managed to work as Paris correspondent for the National Guardian, a left-wing weekly*, while also stringing for Time magazine, was a frequent visitor chez Stone. “The people at the Guardian were sectarians. I once proposed doing a piece on Arthur Koestler. They went berserk! They thought those people [former Communists] were worse than fascists. Izzy was not at all sectarian. Plus Izzy had these two worlds in Paris. He had a kind of left-ish world and a Zionist world,” Karnow recalled.⁶⁹

Christopher Stone remembers Jo Davidson, writer Pietro Di Donato (author of Christ in Concrete) and director Carl Foreman, in self-imposed exile from Hollywood while his lawyer, Sidney Cohn, fought the blacklist, as regulars. But most of the company

* According to his FBI file, Izzy attended the paper’s founding meeting at Lillian Hellman’s apartment in May 1948, along with his brother Marc, who was for a while the Guardian’s business manager. But Izzy seldom wrote for it. Karnow, who did, described the Guardian as “nominally independent” while actually very close to the Communist Party line.

were journalists. Kingsley Martin, editor of the British New Statesman, came often, as did the Statesman's Richard Crossman. (On first sitting down to supper with the Stones, Martin exclaimed "A fine joint you have here!" Celia and her brothers thought he was praising the house, only to realise later that coming from London, where meat was still subject to rationing, the Englishman's appreciation was meant for the roast.) Jean-Paul Sartre, who wanted Izzy to contribute to Les Temps Modernes, was a more occasional visitor.⁷⁰ It was Claude Bourdet, though, who launched Izzy on the project that would take up most of his time in Paris.

The Frenchman asked Izzy to write a series of articles for L'Observateur on the origins of the ongoing conflict in Korea. Working from his study in France, and forced to rely on the State Department's July 1950 White Paper, the Paris edition of the Herald Tribune, clippings from the New York Times, and the British and French press, Izzy noticed that there was a considerable divergence between accounts of the war produced for American domestic consumption and those intended for European readers—regardless of political orientation. His interest piqued, he soon realised that he could use this parallax effect—the apparent change in position of an object when seen from two different vantage points—to his reportorial advantage.

Izzy still had to produce six pieces a week for the Compass as well as his work for Bourdet. "Because they didn't want to spend money on cables I had to have my stuff at the post office ... by 2 p.m. each day in order to get it to New York the following day. So I was really hopping."⁷¹ Somehow, though, he managed to find time to enjoy Paris. When Chris, his younger son, turned

13, Izzy marked his coming of age not with a Bar Mitzvah, or even a trip to synagogue, but by taking him to see the Folies Bergeres. Jeremy, two years older, decided that total immersion in French was not for him. Instead he became his father's typist on what had by now become a book-length manuscript, The Hidden History of the Korean War.

"When the book was finished I went with him to London to try and sign a contract with the New Statesman," said Jeremy. "Before we went to their offices he'd opened a British bank account, and on the way back from the bank we passed a big sign outside a newsstand, 'TRUMAN SACKS MACARTHUR.' So when we got to the New Statesman he said 'I feel like the Venerable Bede,' meaning the book would never be published."⁷² It was the summer of 1951 and the lease on Jouy-en-Josas was at its end. "There was talk of going to Israel," his son Christopher recalled, "up to the last minute. He said, 'Bring me some tea and I'll decide.' When I came back with the tea he'd fallen asleep."⁷³

On June 15 Izzy, Esther and the two boys sailed into New York Harbor aboard the French liner *La Liberté*. An official from U.S. customs came aboard ship to examine their passports:

"Is youse the Stone that writes for PM?"

"Yes I am," Izzy replied, thinking "Oh boy!. Here's where I lose my passport." Unlike some of Izzy's worries, this fear was not at all far-fetched. Paul Robeson and the artist Rockwell Kent had already had their passports taken away—as had many others. Arthur Miller would soon be denied a passport to attend the premiere of The Crucible in London.

“*Zei gur gezint!*” [Yiddish for “Go in good health!”], said the official, who stamped the passport and handed it back to its astonished—and delighted—owner.⁷⁴

V.

His euphoria was short-lived. The State Department Press Association refused his application for membership. With the house in Washington still occupied by tenants, Esther and the children were on Fire Island while Izzy camped out at the Willard Hotel, making the long commute most weekends. But Washington depressed him, and when he could Izzy sent in his column from the house at Ocean Beach. This made life difficult for the hapless copy boys as Ralph Ginzburg, who was one of them, recalled: “Izzy habitually pushed a deadline. He pushed it harder than anyone I’ve ever worked with. And so the heat was always on me I would show up, he would finish writing his column--or usually he would start writing his column.” Then Ginzburg would race to the Western Union office (the Fire Island house had no telephone), returning to New York by ferry and railroad.⁷⁵

On July 4, Izzy reflected on “a country scared into submission.” Noting that “everywhere, in government employment, in the press, on the radio, in the movie business, in the labor movement, among professional people, one finds fear,” Izzy remarked that “in Germany and Italy it was necessary to beat, torture, and imprison relatively few people in order to frighten the rest into silence.”

Calling for “the conservatives and respectables ... to see that if they do not begin to fight, all that was precious in America

may well be lost,” he admitted that forming a coalition to “stand and fight” would take more than just courage. Strong stomachs would also be required: “Some of us are closer to Minsk than to the Mayflower. Some are Reds. Some are folk whose skins bar them from many places.... We are not quite the kind of people with whom one associates.”⁷⁶

Izzy knew what it was to be shunned. Though he found Scottsboro Boy a publisher in a single phone call, his own manuscript on the Korean War was turned down by over two dozen houses. Even his British friends seemed skittish, preferring to wait until the book came out in the U.S., where editors were unanimous in finding Izzy’s work important, and worthy of publication—by someone else.

In the fall of 1951 the Stone family was living in borrowed luxury—through friends in the building they’d arranged to sublet an apartment at 1133 Park Avenue. Izzy, who had been reassigned to the Compass features desk, liked to walk to work via Central Park. One day, outside the Central Park Zoo, Izzy ran into his old PM colleague Leo Huberman. “We were sitting at the cafeteria and Izzy walked in,” said Paul Sweezy. Sweezy was an economist who’d taught at Harvard; he and Huberman had just started Monthly Review, a non-sectarian leftist journal. Izzy could hardly believe it when the two men asked if he knew anyone with anything interesting to say about the Korean War. “He told us about this manuscript he’d written that no one would publish. He told us in quite anguished detail about it. And the more he told us, the more excited we got. We said, ‘Look, this thing has got to be published. Could you send it over?’ The manuscript arrived at

around 4-5 o'clock. We began reading it right away, and we got even more excited. We figured we'd raise the money somehow."⁷⁷

Claude Bourdet told Izzy that his second article on Korea created a more frenzied response than anything L'Observateur had ever published.⁷⁸ So when The Hidden History of the Korean War appeared in April 1952 Izzy had every reason to expect controversy. What he got instead—at least from the mainstream press—was silence, eerie and unbroken. At the New Republic editor Michael Straight roused himself to declare the book “not reasoned dissent” and “a fictive report.” A brief notice in Foreign Affairs warned readers that Hidden History “at times verges on the official Soviet line.”⁷⁹ True, the Daily Worker reviewer saluted “a valuable work of polemical journalism in the best bourgeois tradition.” The Militant, organ of the Trotskyist Socialist Workers' Party, went even further, praising the book in such terms that the Compass book page simply reprinted it verbatim.⁸⁰ But from the New York Times, the Herald Tribune, Saturday Review, Time, or any of the dozen other journals that had positively reviewed Underground to Palestine ... nothing.

With one exception. On Sunday, May 11, 1952, before any other notice, a full-page attack on “this preposterous book” appeared in the New York Post labelling it “a piece of bland and heavily documented rubbish.” Recalling Stone's fury at the Nazi-Soviet pact the reviewer wrote “I can recall no one from the period who was more outraged by that outrageous document than Stone. As The Nation's Washington correspondent during the early years of the war, Stone was as good as the best and was perhaps was the best. I do not know what happened to deflect Stone's promising career in the forties.... For several years now,

Stone has no longer been a promising journalist, or even a moderately good one. Zest, style and humor have departed his work, leaving it merely querulous.... Stone's contribution to American journalism today is that of a man who thinks up good arguments for poor Communist positions."

The author of this screed was ex-New Masses editor Richard Rovere, a veteran, like Izzy, Post editor James Wechsler and Paul Sweezy, of the "Independent Left" group at the end of the thirties. Now comfortably established at the New Yorker, Rovere was an unusual choice for the Post—indeed, he never reviewed for the paper again. "That was a hit job," said Murray Kempton, a friend of both Rovere and Wechsler (the three men shared, among other things, a trajectory in and out of the Communist Party) who had just begun his own long career as a Post columnist. "Wechsler summoned him to do it." In a letter to Rovere thanking him for his "effort ... in a noble cause," Wechsler warns: "too many of our silly readers will be quoting Stone as gospel unless this job is done."⁸¹

The reverberations from Rovere's exercise in character assassination lasted a long time. According to Kempton there was a "rage at Izzy on the part of the anti-Communist left" dating from "the Korean War period. It ran very deep." Deep enough to generate a cloud of allegation and misperception easily sufficient to obscure what was, in fact, a relatively modest essay in critical reading of contemporary sources. Over the years such a mythology has developed around Hidden History—that Izzy contended South Korea invaded North Korea, or that he accused the U.S. of using nerve gas or "germ warfare" against North

Korean troops*--that it is worth taking a brief look at what the book actually says.

The Hidden History of the Korean War is actually a history wrapped in an enigma. The history, though controversial at the time, is straightforward: When the war began, Secretary of State Dean Acheson told the United Nations the aim of intervention was “solely for the purpose of restoring the Republic of Korea to its status prior to the invasion from the North.” By the time the Stone family reached France this objective had been achieved—after his brilliant landing at Inchon General MacArthur soon pushed the North Korean army back behind the 38th parallel. Yet the war continued for another two years, with MacArthur’s race north drawing in the Communist Chinese and seeming to herald a much wider conflict. In the fall of 1951, with fighting stalemated on the 38th parallel and Communist Chinese delegates en route to peace talks at the UN, MacArthur launched a “Home-by-Christmas” offensive that kept the fighting going for months without any significant change in the battleline—but with thousands more dead on both sides. Throughout, Soviet military

* Such claims still surface on the internet (e.g. <http://www.cyberussr.com/hcunn/e-asia/korea-cmg.html> which has Stone arguing that South Korea invaded the North). Both North Korea and China did accuse the U.S. of using “germ warfare” in June 1952, and though this propaganda campaign had some supporters on the American left, including Columbia University anthropology lecturer Gene Weltfish, I.F. Stone was not among them. “Several readers have written in to ask what I think of the germ war charges in Korea,” he wrote in the Compass on July 3, 1952. “The answer is that I do not believe them.” He did, however, write that the use of “jellied gasoline bombs” (napalm) to obliterate the entire city of Sinuiju “makes me as an American deeply ashamed”—an admission perhaps sufficiently damning for Stone’s detractors. Or was the provocation Stone’s realisation that such means wouldn’t always be restricted to one side? “A terrible retribution,” he wrote on p. 179, “threatened the peoples of the Western world who so feebly permitted such acts to be done in their name. For it was by such means that the pyromaniacs hoped to set the world aflame.”

support for the North Koreans remained limited—even after U.S. fighter planes attacked a Russian airbase 40 miles south of Vladivostok.

“The Korean War book is a very good book,” said Kempton. “His analysis of the progress of the war was impeccable. We misread the war—especially those of us who’d been soldiers in the Second World War. Izzy read the war better than any of the rest of us.”⁸²

Korea also provided the occasion, if not the pretext, for a sharp rightward turn in American policy not just towards China, but in Europe, where U.S. proposals for NATO now included 10 divisions from a rearmed Germany.⁸³ Though NSC-68 (National Security Council Paper No. 68), the policy document advocating a more aggressive approach to containment, backed by an unprecedented increase in peacetime military spending, would remain classified for decades, the shift to a more confrontational military posture was, at least to Izzy, unmistakable.⁸⁴

Equally obvious, at least from Paris, was the way the war spared the Truman administration any number of tough political choices. With military spending ballooning there was no need to plan for a full-employment peacetime economy. Rescuing Syngman Rhee’s regime also allowed Truman to redeem himself from the opprobrium of having “lost” China (though at the cost of tying the US much more closely to Chiang Kai-Shek’s government on Taiwan). Indeed the outbreak of fighting was so well-timed from the point of both Rhee (whose party had fared disastrously in South Korea’s first free elections, held in May 1950) and the China Lobby that Izzy, though never quite claiming that South Korea started the war, did suggest that Rhee

provoked the North Korean invasion and that both he and MacArthur certainly welcomed it.

“Was the war Stalin’s blunder? Or was it MacArthur’s plan?” Izzy wondered somewhat disingenuously.⁸⁵

History shows that Izzy was probably wrong about how the war started. Certainly he underestimated the degree of coordination between Kim Il Sung’s North Korean regime and Stalin.⁸⁶ We now know, in historian John Lewis Gaddis’s phrase, many things that Izzy could only surmise. And yet the enigma of just when and how the Korean War began, and why the United States and the Soviet Union responded as they did to this proxy battle, remains as mysterious as ever. “What is striking about the Korean War,” says Gaddis, writing after the opening of American, South Korean, and some Chinese and Soviet archives, “is the extent to which its outbreak, escalation, and ultimate resolution surprised everyone.”⁸⁷

Where The Hidden History really touched a raw nerve, though, was Izzy’s calm assumption that in pursuit of its political aims a group within the Truman administration was perfectly willing to (at the very least) allow an attack to go ahead, and then to continue to deceive the American people about the circumstances leading up to hostilities and the real objectives of government policy. After the Gulf of Tonkin, wrote Eisenhower biographer Stephen Ambrose, “Americans are ready to believe things about their government that they would have dismissed as Communist propaganda five years ago.”⁸⁸

Yet even today, after Vietnam, after the Iran-Contra scandals, after the 9-11 Commission reports, Rovere’s dismissal still does its work. There are exceptions—most significantly Bruce

Cumings, America's leading Korea scholar, whose debt to I.F. Stone is not only explicitly acknowledged in his own two volume study The Origins of the Korean War, but also handsomely repaid in his preface to the 1988 edition of Stone's Hidden History, which Cumings describes as an inquiry into "empire and its method."⁸⁹ For his pains Cumings himself is often branded a "revisionist"—a label meant to put his work, too, outside the pale of respectable scholarship.

It is, perhaps, still too early to tell whether Cumings was right to call Hidden History "a book with nine lives, padding in on the cat's feet of its shrewd author to unsettle the scribes of historical and political orthodoxy." Maybe the end of the Cold War has rendered such controversies purely of academic interest (though Izzy's account of China's phantom army, which, utterly destroyed by MacArthur after Inchon, was raised "like Lazarus from the tomb" before Christmas, yet bafflingly "failed to 'agress'," can't help, to contemporary readers, conjure up similarly ephemeral agents of mass destruction.)

But it is still hard to better the book's description of "an Anglo-American partnership in which one partner made the decisions and left the other to face the consequences." The British government could, Stone acknowledged, "threaten to withdraw its troops if it did not like MacArthur's conduct of the 'unified command'. But it could not recall or revise the blank check it gave him through the United Nations. It could urge, it could suggest, it could protest, it could deplore, but it could not instruct."⁹⁰ Nor has the passage of time rendered wholly obsolete Stone's sketch of American attitudes at United Nations: "The relationship of the United Nations to the Korean question had

been from the beginning marked by a strategy of *fait accompli* on the American side, and a quick and quiet acquiescence on the part of the United Nations.”⁹¹

Reflecting on the ostracism Izzy faced, Stephen Ambrose wrote: “It took guts to publish this book in the McCarthy era.” He didn’t know the half of it. But then, neither did Izzy.

V.

For I.F. Stone, the “knock on the door” had already come. On September 25, 1951 Agent William Canfield of the State Department Security Division had presented himself at the Daily Compass office and demanded that Izzy surrender his passport.⁹² The visit was not a complete surprise. Izzy half expected to have his passport taken at dockside in June. Physicist Linus Pauling had just been refused a passport despite an invitation to address Britain’s Royal Society. In Paris, Stanley Karnow only held on to his passport after Time, Inc. interceded on his behalf. Even Joseph Lash, confidant to Eleanor Roosevelt and one of the founders of the anti-Communist ADA, was refused a passport. Ruth Shipley, the head of the State Department’s passport division, was notorious for the way she used her new powers under the McCarran Act to punish anyone she—or her good friend J. Edgar Hoover—deemed subversive.* Max Lowenthal,

* Mrs. Shipley’s older brother, A. Bruce Bielaski, had been one of Hoover’s predecessors as FBI director. But Shipley was far from having to rely solely on her friends at the Bureau for guidance on whose foreign travel “would not be in the best interests of the United States.” Her younger brother Frank Bielaski, an investigator for the Republican National Committee in the 1930s, became director of investigations at the OSS; it was Frank Bielaski who supervised the Amerasia break-ins.

who'd known Izzy since the thirties, found that even a close friendship with President Truman wasn't enough to erase the sin of having written a book critical of Hoover and the Bureau.⁹³ Besides, Izzy's passport had already expired earlier that month.

If the request was predictable, the response was not. To Canfield's amazement, Izzy sent him away empty handed. "I said a passport was too valuable a piece of property to be handled in so unbusinesslike a way, and asked for a letter from the Department stating (1) its legal authority to withdraw the passport and (2) its reason for doing so."⁹⁴ He got his letter—in fact he got two letters, since, as he pointed out, the first letter gave the required authority but not the reason. However it seems Izzy never did physically surrender his passport.

Even if he'd seen Secretary of State Acheson's confidential telegram ordering the American consul in Israel not to extend or renew his passport Izzy might well have assumed the move was in retaliation for his criticism of the Korean War. Acheson's cable was dated March 29, 1951—when the diplomatic stir created by Izzy's articles in L'Observateur was at its height⁹⁵. And though Izzy concentrated most of his fire on John Foster Dulles, reminding readers of the Presbyterian layman's amiable negotiation with Nazi finance minister Hjalmar Schacht on behalf of several New York banks—"if the Nazi regime offended his religious sensibilities, he gave no evidence of it"—and depicting Dulles as MacArthur's co-conspirator,⁹⁶ he was hardly one of Acheson's admirers either.

The British may have had a weakness for Acheson. "He was," Izzy wrote, "their picture of what a foreign secretary should be: cultivated, personable, and superbly tailored." In Izzy's view,

Acheson's urbane exterior didn't signify, still less the Secretary of State's private thoughts: "It is what the pressure of circumstance upon his own personality leads him to do and say that counts." Most of what Acheson said about China was foolish and (based on the premise that Peking was merely Moscow's tool) wrong; the resulting policy was tragically misguided, showing, Izzy wrote, "an absence of ... vision and courage."⁹⁷

The truth, though, was that Izzy's passport difficulties had nothing to do with Acheson, or Dulles, or even Korea. The roots of Agent Canfield's visit went much further back—to the closing days of the second world war, to the grounds of a private girls' school near Washington named Arlington Hall. And to Moscow. It was at Arlington Hall that Meredith Gardner, a lanky Texan-born linguist who was recruited to the Army's Signals Intelligence Service from the German faculty at the University of Akron, turned his attention from Japanese codes to Russian. During the war the Russians, like other foreign missions in the U.S., communicated with their home country via commercial cable companies, which under wartime censorship rules supplied copies of every cable sent to the military. The Russians, who were aware of this, didn't mind because they used a two-step code system that, in theory, was completely unbreakable. Each message was first translated into a string of numbers using a code book—essentially a dictionary with separate number strings for each word. Then these number strings were themselves turned into other number strings using a one-time pad—sheets of paper with random number sequences which are supposed to be destroyed after use (the recipient needs an identical sheet to decipher the message).⁹⁸

One-time pad ciphers are indeed virtually unbreakable, but the pressure to keep producing new one-time sheets after Hitler invaded the Soviet Union meant that some sheets were re-used. This in turn enabled Gardner to decipher some common phrases—for example the code string used to signal the beginning and end of a non-Russian name (since they wouldn't be in the code book names had to be spelled out letter by letter). In December 1946, Gardner deciphered a two-year-old cable containing a whole list of foreign names: Hans Bethe, Niels Bohr, Enrico Fermi, Edward Teller, Harold Urey—all under the heading “List of scientists engaged on the problem of atomic energy.” Gradually Gardner and his largely-female team of cryptanalysts uncovered evidence of a network of Soviet espionage agents working in the U.S., but the product of their efforts, code-named “Bride” (later “Venona”), was closely held by the Army. In October 1948 the FBI was invited to send a full-time liaison to the project, but the work was still slow and painstaking and not a very high priority—until September 1949, when the first Soviet atomic explosions stunned the U.S., and suddenly put Arlington Hall into high gear.⁹⁹

It was this decrypted cable traffic that led to the arrest of Judith Coplon, but the Army's determination to keep its codebreaking achievement a secret proved a fatal handicap for the prosecution*. The British had better luck with physicist Klaus

*The government kept the Venona Project a secret for 53 years. As Haynes and Klehr point out (*Venona*, p. 18), this secrecy “has seriously distorted our understanding of post-World War II history.” They also note that “the Venona messages, if made public, would have made Julius Rosenberg's execution less likely” for the simple reason that Venona identified three other Soviet spies inside the Manhattan Project each of whom made a far greater contribution to the Soviet atomic program than Rosenberg. But Klehr and Haynes still fail to

Fuchs, a refugee from Nazi Germany and naturalized British subject who was already passing information to the Soviets when he arrived in the U.S. to work on the Manhattan project.

Interrogated in late 1949 after being identified by the codebreakers, Fuchs quickly confessed, leading investigators to his KGB courier, Harry Gold, whose information in turn led the FBI to David Greenglass. In June 1950 Greenglass confessed and implicated his sister, Ethel Rosenberg, and her husband Julius.¹⁰⁰

What does any of this have to do with I.F. Stone's passport? In late 1949 the codebreakers at Arlington Hall deciphered a number of messages sent by the KGB's New York station to Moscow in the fall of 1944 concerning contacts with American journalists. One cable described the efforts of SERGEJ—the codename for Vladimir Sergeyevich Pravdin, New York correspondent for the Soviet press agency TASS and also an officer of the KGB—to cultivate an acquaintance with “persons of great interest from a legal point of view. They are well-informed and, although they do not say all they know, nevertheless they

grasp the full implication of the decision to keep Venona secret. As Senator Moynihan notes in *Secrecy* (p. 70), “President Truman was never told of the Venona decrypts.” Yet as Klehr, Haynes and Moynihan all acknowledge, the Soviets knew their wartime cable traffic was being broken almost immediately. No sooner had Meredith Gardner broken the message regarding atomic research than he showed it to William Weisband, a graduate of the Army Language School assigned as a consultant to the Signals Intelligence Service who also happened to be working for the KGB. (According to Haynes and Klehr Weisband himself figures in a number of Venona intercepts, but these particular messages weren't deciphered until 1979!) And if Weisband's superiors in Moscow were reluctant to believe their “unbreakable” code had been cracked, they had only to read the reports of Kim Philby, who as British Intelligence liaison to Washington in 1949, not only was given access to Venona product but actually visited Arlington Hall. Indeed Philby had barely arrived in Washington before the FBI consulted him about the possible identity of a Soviet spy in the British Embassy codenamed Homer. Quickly recognizing his friend—and fellow KGB agent—Donald Maclean, Philby was able to warn

provide useful comments on the foreign policy of the country. Among them SERGEJ is studying Joseph Barnes and I. Stone who, however, for the time being is avoiding SERGEJ.”¹⁰¹

It wasn't so much Izzy's name as the assertion that he was “avoiding” the TASS correspondent that caught the eye of Robert Lamphere, the FBI man assigned to Arlington Hall. Because in a message sent just a few weeks earlier and also deciphered in 1949, Pravdin's boss complained that “SERGEJ has three times attempted to affect liaison with BLIN* ... [but] each time BLIN declined.”¹⁰² And there was a further message, detailing what transpired when SERGEJ finally succeeded in making contact: BLIN admitted he'd been avoiding a meeting “fearing the consequences.” However BLIN now “gave him to understand that he was not refusing his aid, but [one should] consider that he had three children and did not want to attract the attention of the [FBI].”¹⁰³ In other words, at least according to Pravdin, BLIN was a target for possible recruitment by the KGB who did not immediately send the Russians packing. Could BLIN be I.F. Stone?

Lamphere certainly thought so. In a note dated February 1951, Lamphere wrote that “it would appear ... I.F. Stone is identical with PANCAKE (BLIN).” He gave four reasons for the identification: Stone had been reported as avoiding Pravdin, as had BLIN; in 1944 Stone was Washington correspondent for PM, and BLIN was a correspondent; Stone, like BLIN, had three children; SERGEJ “was considering the recruitment of Barnes and Stone.” His boss “recommended that Barnes not be recruited. The

Moscow and arrange for Maclean and Guy Burgess, also working at the British embassy in Washington, to escape.

* BLIN is the Russian word for Pancake.

inference is quite clear that [the KGB] was not opposed to the recruitment of Stone.”¹⁰⁴ It was probably this note that led to Acheson’s cable.

Not all of Lamphere’s colleagues were convinced. The FBI’s Washington field office, noting that BLIN was described as “earning as much as 1500 dollars a month,” pointed out that “the income of Stone ... was considerably less than that.”¹⁰⁵ The New York field office was even more skeptical, arguing that BLIN “must have been a person whose true pro-Soviet sympathies were not known to the public and his associates.” New York had other objections as well, leading to the conclusion that “I.F. Stone would not appear to be identical with [BLIN]” and suggesting “Ernest K. Lindley* was perhaps a better suspect.” A few days later New York again weighed in with the view that since the evidence “tends to eliminate Stone entirely as a suspect” further investigation would be unwarranted.¹⁰⁶ Here Washington disagreed: “Stone cannot now be eliminated from consideration.”

The FBI was still debating when *La Liberté* docked in New York. Indeed Izzy might not have been so relieved by the customs agent’s welcome if he had seen the memo, sent from the FBI’s Washington field office to the Collector of Customs advising that the FBI “is especially interested in Stone.” Warning “Stone should not be unduly detained or otherwise made aware that the Federal Bureau of Information is interested in him,” the memo

* Lindley, who died in 1979, covered the Roosevelt White House for the New York Herald Tribune before becoming Washington Bureau Chief of Newsweek. FDR’s 1932 speech calling for “bold, persistent experimentation” was written by Lindley, who also served on the National Security planning staff in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Lindley’s lasting claim to fame, though, is probably as the inventor of the “Lindley rule” for deep background briefings

nonetheless “requested that Stone’s baggage be searched.”¹⁰⁷ In August Hoover made up his mind, ordering New York “to conduct a physical surveillance of Stone in order to ... ascertain if he is presently active in Soviet espionage work.”¹⁰⁸ The FBI, which had been keeping tabs on Izzy since the 1930s, started a new file: “I.F. Stone, ESPIONAGE-R.”

Fire Island, with its absence of cars, posed a problem—as did the lack of a telephone at Grand Central Station, the Stone family cottage on Ocean Beach.¹⁰⁹ So, apparently did the Daily Compass: “In view of Stone’s profession and his frequent castigations of the Bureau, it is felt that extreme caution is needed.... The large windows of the Compass office could easily be used to detect a surveillance and perhaps even to take photographs of the surveilling agent.”¹¹⁰ By September, though, when the State Department asked for his passport, Izzy was living on Park Avenue, where “it is felt that a more discreet and productive surveillance can be maintained.”¹¹¹

Was I.F. Stone the journalist known as BLIN? Writing in 1995, when the Venona decrypts were first released, the National Security Agency’s official historian declared “the identification really is not in doubt.”¹¹² But the available evidence, though suggestive, is simply not conclusive.¹¹³ And as even the NSA concedes, “the doubt concerns what happened next.” BLIN appears only one more time in the decrypted cable traffic—a summary of “correspondents who have contacts with military leaders”—when he was mentioned in the context of a report on BUMBLEBEE , the codename used for Walter Lippmann.¹¹⁴

in which the source, and the very fact of the conversation, are off the record but the substance of the conversation is not.

What happened next to BLIN is still unknown. If he was I.F. Stone, as seems entirely possible, his attitude toward the Soviet Union remained unchanged: deep gratitude for the military achievements of the Red Army, admiration for the tenacity of the Russian people, recognition of the reality of Soviet power, ideological sympathy for the professed goals of the revolution, some sympathy also for Soviet security concerns in Europe, yet at the same time a deep distaste for Stalin's dictatorial methods and unwavering scorn—but not hostility—towards his American apologists.¹¹⁵

Might Moscow have viewed Stone as a potential recruit? Of course. The Soviets' grasp of American political reality was as shaky as J. Edgar Hoover's. And though BLIN's tactic of avoidance and excuses, rather than outright refusal, might be merely an imaginative agent's rationale for failure, it is certainly possible to imagine Izzy in the role. At worst, says historian Ronald Radosh, the Venona decrypts prove "merely that one agent in the States says he approached Izzy and that Izzy was interested but was worried about taking the money. Even that could be attributed to [the] agent's desire to impress his boss."¹¹⁶

What happened next to I.F. Stone, however, is amply documented. Agent Canfield's visit to the Daily Compass was just the visible tip of a massive undercover operation. A 30 Day Mail Cover allowing the FBI to open Izzy's mail was begun—and renewed every month for the next two years! FBI agents interviewed his neighbors at the National Press Building, and recruited the concierge at 1133 Park Avenue to report on Izzy's movements. They also interviewed former Post editor Harry

Saylor, who described Izzy as “especially friendly with officials of the Newspaper Guild” and probably a Communist.

From the fall of 1951 onwards Izzy was the subject of daily physical surveillance. Agents followed him on the bus and the subway, they followed him in and out of the Argosy Book Store and Brentano’s, they followed him to the men’s room at Grand Central Station (but waited outside until he finished), followed him to the Automat and Horn & Hardart, and followed Izzy, Esther and Celia to the Trans-Lux theatre, where in March 1952 the Stone family saw “The Young and the Damned,” better known as “Los Olvidados,” by Luis Bunuel.¹¹⁷ The bureau even followed him on a trip to San Francisco, collecting from the hotel operator a list of his calls to such subversive organizations as United Airlines, an auto repair shop, and the Jewish Community Bulletin. The IRS combed through Izzy’s tax returns, looking for Moscow gold.¹¹⁸ FBI agents sifted the Stone family garbage (in bureau-speak, a “trash cover.”) They also tapped the family telephone.¹¹⁹

VI.

Did I.F. Stone, near-sighted and hard of hearing as he was, simply fail to notice the corps of clean-cut young men who now shadowed him virtually every waking hour of the day (though with Sundays off and only from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays)? “I never felt that there were FBI men on the corners watching him,” said Jeremy Stone, at the time a student at the Bronx High School of Science.¹²⁰

But there were. If he’d been born in Pinsk instead of Philadelphia, Izzy would have been denaturalised and

deported.¹²¹ Instead he was put on the FBI's Security Index. "The idea," said a former FBI agent, "was to arrest everyone on the Security Index within twenty four hours or as soon as possible, if there was a national emergency."¹²² Seeking to demonstrate their own anti-Communist credentials in the fight over McCarran's Internal Security Act, a group of Senate liberals, led by Hubert Humphrey, inserted a provision calling for "subversives" to be rounded up and held in concentration camps in the event of a national emergency.¹²³ Now I.F. Stone's name was on the list of potential detainees.

Many on the left seemed to be losing the will to fight. In one early issue of *Monthly Review* every single contributor preferred to remain anonymous.¹²⁴ Mike Blankfort had begun distancing himself from the Communist Party even before the Nazi-Soviet Pact. When his friends Albert Maltz and George Sklar were blacklisted, Blankfort wrote privately to George Sokolsky, the Hearst columnist, explaining his disenchantment.¹²⁵ Called before HUAC in January 1952, Blankfort told Congressman Donald Jackson he'd never been a Party member and therefore had no names to offer. However when asked by Jackson if he had any relatives who were or had been Communists, Blankfort replied "You are referring to my ex-wife Laurie and my cousin Henry—I have no knowledge of either."¹²⁶

Izzy never reproached his old college friend for collaborating with the inquisitors—perhaps because he remembered what it felt like to be afraid. But he didn't follow his example, either. "I.F. Stone, of the *Daily Compass*, made his eleventh speech attacking the Smith Act," the *Herald Tribune* warned its readers. "I have heard of more sensational exposes,"

Izzy replied, noting that actually “I have made 12 speeches in nine cities against the Act since returning from abroad in June.... They were not advertised as violin recitals. I did not pretend to be a lecturer sent out by the National Geographic Society. I did not claim to be a card-carrying Republican.... Except for a few jokes in Yiddish, they were carried on in the English language....”¹²⁷ When, a few months later, Trib columnist Ogden Reid ran Izzy’s picture under the headline “The Red Underground,” Izzy’s next Compass column, also headlined “The Red Underground,” featured Reid’s picture*, captioned “Tribune Reporter,” next to a picture of “Former Tribune Reporter” Karl Marx.¹²⁸

Far from signalling a retreat, Izzy’s brush with the passport office seems to have made him more pugnacious. Though he never mentioned the incident in his column, where he was too busy attacking the China Lobby, by the end of September he’d opened a new front in the fight against what, refusing the epithet favored by Schlesinger and the ADA, he insisted on calling “Trumanism.” Shortly after the Supreme Court voted to uphold the convictions in the first Smith Act trial Izzy and a group of friends gathered at Ted Thackrey’s apartment. Conversation turned to the ACLU, which since expelling Elizabeth Gurley Flynn had become more and more of a bystander to the suppression of dissent, seemingly content to remain on the sidelines as passports were seized, writers and academics subpoenaed, and

* Not that Reid was in danger of being blacklisted. His grandfather, Whitelaw Reid, wrested the New York Tribune away from founder Horace Greeley; his father, Ogden Mills Reid, merged the paper with James Gordon Bennett’s Herald; his mother, Helen Rogers Reid, was the Trib’s current publisher, and his brother, Whitelaw Reid II, was the paper’s editor.

wires tapped. Izzy was also deeply suspicious of Morris Ernst, the ACLU co-counsel who acted as J. Edgar Hoover's personal attorney.¹²⁹

"The question," recalled James Imbrie, a retired banker present that evening, "was whether a new organization was needed ... with guts enough to fight the evils of McCarthyism without fear of being sullied by the label 'pro-Communist'." Most of the group were opposed, but Imbrie, Izzy and Henry Pratt Fairchild, an emeritus professor at New York University, favored immediate action. Joined by Paul Lehmann, a professor at the Princeton Theological Seminary, E. Franklin Frazier, chair of the sociology department at Howard University, and H.H. Wilson, professor of politics at Princeton, they founded the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee. Besides taking on the cases—and causes—shunned by the ACLU, the ECLC was, from the very beginning, an organization willing to take a more aggressive approach. Clark Foreman, who'd had his own passport seized earlier that year, was hired as director.¹³⁰

"The ACLU did not take test cases all the way to the Supreme Court," said Edith Tiger, who came with Foreman from the Progressive Party and worked as his assistant. "Test cases were expensive. You had to stay with it ... [but] Izzy felt this had to be done. He said, 'We'll do one of each kind of case.' Izzy didn't want it to come out of the left. This was a group of New Dealers."¹³¹ They were also men who, either retired or with tenure, had little to fear from any blacklist.

"Before we got underway Izzy said to me, very quietly, 'Do you know what you're getting into?'," recalled Paul Lehmann. "I had been a member of the Fellowship of Socialist Christians"—a

group founded by Reinhold Niebuhr. The ECLC's lack of a Leninist past, however, was no deterrent to the paladins of the newly-revived American Committee for Cultural Freedom. Though bitterly divided themselves on whether McCarthy or Stalin posed a greater present danger to American culture, the prospect of a common enemy on the left acted as a tonic.¹³² No sooner had the ECLC announced its first public meeting than Lehmann and his fellow sponsors received letters urging them to withdraw. When they refused the ACCF publicly denounced them, not as Communists, or even fellow-travelers, but as "dupes."¹³³

As the only ECLC board member not protected by wealth or tenure, the pressures on Izzy were intense. He must also have been aware that the Compass itself was in desperate straits. Yet it was as if something inside, an internal censor weighing his words, calculating for prudence or personal advantage, had shaken loose. His attacks blazed with new ferocity: Robert Morris, chief counsel to the McCarran committee, was not just "the man who protects" the perjurer Budenz, but a master of "the ethics of the knife in the back."¹³⁴ Even to his friends, he seemed suddenly determined to speak his mind: "I was never persuaded by the campaign on behalf of the Rosenbergs.... I have never been persuaded that the case was a frame-up." (He did go on to call the death sentence "barbaric, savage, and way out of line with justice.")¹³⁵

When the government sent Dashiell Hammett to jail for refusing to turn over the names of donors to the Civil Rights Congress bail fund, Izzy leapt to his defense: "If you pick a fight with a midget in a bar-room you ought to be able to finish it

without getting your friends to hold his hands behind his back while you kneel down to give him an uppercut.”¹³⁶ But when the novelist asked him to speak at a rally for V.J. Jerome, the Party’s cultural commissar and a defendant in the second round of Smith Act trials, Izzy declined: “I’d feel like a stultified ass to speak at a meeting for Jerome without making clear my own sharp differences with the dogmatic, Talmudic and dictatorial mentality he represents.”¹³⁷

Nothing symbolizes Izzy’s newfound independence, his determination not just to stay and fight but to speak his mind, as his response to the George Polk investigation. Although Greece’s rightist government soon announced a solution to his friend’s murder—Gregory Staktopoulos, a Reuters stringer, confessed that he’d killed the CBS correspondent on behalf of “the Greek Communist Party, in order to throw the blame of the murder to the Right, thus to defame Greece abroad and to stop the application of the Marshall Plan”—Izzy was dubious. “Two months in solitary confinement may make a man tell the truth,” he’d written at the time, “or it may make him say anything his jailers want him to say. This is one of the reasons for *habeas corpus*. That right does not exist in Greece.”¹³⁸ Others shared Izzy’s skepticism. Howard K. Smith, the CBS correspondent who’d spent the most time in Greece after Polk, cabled that he thought it “highly improbable” the Greek left would kill Polk, asking the network to mount its own investigation with him in charge.¹³⁹

Instead two separate press groups formed. The Newsmen’s Commission to Investigate the Murder of George Polk, organized by the New York Newspaper Guild, called for “a full investigation ... by a qualified team of correspondents and government

officials.” Though backed by Polk’s family, the Newsmen’s Commission had little clout and less money. Its sole staff member, Shana Ager*, daughter of PM film critic Cecelia Ager, was paid \$35 a week. The Overseas Writers Special Committee to Inquire into the Murder of George Polk, on the other hand, was a first-class operation. Chaired by Walter Lippmann, and backed by Washington Post publisher Eugene Meyer, who raised over \$40,000, the committee included Marquis Childs, James Reston of the New York Times, Elmer Davis of ABC, Eric Sevareid of CBS, and Ernest K. Lindley, who asked his friend William “Wild Bill” Donovan, recently resigned as head of the OSS, to serve as counsel. CBS contributed \$10,000 and the services of Rome correspondent Winston Burdett, who flew to Athens to monitor the trial.¹⁴⁰

These, Lippmann boasted, were “men whose profession it is to have few illusions.” And when, in July 1952, the Lippmann committee finally issued its report concluding that Staktopolous “received a fair trial” most American journalists were happy to go along. Not I.F. Stone. In a devastating five-part series in the Compass Izzy denounced the Lippmann report as a “feeble bit of whitewash” written by men “willing to hold back vital information rather than go to bat ... on behalf of their dead colleague.” It would be years before Staktopoulos recanted his confession, decades before evidence of a frame-up would come to light, and decades more before the full extent of collusion between Lippman, Donovan, and the State Department would become known. That anyone was still paying attention, after so

* Better known in later life as Shana Alexander.

many years, must in large measure be due to Izzy's furious indictment of what he termed "a double crime. One was the murder of the man whose body was found floating in Salonika Bay.... The other was the success of the Greek and American governments in making an accomplice of this bunch of journalistic stuffed shirts."¹⁴¹

Izzy wasn't the only voice crying "Whitewash!" John Donovan, Polk's opposite number at NBC, was fired by the network after refusing to resign from the Newsmen's Commission. Protests by Polk's cousin, Daily News reporter William Price, prompted the FBI to open a file on him; a few years later Price was refused a passport. Neither man ever worked in mainstream journalism again.¹⁴²

And I.F. Stone? For Izzy the fall of 1952 was a frenzy of activity—and of indecision. In Boston he raised funds for Dirk Struik, the MIT mathematician indicted on state sedition charges.* In the Bronx he appeared with Rep. Vito Marcantonio at a rally honoring Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and three other women Smith Act defendants. In San Francisco he hung out with Vincent Hallinan, prosperous lawyer turned Progressive Party candidate for President. And in Brooklyn he defended Mildred Flacks, a first grade teacher at P.S. 35 in Bedford-Stuyvesant fired for refusing to answer questions about her political beliefs: "Are there hysterics so idiotic they believe she managed to inject

* Struik, who died in 2000 at the age of 106, was suspended from teaching by MIT upon his indictment, but reinstated in 1956 after the charges were dismissed without trial owing to a U.S. Supreme Court ruling overturning state sedition laws. His Concise History of Mathematics is still in print and used as a textbook throughout the world; Struik also wrote an introduction to the International Publications edition of Marx's Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts.

Marxism-Leninism into minds grappling with alphabet blocks and how-to-do-sums-without-fingers?"¹⁴³

"Watching the witch hunt in the schools," he wrote a few days later, "is like watching a particularly revolting kind of murder, the kind in which a man is beaten to death before the eyes of a crowd too cowardly to interfere."¹⁴⁴ Yet even on this topic indignation was not the only string in his bow. When Yale University issued a stirring defense of academic freedom Izzy applauded. But he also allowed a sneaking admiration for the "brash young right-winger, William F. Buckley, Jr." whose screed God and Man at Yale prompted the University's self-examination. Calling Buckley "an able and engaging fellow, with a sharp eye for liberalistic bunkum," Izzy noted Buckley's defense of "free enterprise 'until something better comes along.' The man flatly denies he's a Communist, of course, but...."¹⁴⁵ With America gripped by an ice age of fear and political paralysis Izzy was grateful for non-conformity wherever he found it.

His increasing impatience with orthodoxy made the 1952 election especially difficult for Izzy. The Democrats disgusted him: "I am sick and tired of the Trumanites, with their fake liberalism. The politicians among them live as unscrupulously on war hysteria as the cheap moochers among them live on the graft they get from selling favors.... I do not think in this situation the Democrats are a lesser evil. In some ways I think the Democrats in their present stage are worse."¹⁴⁶ Not that he expected better from the Republicans. Eisenhower he'd always admired; he also felt the former soldier would be less easily led by his generals. But Nixon was another matter--"a young man who symbolizes a

slick kind of Arrow-collar-ad Fascism, with a cynical contempt for the masses behind the histrionics of That Broadcast.*”¹⁴⁷

And the Progressives? The party he’d been willingly duped by in 1948 still “gives the isolated few who believe in peace and liberty a sense of not being alone. Its candidates and organization, whatever their shortcomings, deserve support.”¹⁴⁸ Coming from a man who’d been accused of “indulging in some plain and fancy red baiting” by Progressive Party secretary C.B. Baldwin, this was generous.¹⁴⁹ But it stopped well short of an endorsement. The world had changed a great deal since Henry Wallace rallied his “Gideon’s Army.” The Progressives, felt Stone, had not: “It would be good for some Progressive Party people to try and remember that a man who wants peace is an ally. Period. It is not necessary to sell him a subscription to Pravda.”¹⁵⁰

Yet still he struggled. On succeeding days Izzy lauded the Democrats as the “Little Man’s Party” and despaired because the “Dead Past Still Rules Dems” when it came to civil rights.¹⁵¹ What finally got Izzy off the fence—and off his high horse of disdain for the Democrats—was the sense that, nationally, “this is one election year when my vote and voice will count.... I am not going to run the risk of electing Eisenhower and Nixon by voting” Progressive. “This is, I realize, inconsistent with a great deal I have written,” he admitted, “but that doesn’t worry me either.”¹⁵²

Consistency was the least of his troubles. His all-out for Adlai put him at odds not only with American Communists—Party polemicist Alan Max spent three issues of the Daily Worker putting Izzy through the dialectical wringer—but

*Nixon’s famous ‘Checkers speech’ on September 23, 1952 defending himself from charges of financial impropriety.

also brought rebukes from old friends like Vito Marcantonio, whose attacks ran across the page from Izzy's column in the Compass. Izzy's announcement that the Progressive Party was now a dangerous distraction must have also made for a few awkward moments at the Lamont for Senate campaign headquarters. The son of Morgan partner Thomas Lamont—who also happened to hold a mortgage on the Daily Compass machinery, plant and fixtures—was running in New York on the American Labor and Progressive Party lines.* His campaign manager: I.F. Stone.¹⁵³

On November 5, 1952 it was all over. Stevenson, who lost the election by nearly 7 million votes, carried just 9 states. The Progressives, with a bare 140,000 votes, were destroyed as a party. Despite the best efforts of his campaign manager, who pronounced the candidate “firmly in [the] great Western libertarian tradition” Corliss Lamont wrote Virginia Durr his result in New York “fell very far beneath what I had hoped for.”¹⁵⁴ Like its star columnist, the Compass supported Stevenson. The paper itself shut its doors two days earlier. Lamont had foreclosed.¹⁵⁵

That April Izzy had written to Freda Kirchwey offering her a column on the Compass. Kirchwey declined. Now he wrote again, offering his services to the Nation. When Kirchwey failed to respond, he followed up with a telegram, but Kirchwey “wouldn't say yes, she wouldn't say no.” Other editors had no

* As a mainstay of the Congress of Soviet-American Friendship, Corliss Lamont was the architect of the infamous letter proclaiming—on the eve of the Nazi-Soviet pact—the impossibility of any rapprochement between Fascism and Communism.

hesitation turning Izzy down, making him feel like some kind of “ideological Typhoid Mary.”¹⁵⁶

“My father had a recurrent nightmare,” Jeremy Stone remembered. In the dream, some “they”--faceless and nameless—“just wouldn’t let him work.”¹⁵⁷ One winter afternoon after the paper closed he sat at his old desk off the now empty city room on the third floor of the Compass building, formerly the Star building and before that the PM building, watching the snow fall on the corner of Hudson and Duane streets. He had gone from the inner councils of the New Deal to the outer darkness of American politics. No daily newspaper in America would hire him. He was 44 years old. He began to type: “I feel for the moment like a ghost.”¹⁵⁸

Epilogue

Of course I.F. Stone didn't really vanish. And though he may have lost his reading public, his political activity hardly slackened. Within days of the Compass closing Izzy spoke at a reception for Harry Bridges. The following day he spoke to the Liberal Citizens of Massachusetts. Indeed thanks to the FBI's daily surveillance, which continued until at least the autumn of 1954, we have a remarkably detailed record of Stone's actions during this period. And yet there remain gaps. In The Secret Defector, novelist Clancy Sigal's thinly disguised memoir, the former union organizer refers to "a Committee of Correspondence ... whereby we kept in touch as we imagined Paul Revere and Sam Adams did in 1776. A scribbled address, a vague contact, or merely a hunch and I'd parachute into the least likely places: Walla Walla, North Platte, Mobile, Knoxville, Conneaut, Troy—anywhere readers of I.F. Stone's Weekly, Dissent, or Monthly Review were prepared to give me a cot for the night."¹ In a recent interview Sigal confirmed that Stone had been a key contact on this latter-day underground railroad. Yet there is no mention of anything like it in Stone's entire FBI file.

And of course Stone wasn't out of print for very long. In January 1953 the first issue of I.F. Stone's Weekly appeared in subscribers' mailboxes. At first they were a very select—and in those days either very brave or already notorious—group, numbering about 5,000. But as early as September 1953 the Weekly already showed an small operating profit. Inspired partly

by George Seldes's radical scandal sheet In Fact and partly by what, in later years Stone called "*eyn breira*"—a Hebrew phrase meaning "no alternative"—the Weekly offered Stone a chance at survival through the American ice age. For his readers, the publication was also a beacon—and in many cases, a lifeline. In the very first issue, more than a year before Edward R. Murrow uttered a word of criticism, under the headline "Who Will Watch This Watchman?," Stone warned: "The Senator who is now the chairman of the Senate's key watchdog committee is the Senator who most needs watching." Describing McCarthy as "a brawler who pays no attention to the rules, Queensbury or otherwise," Stone pulled no punches in denouncing "the most brazen operator to appear in the U.S. Senate since the days of Huey Long."

Throughout the 1950s wherever Americans stood up to claim their rights I.F. Stone was there. By June 1955 his activities—on behalf of the ECLC, or the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, or refugees from Nazism now threatened with deportation—were enough of an irritant to the inquisitors that Counter-Attack, the blacklists' house journal, devoted an entire issue to "unmasking" I.F. Stone, who later remarked: "Like Gypsy Rose Lee, I was taking it off every week in public. There was nothing left to expose."² At the time, though, the isolation cut very deep. Richard Dudman had been a friend since the two reporters met in a Displaced Persons camp after the war. Sent to Washington for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch in 1953, Dudman remembered "a party at our house in Cleveland Park. There were several other people, including a guy who was with the government. Our other friend followed me into the kitchen, and

said: 'How could you invite me to your house the same time as I.F. Stone!' ”³ At first, the Weekly rented an office on East Capitol street. Stone gave it up when he realised that in three years “not a single person came to the door who was not a maintenance man or a mailman.”

In 1956, prompted in part by reports of Khrushchev's secret speech to the Twentieth Party Congress denouncing Stalin's crimes, Stone finally visited the Soviet Union. He had never believed in the myth of a worker's paradise, and his active sympathy for the Soviet cause ended in September 1939, but he was still shocked by the depths to which Soviet Communism had sunk. Comparing himself to “a swimmer under water who must rise to the surface or his lungs will burst,” he declared: “Whatever the consequences, I have to say what I really feel after seeing the Soviet Union and carefully studying the statements of its leading officials. This is not a good society and it is not led by honest men.”⁴ His conclusion that even under Khrushchev “nothing has happened in Russia to justify cooperation abroad between the independent left and the Communists” stunned his readers, 400 of whom canceled their subscriptions.

In order to travel he had to apply for a passport, which was duly granted, though only after he signed an affidavit solemnly swearing “I am not and never have been a member of the Communist Party or of the Communist Political Association.” Yet he was still a long way from the mainstream. That same year he tried to rejoin the National Press Club. He needed 25 co-sponsors (journalists willing to endorse his candidacy). He got nine.

Like his friend Zero Mostel, I.F. Stone never stopped working. But until the early 1960s his readership was more of an

affinity group than an audience. Civil rights was one factor in ending Stone's isolation. Cuba was another. On his first visit to the island, in the summer of 1960, he was swept off his feet by the "extraordinary ... beauty ... simplicity and sobriety" of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, who greeted the journalist warmly as "a fellow rebel against Yanqui Imperialism." Stone urged Washington not to push the country into the Soviet camp, but to recognize that Castro could be "our Tito." When he returned in January 1963 the romance had cooled somewhat—perhaps because Stone, who arrived bearing a gift of medical supplies purchased in Mexico City, was immediately arrested and spent his first night in jail. But his continuing support for students who wanted to travel to Cuba (in defiance of U.S. law) to make up their own minds brought him into contact with Tom Hayden, Al Haber, and Sandra Cason—who in a few months, in an old United Auto Workers summer camp in Port Huron, Michigan, would be among the founders of Students for a Democratic Society. By the time the Vietnam War came along Stone's painstaking analysis of the Gulf of Tonkin incidents—which began "The American government and the American press have kept the full truth about the Tonkin Bay incidents from the American public."—was passed eagerly from hand to hand by a whole new generation of readers.⁵

The Vietnam War plucked I.F. Stone from the dustbin of history and planted him in the very front ranks of American activism. He may have been wrong about Korea, but read in the light of Lyndon Johnson's monumental mendacity Stone's mistakes seemed more like prophecies. And as the war dragged on Izzy's prestige—and his audience—increased. Marcus Raskin,

who as a Kennedy adviser was warned off associating with “that Communist Izzy Stone” watched bemusedly as his dangerous friend was invited to the Johnson White House.⁶ In 1966, Izzy and Esther went to the Lippmann lawn party. By 1967, his rehabilitation was sufficiently advanced for Izzy to be interviewed on NBC’s Today program—his first appearance on national television since the Truman era. Two years later a single appearance on the Dick Cavett Show nets the Weekly 5000 new subscribers, bringing the total to above 70,000. In 1970 Stone receives the George Polk Award, his first mainstream honor since his PM series “Underground to Palestine” won a Newspaper Guild award in 1947. In 1973 the Canadian filmmaker Jerry Bruck’s documentary I.F. Stone’s Weekly won the special jury prize at the Cannes film festival.

By then the film’s subject was purely historical. The Weekly (which owing to Izzy’s frail health had become a bi-weekly) ceased publication in December 1971. But the editor in chief was far from ready for retirement. In addition to becoming a contributing editor at the New York Review of Books (who acquired the Weekly’s subscription lists) and a columnist for the Nation Izzy embarked on a project to teach himself the ancient Greek he’d had to give up when he dropped out of college a half century earlier. His lifelong interest in freedom of speech soon draws him to Plato’s “Apology of Socrates,” and, rushing in where classicists fear to tread in 1988 he publishes The Trial of Socrates. Combining textual criticism, historical detective work and hard-nosed political analysis, Stone’s depiction of Socrates as an aristocratic snob who encouraged the overthrow of Athenian democracy is predictably controversial, but the book’s success as

a headline-making bestseller is an unexpected triumph. I.F. Stone died on June 18, 1989.

Introduction: The Vanishing of I.F. Stone

¹J.G.A. Pocock, Politics, Language and Time, (London: Methuen, 1972), p. 195.

²Ibid., p.14.

³Ellen W. Schrecker, No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) , p. 25.

Chapter 1: Feinstein's Progress

¹ Louis Stone and Marcus Stone, The Family (Where and When It Began). unpublished mss; "I.F. Stone," Federal Bureau of Investigation, Headquarters File 100-37078, Document 60, p. 2.; interview with Louis Stone, March 13, 1991.

²Interview with Louis Stone, March 13, 1991.

³Ibid. Judah Feinstein's wife was Rachel Tonkonogy, whose first cousin, Abraham Tonkonogy, was the grandfather of the publisher George Delacorte, who was born George Tokonogy, and took his wife's name.

⁴"Philadelphia" in Henry James, The American Scene (Bloomington, Ind., 1968), p. 286.

⁵John Lukacs, Philadelphia: Patricians & Philistines, 1900-1950, (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1980), pp. x-1.

⁶Caroline Golab, "The Immigrant and the City: Poles Italians and Jews in Philadelphia, 1870-1920." in Allen F. Davis and Mark H. Haller, eds., The Peoples of Philadelphia: A History of Ethnic Groups and Lower-Class Life, 1790-1940 (Philadelphia: Temple U. Press, 1973), pp. 204-205.

⁷Edward P. Johanningsmeier, Forging American Communism: The Life of William Z. Foster. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

⁸Maxwell Whiteman, "Philadelphia's Jewish Neighborhoods," in Davis and Haller, op. cit. .

⁹Interview with Louis Stone, March 13, 1991.

¹⁰Andrew Patner, I.F. Stone: A Portrait, (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), p.117.

¹¹Interview with Jeremy Stone, November 20, 1991.

¹²Henry Clay Fox, ed., Memoirs of Wayne County and the City of Richmond Indiana, (Madison: Western Historical Association, 1912), pp. 519-526; Richmond Directory, (Indianapolis: R.L. Polk & Co., 1912), p.143.

¹³Lance Jonathan Sussman, The Emergence of a Jewish Community in Richmond, Indiana, (Fort Wayne: The Indiana Jewish Historical Society, 1981), p. 52.

¹⁴Douglas B. Rauschenberger and Katherine Mansfield Tassini, Lost Haddonfield (Haddonfield: The Historical Society of Haddonfield, 1989).

¹⁵Marcus Stone, Max (unpublished mss.)

¹⁶Louis Stone and Marcus Stone, The Family (Where and When It Began).

¹⁷Marcus Stone, Max.

¹⁸Ibid.; Interview with Isador Rosenthal, March 3, 1994. Letter to DDG from Douglas Rauschenberger, December 7, 1994.

¹⁹Interview with Margaret Farrington, November 25, 1991; Interview with I. Edward Cutler, March 3, 1994; The Public Press, (Haddonfield, NJ) Thursday July 26, 1923.

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- ²⁰Interview with Louis Stone; Jeffrey M. Dorwart and Philip English Mackey, Camden County, New Jersey 1616-1976: A Narrative History (Camden: Camden County Cultural and Heritage Commission, 1976); Louis Stone and Marcus Stone, *op. cit.*
- ²¹Dick Polman, "Outcasts and icons," Philadelphia Inquirer, January 28, 1968, C1; I.F. Stone, The Truman Era (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1953), pp. 100-101; Interview with Margaret Farrington.
- ²²*Ibid.*; Interview with Palmer Holloway, November 23, 1992.
- ²³John Greenya, "Portrait of a Man Reading," The Washington Post Book World, February 14, 1971, p. 2.
- ²⁴IFS to a Mr. Erickson, May 3, 1968; Greenya, *op. cit.*
- ²⁵Greenya, *op. cit.*; Malcolm Cowley, "Books That Changed Our Minds," New Republic 95 (December 21, 1938), 205-206; Jack London, Martin Eden, (New York: The Library of America, 1982), p. 849.
- ²⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 849, 650.
- ²⁷Peter Kropotkin, The Conquest of Bread and Other Writings (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 34.
- ²⁸Jerry Buckley, "I.F. Stone: Journalist and Prophet." B.A. honors thesis, Fordham University, 1977.
- ²⁹Kropotkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.
- ³⁰See any of Stone's articles (writing as Abelard Stone) in Modern Monthly, particularly "Roosevelt Moves Toward Fascism," Modern Monthly VII:5 (June 1933), pp. 261-274.
- ³¹Greenya, *op. cit.*; The Shield (Haddonfield High School, 1924)
- ³²I.F. Stone, "I.F. Stone on Bertrand Russell on Bertrand Russell," Ramparts April 1970, pp. 64-73.
- ³³Louis Stone and Marcus Stone, *op. cit.* ; Marcus Stone, *op. cit.* ; Interview with Isador Rosenthal.
- ³⁴Louis Stone and Marcus Stone, *op. cit.* ; Marcus Stone, *op. cit.* ; IFS eulogy for Ithamar Feinstein, 1934, reproduced in Your Family Flyer (a Feinstein family newsletter) I:2 (October 25, 1989).
- ³⁵*Ibid.*, IV:3; Patner, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
- ³⁶*Ibid.*; Marcus Stone, *op. cit.* ; Louis Stone and Marcus Stone, *op. cit.* .
- ³⁷Interview with Louis Stone; Malcolm Cowley, *op. cit.*; Ronald Steel, Walter Lippmann and the American Century, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980), p. 75.
- ³⁸Robert Cottrell, Izzy: A Biography of I.F. Stone, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), p. 24; Interview with Louis Stone; I.F. Stone, "Notes on Closing, But Not in Farewell," I.F. Stone's Weekly (hereafter Weekly) XIX:21-22 (December 14, 1971), 1.
- ³⁹The Progress (Haddonfield, New Jersey) I:1 (February, 1922); Interview with Margaret Farrington.
- ⁴⁰The Progress I:2 (March, 1922); Interview with Palmer Holloway, November 23, 1992; Pages From The Nation (New York, 1928), pp. 10, 51; Keynes quoted in Steel, *op. cit.*, p. 164.
- ⁴¹I.F. Stone interviewed by Graydon Forrer and Elise Glickman, 1979; Weekly III:36 (October 3, 1955), p.2; The Progress I:3 (April, 1922).
- ⁴²*Ibid.*; Marcus Stone, *op. cit.*
- ⁴³Isadore Feinstein Haddonfield High School transcript; Greenya, *op. cit.*; Interview with Karl Meyer; Interview with Margaret Farrington.

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- ⁴⁴Louis Stone and Marcus Stone, *op. cit.* ; Interview with Louis Stone; Interview with Jill Stern, December 9, 1992.
- ⁴⁵J. David Stern, *Memoirs of a Maverick Publisher*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962), pp. 113, 127.
- ⁴⁶Bernard Feinstein deeds on file in Camden County (NJ) Courthouse.
- ⁴⁷Stern, *op. cit.*, p.9; Patner, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-34. The byline Isadore Feinstein does not appear in the *Camden Courier* during 1923.
- ⁴⁸Interview with Jill Stern.
- ⁴⁹"The Jewish Communities of Philadelphia and Boston" by E. Digby Baltzell, Allen Glicksman and Jacqueline Litt, in Murray Friedman, ed., *Jewish Life in Philadelphia: 1830-1940*, (Philadelphia: Ishi Publications, 1983), p. 310; Michael Blankfort, Draft Autobiography, Blankfort collection (hereafter MB MSS), Box 59, folder 4.
- ⁵⁰*Ibid.*; Isadore Feinstein transcript, The University of Pennsylvania.
- ⁵¹Blankfort, *loc. cit.*; Robinson Jeffers, *The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*, (New York: Random House, 1937), pp. 89-182.
- ⁵²Blankfort, *loc. cit.*
- ⁵³*Ibid.*; Interview with Mildred Traube, August 27, 1991; Interview with Nathalie Bodanskaya Gorman, November 5, 1991.
- ⁵⁴Interview with Janet Neschis, March 21, 1995; "Pirandello a Disappointment," *Camden Courier*, July 2, 1926; *Camden Morning Post*, July 2, 1926. p.1; IFS to Michael Blankfort, July 21, 1926, MB MSS, Box 83, Folder 3.
- ⁵⁵Edward Abrahams, *The Lyrical Left* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1986), pp. 166-167.
- ⁵⁶Interview with Louis Stone; Malcolm Cowley, *Exile's Return* (New York: Viking Press, 1962), p. 28 ; Isadore Feinstein, *Junto*, (May 1928), pp. 24-28.
- ⁵⁷Interview with Helen Goldberg Menin, June 1992.
- ⁵⁸Interview with Jean Boudin, March 27, 1991; Interview with Eleanor Milgram Schneider, June 4, 1992.
- ⁵⁹IFS to Esther Roisman, May 17, 1927.
- ⁶⁰IFS to Michael Blankfort, July 21, 1926; Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell To Arms* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. 196; G. Bernard Shaw, Preface to *Getting Married*, (London: Constable and Company, 1911), p. 148.
- ⁶¹IFS to Esther Roisman, May 17, 1927; Interview with Sidney Elliott Cohn, August 23, 1991; Janet Neschis, March 21, 1995.
- ⁶²Robert Gershon, interview with I.F. Stone, December 29, 1982.
- ⁶³I.F.Stone, "Notes on Closing...."
- ⁶⁴Gardner Jackson Oral History, Columbia University Oral History Collection, p. 115; David Felix, *Protest: Sacco-Vanzetti and the Intellectuals* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965), pp. 212-213.
- ⁶⁵Robert Strauss Feuerlicht, *Justice Crucified: The Story of Sacco and Vanzetti* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977), pp. vii-ix; Louis Joughin and Edmund Morgan, *The Legacy of Sacco and Vanzetti*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), pp. 238, 274; Felix, *loc. cit.*
- ⁶⁶Cottrell, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31. Louis Stone told Cottrell that Izzy never made it out of Camden. Bernard, he said, headed his son off at the ferry landing. Izzy told the same interviewer that he did leave town, but that when he stopped in to visit a relative in New York he learned of the reprieve and decided to continue north to stay with a friend who lived in Bellows Falls, Vermont. Neither of these accounts are wholly satisfactory. For one thing, the first strong indication that there would be a reprieve came less than two hours

before midnight on the 10th—the time originally scheduled for the executions (Felix, 213). Anyone hoping to reach Boston in time would have already left New York. Louis Stone told this writer about his brother's sojourn in Vermont, but couldn't recall his route. Given the importance Stone obviously attached to the incident, and the fact that a half century later he still remembered the name of his Vermont friend, I'm inclined to believe he made it to New England.

⁶⁷Jackson, *loc. cit.*, p. 242; IFS to Esther Roisman, May 17, 1927.

⁶⁸Seymour Michael Blankfort, "A Final Appeal," in Lucia Trent and Ralph Cheyney, *America Arraigned* (New York: Dean, 1928), p.48. Allen Ginsburg's father Louis was also a contributor.

⁶⁹Malcolm Cowley, "For St. Bartholomew's Day," *Nation* 127:175 (August 22, 1928); Cowley, "Echoes of a Crime," *New Republic*, 134:79 (August 28, 1935).

⁷⁰The expression is from I.F. Stone, "In Defense of the Campus Rebels," *Weekly* XVII:10 (May 19, 1969), p.1.

⁷¹John Dos Passos, *USA: The Big Money*, (NY: Harcourt Brace, 1961), pp. 521-522.

Chapter 2: Publisher's Apprentice

¹William G. Shepherd, "The Price of Liquor," *Collier's*, (December 1, 1928), pp. 8-41.

²Thomas H. Coode and John F. Bauman, *People, Poverty and Politics: Pennsylvanians during the Great Depression*. (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1981), p. 176; Bonnie Fox Schwartz, "Unemployment Relief in Philadelphia, 1930-1932: A Study of the Depression's Impact on Voluntarism," in Bernard Sternsher, ed., *Hitting Home: The Great Depression in Town and Country*, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1970, 1989), p. 65.

³Schwartz, *op. cit.*, p. 64; Philip Scranton, *Figured Tapestry: Production, markets, and power in Philadelphia textiles, 1885-1941*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 11.

⁴Coode and Bauman, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-53.

⁵Henry Tetlow, "Philadelphia Acquires a Good Newspaper," *The American Mercury*, 28 (February 1933): 185-87.

⁶Russell Davenport, *Fortune* XIII:6 (June 1936), p. 186.

⁷Schwartz, *op. cit.*

⁸IFS to Esther Roisman, May 17, 1927; Isadore Feinstein transcript.

⁹Robert Cottrell, Interview with I.F. Stone, October 16, 1981.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²I.F.Stone, "Notes on Closing...."

¹³Daniel Leab, *A Union of Individuals: The Formation of the American Newspaper Guild, 1933-1936*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970) p. 36.

¹⁴Jerry Buckley, "I.F. Stone: Journalist and Prophet," B.A. honors thesis, Fordham University, 1977, p. 14.

¹⁵*Junto*, (May 1928), pp. 2-4; Michael Blankfort to Mr. Lyle, September 9, 1972. MB MSS. In the same letter Blankfort goes on to say that "Auerbach disappeared into the radical movement ... and I don't know what happened to him." According to Harvey Klehr (*The Heyday of American Communism*, pp.

422-423) after leaving Penn Auerbach adopted the Party name of Jim Allen, later becoming editor of the Southern Worker.

¹⁶IFS to Esther Roisman, May 17, 1927.

¹⁷"Pepito the Clown Stars on Fox Bill," Camden Evening Courier, July 17, 1928.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹" 'Siegfried' Opens at Little Theatre," Evening Courier, October 9, 1928

²⁰H.L. Mencken, The American Scene: A Reader, (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), p. 257.

²¹"Civic Theatre Opens in Play by Tchekoff," Evening Courier, April 8, 1930.

²²"Movie Dramatizes Undersea Disaster," Evening Courier, November 6, 1928.

²³"Max, Have Moissil," Evening Courier, December 11, 1928

²⁴"Word or Flesh," Evening Courier, December 4, 1928.

²⁵"Better Than Ben Jonson," Evening Courier, December 18, 1928.

²⁶"To Be Witty or to Be Pure," Evening Courier, November 20, 1928.

²⁷"Another Gangster Finds Salvation," Evening Courier, October

²⁸"Who Might Doris Vinton Be?," Evening Courier, December 18, 1928; Walter Hart to Michael Blankfort, not dated, MB MSS.

²⁹"Editorial Note" The American Mercury 29 (May 1933): xxiv .

³⁰David A. Shannon, The Socialist Party of America: A History, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), p. 187; Interview with Ben Menin, June, 1992.

³¹Irving Howe, Socialism and America, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), pp. 3-4, 49-50.

³²Ibid.; I.F.Stone, "Notes on Closing...." He was not, however, the youngest state official in the party. That distinction probably belonged to David George, an 18-year-old who served as secretary of the Virginia party in 1928 after no one else could be found to take the job. (Shannon, p. 200)

³³Roy Rosenzweig, " 'Socialism in Our Time': The Socialist Party and the Unemployed, 1929-1936, Labor History 20 (1979), pp. 488-489.

³⁴Robert Cottrell, loc. cit.

³⁵See Lawrence Goodwyn, The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978, passim, for a particularly enlightening discussion of the relationship between politics and "movement culture".

³⁶Norman Thomas, "The Thirties in America as a Socialist Recalls Them" in Rita James Simon, ed. The Thirties: Essays on social and political movements of a decade, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1967), p. 115.

³⁷Robert Cottrell, loc. cit.

³⁸Robert Gershon, interview with I.F. Stone, December 29, 1982.

³⁹Floyd Dell, The Liberator, III (Jan. 1920), p. 46

⁴⁰Margaret Brenman-Gibson, Clifford Odets: American Playwright, (New York: Athenenum, 1981), pp. 122-123; Interview with Jean Boudin, March 27, 1991.

⁴¹Eric A. Gordon, Mark the Music: The Life and Work of Marc Blitzstein, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), pp. 24, 33.

⁴²Murray Friedman, "Introduction," in Friedman, ed., Jewish Life in Philadelphia: 1830-1940, (Philadelphia: Ishi Publications, 1983), pp. 21-22.

⁴³Interview with Samuel Grafton, April 25, 1991.

⁴⁴Interview with Jean Boudin.

⁴⁵John P. Diggins, Mussolini and Fascism: The View from America, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 141.

⁴⁶Patner, op. cit., p. 37; Diggins, op. cit., 40.

⁴⁷Philadelphia Jewish Exponent, July 12, 1929, p. 12.

⁴⁸Interview with Jean Boudin.

⁴⁹Bernard Feinstein deeds.

⁵⁰Jeffrey M. Dorwart and Philip English Mackey, Camden County, New Jersey 1616-1976: A Narrative History (Camden: Camden County Cultural and Heritage Commission, 1976), pp. 217-220.

⁵¹John F. Bauman and Thomas H. Coode, In the Eye of the Great Depression: New Deal Reporters and the Agony of the American People, (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1988), p. 42.

⁵²Robert Cottrell, *loc. cit.*

⁵³Walter Hart to Michael Blankfort, April 1929, Blankfort MSS.

⁵⁴George Seldes, The Years of the Locust: America 1929-1932, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1933 and 1973), p. 42

⁵⁵"Ethel Barrymore, a Cleo Conquered in 'Love Duel'," Evening Courier, March 18, 1930.

⁵⁶"Hop This Finale," Evening Courier, July 27, 1930; "Colored Swindler Turns Messiah in 'Sweet Chariot'," October 7, 1930.

⁵⁷Evening Courier, June 17, September 9, and December 30, 1930.

⁵⁸Seldes, *op. cit.*, p. 25; "'The Apple Cart' Opens at Garrick," Evening Courier, December 9, 1930.

⁵⁹"'Once in a Lifetime' Thumps the Talkies," Evening Courier, September 2, 1930.

⁶⁰Schlesinger and Warshow quoted in Robert S. McElvaine, The Great Depression: America 1929-1941, (New York, Times Books, 1984), pp. 208-209.

⁶¹Seldes, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

⁶²Interview with Louis Stone, March 13, 1991.

⁶³Earl Bond, Dr. Kirkbride and his Hospital, (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1947), *passim*; interview with Louis Stone.

⁶⁴Ben Hecht, A Child of the Century, (New York: Signet Books, 1955), pp. 117-118, 136. Though the job title has fallen out of use, I can assure readers that city editors still send reporters out with the admonition not to return without a photo of the newsworthy deceased.

⁶⁵New York Times, January 29, 1926.

⁶⁶Stephen M. O'Keefe, "Stone `Unturned' in 50 Years," Courier-Post, December 10, 1971, p.1.

⁶⁷Robert Gershon, interview with I.F. Stone, December 29, 1982. The epigraph to this section is from the same source.

⁶⁸Robert Cantwell, "Journalism--The Magazines," in Harold E. Stearns, ed., America Now, (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1938), pp. 345-349.

⁶⁹Justin Kaplan, Lincoln Steffens (London: Jonathan Cape, 1974), p. 115.

⁷⁰Henry Demarest Lloyd, Wealth Against Commonwealth, quoted in Harvey Swados, Years of Conscience: The Muckrakers, (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1962), pp. 13-14.

⁷¹quoted in Swados, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

⁷²Ray Stannard Baker, The American Magazine, LXXII (1911), p. 61, quoted in David Mark Chalmers, The Social and Political Ideas of The Muckrakers, (Salem, NH: Ayer Company, 1964), p. 74.

⁷³Ida M. Tarbell, All In The Day's Work: An Autobiography (Boston: G.K.Hall, 1985), p. 204.

⁷⁴Kaplan, *loc. cit.*

⁷⁵Louis Filler, The Muckrakers, (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), p. 378.

⁷⁶Goodywn, *op. cit.*, pp. xiv-xvii.

⁷⁷Russell F. Weigley, ed., Philadelphia: A 300-Year History, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982), p. 584.

⁷⁸Sam Bass Warner, Jr., The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of Its Growth, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), pp. 217-218. While not denying Vare's kleptocratic tendencies, Warner argues that Vare was "instrumental in guiding the final bills through the Pennsylvania legislature for workman's compensation, child labor, hours of labor for women, Mother's Assistance welfare payments, and the constitutional amendment giving women the vote," and that Vare also unsuccessfully sponsored an old-age pension bill.

⁷⁹Russell Davenport, Fortune XIII:6 (June 1936), p. 194; E. Digby Baltzell, Philadelphia Gentlemen: The Making of a National Upper Class, (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1958), pp. 379-380.

⁸⁰Coode and Bauman, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-225; Sandra Featherman, "Jewish Politics in Philadelphia, 1920-1940" in Friedman, *op. cit.*, p. 278.

⁸¹Weigley, *op. cit.*, pp. 620-621.

⁸²The Philadelphia Record reporters' assignment books are now at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Isidor Feinstein first appears in the entry for September 23, 1931.

⁸³Schwartz, *op. cit.*, p. 65; Coode and Bauman, *op. cit.*, p. 178; Philadelphia Record, October 4, 1931, p.1.

⁸⁴see William L. Phillips and Bernard Sternsher, "Victims of the Great Depression: The Question of Blame and First-Person History," in Sternsher, *op. cit.*, pp. 267-285.

⁸⁵Harvey Klehr, The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade (New York: Basic Books, 1984), p. 41.

⁸⁶Coode and Bauman, *op. cit.*, pp. 55, 57, 62-63.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, p. 180.

⁸⁸Mauritz A. Hallgren, "Mass Misery in Philadelphia," Nation 134 (March 9, 1932): 275-277.

⁸⁹Robert Cottrell, *loc. cit.*

⁹⁰Coode and Bauman, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

⁹¹Philadelphia Record, February 13, 1931, p. 8.

⁹²Schwartz, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61, 78.

⁹³Seldes, *op. cit.*, pp. 188-191

⁹⁴Philadelphia Record, August 5, 1932, p.8.

⁹⁵Weigley, *op. cit.*, p. 612.

⁹⁶Philadelphia Record, October 23, 1932, p.1.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, August 8, 1932.

⁹⁸Klehr, *op. cit.*, p. 91. See also Fraser M. Ottanelli, The Communist Party of the United States: From the Depression to World War II, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991) pp. 18-41.

⁹⁹A.B. Magil, "Toward Social Fascism--The `Rejuvenation of the Socialist Party,'" The Communist, II (April 1930), 309-320.

¹⁰⁰Michael Blankfort, Draft Autobiography, MB MSS, Box 59, folder 4.

¹⁰¹Leonard Wilcox, V.F. Calverton: Radical in the American Grain, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), pp. 31, 49, 99, 147.

¹⁰²Blankfort, *loc. cit.*

¹⁰³Alfred Kazin, Starting Out In The Thirties (London: Secker & Warburg, 1966), pp. 61-65.

¹⁰⁴V.F. Calverton to Isidor Feinstein, January 6, 1933.

¹⁰⁵Henry Tetlow, "Philadelphia Acquires a Good Newspaper," The American Mercury, 28 (February 1933): 185-87.

¹⁰⁶I.F. Stone interviewed by Graydon Forrer and Elise Glickman, 1979; Isidor Feinstein, "A Gentleman in Politics," The American Mercury 29 (May 1933), pp. 82-85.

¹⁰⁷IFS to Michael Blankfort, July 21, 1926; Feinstein, "A Gentleman in Politics," p. 83.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 85.

¹⁰⁹Abelard Stone, "Roosevelt Moves Toward Fascism," The Modern Monthly, VII:5 (June, 1933), pp. 261-274. (emphasis added)

¹¹⁰League of Professional Groups for Foster and Ford, Culture and the Crisis: An Open Letter to the Writers, Artists, Teachers, Physicians, Engineers, Scientists and Other Professional Workers of America, (New York: Workers Library Publishers, 1932), pp. 17, 23.

¹¹¹Wilcox, op. cit., pp. 147-150.

¹¹²Abelard Stone, "Morgan & Co.: A House of Ill Fame," Modern Monthly VII:6 (July, 1933), p.344.

¹¹³Blankfort, loc. cit.

¹¹⁴Isidor Feinstein, "Back to Autocracy," Philadelphia Record, January 22, 1933, p. 9; Abelard Stone, "Who Pays for Inflation?," Modern Monthly, VII:3 (April, 1933), p. 135-137.

¹¹⁵"The Twilight of Capitalism and Democracy in Germany," Philadelphia Record, January 31, 1933, p. 8.

¹¹⁶Abelard Stone, "The Literary Caravan," Modern Monthly, VII:3 (April, 1933), p. 189.

¹¹⁷ Isidor Feinstein, "Social Democracy Surrenders," Philadelphia Record, April 4, 1933, p.8.

¹¹⁸Abelard Stone, "The Literary Caravan," loc. cit.; Klehr, op. cit., p. 102; Abelard Stone, "Morgan & Co.," p. 345.

¹¹⁹Frank A. Warren, III, Liberals And Communism: The "Red Decade" Revisited, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), p. 44.

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¹ J. David Stern Oral History, Columbia University Oral History Collection, p.80.

² Interview with Samuel Grafton, April 25, 1991.

³ "New York Loyal To Its Own," New York Evening Post, December 11, 1933, p.1.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Robert Cottrell, Interview with I.F. Stone, October 16, 1981.

⁶ Douglas B. Rauschenberger and Katherine Mansfield Tassini, Lost Haddonfield (Haddonfield: The Historical Society of Haddonfield, 1989), p.62.

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⁸ Earl Bond, Dr. Kirkbride and his Mental Hospital (Philadelphia: J.B.Lippincott, 1947), p. 152

⁹ The Federal Writers' Project, New York Panorama (New York: Random House, 1938, republished by Pantheon Books, 1984) p.3.

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- ¹¹ John Dos Passos, USA: The Big Money, (NY: Harcourt Brace, 1961), p. 65.
- ¹² Ann Douglas, Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s, (London: Picador, 1996), p. 15.
- ¹³ Federal Writers' Project, *op. cit.*, p.76.
- ¹⁴ Robert Caro, The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York, (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), p. 354.
- ¹⁵ Robert Cottrell, *loc. cit.*; Isidor Feinstein, "Warning," New York Evening Post, December 28, 1933, p.1.
- ¹⁶ Norman Thomas and Paul Blanshard, What's the Matter with New York: A National Problem, (New York: Macmillan, 1932) p.3.
- ¹⁷ Thomas and Blanshard, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-178.
- ¹⁸ Moshe R. Gottlieb, American Anti-Nazi Resistance, 1933-1941: An Historical Analysis, (New York: Ktav, 1982), pp. 57, 131.
- ¹⁹ "A Good Beginning," New York Evening Post, December 14, 1933, p.10.
- ²⁰ Isidor Feinstein, "Pension Graft," New York Evening Post, December 14, 1933, p.10.
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- ²² Michael Blankfort to Karen Malpede, undated, MB MSS.
- ²³ Charles Shipman, It Had to be Revolution: Memoirs of an American Radical, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 189-192.
- ²⁴ Federal Writers' Project, *op. cit.*, p. 275.
- ²⁵ Shipman, *loc. cit.*.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*.
- ²⁷ Robert Cottrell, *loc. cit.*.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*.
- ²⁹ Jerry Buckley, "I.F. Stone: Journalist and Prophet," B.A. honors thesis, Fordham University, 1977, p. 34.
- ³⁰ Robert Cottrell, *loc. cit.*.
- ³¹ "Barricades Against Brown Shirt Barbarism," New York Evening Post, February 13, 1934, p. 8.
- ³² "Reds Mass At Pier to Boo Austrians Arriving Tonight," New York Evening Post, February 17, 1934, p.2; Irving Howe, Socialism and America, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), p. 60.
- ³³ "Disgraceful," New York Evening Post, February 19, 1934, p.6.
- ³⁴ Buckley, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
- ³⁵ "Thunder on the Left," New York Evening Post, November 30, 1934, p.8.
- ³⁶ Robert Cottrell, *loc. cit.*.
- ³⁷ Alfred Kazin, Starting Out In The Thirties, (London: Secker & Warburg, 1966), p.15.
- ³⁸ Bernard Karsh and Phillips L. Garman, "The Impact of the Political Left," in Milton Derber and Edwin Young, eds., Labor and the New Deal, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1957), p. 86.
- ³⁹ Karsh and Garman, *op. cit.*, p. 98.
- ⁴⁰ Robert S. McElvaine, The Great Depression: America, 1929-1941, (New York: Times Books, 1984), pp. 225-226; David Milton, The Politics of Labor: From the Great Depression to the New Deal, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1982), pp. 52-62.

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- ⁴² Melvyn Dubofsky, The State and Labor in Modern America, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), pp. 107-135.
- ⁴³ Anthony J. Badger, The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933-1940. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), p. 130.
- ⁴⁴ Bert Cochran, Labor and Communism: The Conflict That Shaped American Unions, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 80-109.
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- ⁴⁶ Michael Denning, The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century, (London: Verso, 1996), p. 68.
- ⁴⁷ Hal Draper, "The Student Movements of the Thirties: A Political History," in Rita James Simon, ed., The Thirties: Essays on social and political movements of a decade, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1967), p. 170; see also Robert Cohen, When the Old Left Was Young: Student Radicals and America's First Mass Student Movement, 1929-1941, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), *passim*.
- ⁴⁸ Harvey Klehr, The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade (New York: Basic Books, 1984), p. 350.
- ⁴⁹ "The Showdown," New York Evening Post, July 17, 1934, p. 6; "Sinclair in California," New York Evening Post, August 30, 1934, p. 6.
- ⁵⁰ Isidor Feinstein, "How to Make a Riot," The New Republic, June 27, 1934, pp. 178-180.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁵² Interview with Simon Gerson, October 3, 1991. Gerson was the Daily Worker's City Hall bureau chief in the 1930s; the relief worker was his wife, Sophie.
- ⁵³ Isidor Feinstein, "O'Ryan Must Go," New York Post, August 12, 1934, p. 6.
- ⁵⁴ Robert Cottrell, *loc. cit.*; Elizabeth Dilling, The Red Network: A "Who's Who" and Handbook of Radicalism for Patriots (Kenilworth, IL: Elizabeth Dilling, 1934), pp. 297-298.
- ⁵⁵ Simon Gerson, Pete: The Story of Peter V. Cacchione, (New York: International Publishers, 1976), p. 54.
- ⁵⁶ Robert Cottrell, Izzy: A Biography of I.E. Stone, (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1992), p. 56.
- ⁵⁷ Interview with Arnold Beichman, 1992
- ⁵⁸ Interview with Samuel Grafton, April 25, 1991.
- ⁵⁹ Stefan Kanfer, A Journal of the Plague Years, (New York: Atheneum, 1973), p.34.
- ⁶⁰ Michael Blankfort, A Time To Live, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1943), p. 162. Whether the self-loathing apparent in accounts by such former pillars of the Popular Front as Blankfort and Rovere (a former CP member and cultural functionary) stems from righteous anger at the betrayals of Stalinism or their own betrayals of former comrades is a question perhaps best left to psycho-historians.
- ⁶¹ "Justice at Scottsboro," Philadelphia Record, November 9, 1932, p. 8.
- ⁶² "Too Dumb to be Dangerous," New York Post, August 12, 1935, p. 8.

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- ⁶³ "The Case Against Dictatorship," New York Post, June 24, 1935, p. 10.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid.; "About the Red Bogey," New York Post, August 6, 1934, p. 6.
- ⁶⁵ "The Wild and Visionary Theorist," New York Post, August 14, 1934, p. 8.
- ⁶⁶ "Fight the Un-American With American Methods," New York Post, February 6, 1935, p. 6; Isidor Feinstein, "About That Red Scare on Relief," New York Post, October 17, 1935, p.14 (emphasis added).
- ⁶⁷ Frank A. Warren III, Liberals and Communism: The "Red Decade" Revisited, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), pp. 45-48.
- ⁶⁸ Interview with Nathaniel Weyl, November 19, 1996; see also Earl Latham, The Communist Controversy in Washington: From the New Deal to McCarthy, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966) pp. 102-123.
- ⁶⁹ Klehr, op. cit., p. 74.
- ⁷⁰ Naison, op. cit., p. 59
- ⁷¹ Ibid., p. 55.
- ⁷² Howe, op. cit., pp. 60-61.
- ⁷³ Denning, op. cit., p. 54; Klehr, op. cit., p. 172.
- ⁷⁴ B.J. Field, "The Viewpoint of the Left (Trotsky) Opposition," Modern Monthly VII:5 (June, 1933), p.280.
- ⁷⁵ Klehr, op. cit., p. 167-168.
- ⁷⁶ Morgan Himelstein, Drama Was a Weapon: The Left-Wing Theatre in New York, 1929-1941, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1963), p. 41; Isidor Feinstein, "They Played it Safe," New York Post, May 8, 1935, p.12.
- ⁷⁷ Denning, op. cit., pp. 442-443.
- ⁷⁸ "A Victory for World Opinion," New York Evening Post, December 26, 1933, p. 6.
- ⁷⁹ Isidor Feinstein, "The People's Front in France," New York Post, April 28, 1935, p. 12; "Poor Little Ethiopia," New York Post, August 16, 1935, p. 10.
- ⁸⁰ Isidor Feinstein, "Jitters in the Kremlin," New York Post, August 18, 1936, p. 8; "Borsch," New York Post, December 1, 1936, p. 8.
- ⁸¹ Latham, op. cit., pp. 46-48.
- ⁸² Howe, op. cit., pp. 88-89. As usual Howe's densely contentious prose contains several strands of argument—many of them debateable. Talk of motives is fair enough, but it is surely foolish to equate noble motives with admirable policies, or to assume that out of base motivations higher goals cannot be attained—indeed the liberal apologia for capitalism is founded on the converse assumption. And while the Popular Front may well have been "conceived in bad faith" Howe's rhetoric about its execution is contradicted by his own assertion that "much of the credit for the success of the Popular Front must go to [CP leader] Earl Browder" who, says Howe, did not merely accept "the Popular Front line; he warmed to it, he enjoyed it, and he came, with evident sincerity, to believe in it." (p. 96) An odd description of bad faith.
- ⁸³ Maurice Isserman, Which Side Were You On?: The American Communist Party During the Second World War, (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), passim.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid., p.22.
- ⁸⁵ Klehr, op. cit., pp. 91, 413.
- ⁸⁶ "Crisis at Geneva," New York Post, September 14, 1935, p. 6.
- ⁸⁷ "The Totalitarian God," New York Post, December 31, 1935, p. 6.
- ⁸⁸ "About That Red Scare on Relief," New York Post, loc. cit.
- ⁸⁹ Isidor Feinstein, "Racketeering in the A. F. of L.: I. The Poultry Racket," The Nation CXLI:3662 (September 11, 1935), pp. 288-291.

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- ⁹⁰ Isidor Feinstein, "Racketeering in the A. F. of L.: II. Skulduggery in New York," The Nation CXLI:3663 (September 18, 1935), pp. 316-318.
- ⁹¹ Cochran, op. cit., p. 85 details AFL leader William Green's failure to capitalize on the 1934 strike wave.
- ⁹² Harvey Klehr, John Earl Haynes, & Fridrikh Igorevich Firsov, The Secret World of American Communism, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). P. 9. The authors promise that in a subsequent volume they will "reproduce documents definitely establishing Bridges's membership in the CPUSA." (ibid., p. 104)
- ⁹³ Louis Adamic, My America (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1938), pp. 316-323. Adamic, a fervent anti-Stalinist who was nonetheless one of the key figures in the Popular Front, provides shrewd yet sympathetic contemporary portraits of both Lewis and Harry Bridges.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 394; Interview with Jill Stern, December 9, 1992.
- ⁹⁵ Leo Huberman, We, the People (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947), p. 317; Adamic, op. cit., pp. 386, 394.
- ⁹⁶ Cochran, op. cit., p. 95.
- ⁹⁷ Badger, op. cit., pp. 132-133. See also Cochran, op. cit., p. 96.
- ⁹⁸ Steven Fraser, Labor Will Rule: Sidney Hillman and the Rise of American Labor, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 399-418. Klehr, Haynes and Firsov suggest that Lewis personally negotiated an agreement with the CPUSA leadership to allow party members to work for the CIO—an arrangement that, given Lewis's well-known preference for going to the top, seems entirely plausible. (Klehr, Haynes, and Firsov, op. cit., p. 106.)
- ⁹⁹ Feinstein, "Racketeering in the A.F. of L.: II Skulduggery in New York," loc. cit.
- ¹⁰⁰ Isidor Feinstein, "Spying on the Jobless: Tsarist Methods in New York," The New Republic (October 30, 1935), pp. 328-331.
- ¹⁰¹ Katie Louchheim, The Making of the New Deal: The Insiders Speak (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), pp. 67-70.
- ¹⁰² Joseph P. Lash, Dealers and Dreamers: A New Look at the New Deal (New York: Doubleday, 1988), p. 60.
- ¹⁰³ Jordan A. Schwarz, The New Dealers: Power Politics in the Age of Roosevelt (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), pp. 126-127; Louchheim, op. cit., p. 25.
- ¹⁰⁴ Page Smith, Redeeming the Time: A People's History of the 1920s and the New Deal (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1987), p. 424.
- ¹⁰⁵ Schwartz, op. cit., p. 139.
- ¹⁰⁶ William E. Leuchtenberg, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal: 1932-1940 (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 149.
- ¹⁰⁷ Isidor Feinstein to Thomas Corcoran, May 28, 1936, Thomas Corcoran Papers, Box 198 (Hereafter Corcoran MSS).
- ¹⁰⁸ Interview with Christopher Stone, June 25, 1998.
- ¹⁰⁹ Lash, op. cit., pp. 9-10.
- ¹¹⁰ Abelard Stone, "Roosevelt Moves Toward Fascism," loc. cit.; Isidor Feinstein, "A Bad Boy Grows Older," in Press Time: A Book of Post Classics (New York: Books, Inc., 1936), pp. 300-301.
- ¹¹¹ Thomas Corcoran to Isidor Feinstein, September 8, 1936, Corcoran MSS; Interview with Samuel Beer, 1994.
- ¹¹² Ibid.

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- ¹¹³ Samuel Beer, "Memoirs of a Political Junkie," Harvard Magazine (September/October, 1984), pp. 65-70. Beer says the phrase "economic royalists" was not his.
- ¹¹⁴ Isidor Feinstein, "Bedtime Story for Radicals," New York Post, February 5, 1936, p. 10.
- ¹¹⁵ "Mr. Roosevelt's Blank Check," The New Republic, (November 11, 1936), p. 31; Latham, op. cit., pp. 51-52, 77; Gerson, op. cit., p. 58; "Democracy Triumphs," New York Post, November 4, 1936, p. 18; Heywood Broun, "The President Needs a Gadfly," The Nation, November 14, 1936, p. 577.
- ¹¹⁶ Alan Brinkley, The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), p. 18.
- ¹¹⁷ Lash, op. cit., pp. 218, 291-295.
- ¹¹⁸ Cottrell, op. cit., p. 59; the outline is in the Corcoran MSS.
- ¹¹⁹ Thomas Corcoran to Lincoln Filene, December 17, 1936, Corcoran MSS.
- ¹²⁰ Isidor Feinstein, "A Lucky Toss of the Judicial Dice," New York Post, November 24, 1936, p.10. The split decision sustained the state appellate court ruling, which upheld the law.
- ¹²¹ Also apparently an eternal one. For the latest comprehensive review of the Supreme Court's turn in 1937 see Laura Kalman, "The Constitution, the Supreme Court and the New Deal," The American Historical Review CX:4 (October 2005), pp. 1052-1080.
- ¹²² Isidor Feinstein, "'Unpacking' the Supreme Court," New York Post, February 8, 1937, p. 6.
- ¹²³ Isidor Feinstein, "The Worst that Can Happen Is—Democracy," New York Post, February 9, 1937, p. 6.
- ¹²⁴ Isidor Feinstein, The Court Disposes (New York: Covici-Friede, 1937), pp. 87, 99.
- ¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 20.
- ¹²⁶ Isidor Feinstein, "Human Rights vs. Property Rights," The Philadelphia Record, May 3, 1932
- ¹²⁷ Feinstein, The Court Disposes, pp. 114, 127.
- ¹²⁸ Theodore Draper, The Roots of American Communism (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1989), p. 57. In 1905, Boudin had been thrown out of the founding convention of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) on the grounds that "no attorney of law could be anything but a parasite." (Victor Rabinowitz, "The Radical Tradition in the Law," in David Kairys, ed., The Politics of Law: A Progressive Critique, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), p.310.
- ¹²⁹ Ibid., pp. 42, 78-79.
- ¹³⁰ Matthew Josephson, "Review and Comment," The New Masses 23 (June 8, 1937), p. 22.
- ¹³¹ Thomas Reed Powell, "The Court, The Constitution, and the Country," The Saturday Review of Literature, XVI:6 (June 5, 1937), pp. 3-5.
- ¹³² Isidor Feinstein, "The Supreme Court and Civil Liberties," The Nation, February 6, 1937, pp. 151-153.
- ¹³³ Arthur D. Pierce, "Clears the Air" Philadelphia Record, June 26, 1937, p. 12.
- ¹³⁴ Brinkley, op. cit., pp. 19-20.
- ¹³⁵ Ibid.; Isidor Feinstein, "A Defeat More Glorious Than Victory," New York Post, August 26, 1937, p. 6.
- ¹³⁶ Thomas Corcoran to Isidor Feinstein, May 5 and May 14, 1937, Corcoran MSS.

¹³⁷ Interview with Celia Gilbert, September 3, 1991; Isidor Feinstein to Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Josephson, June 1, 1937.

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¹ J. David Stern Oral History, Columbia University Oral History Collection, pp. 88-89.

² Malcolm Cowley to Isidor Feinstein, undated, Malcolm Cowley Collection; Louis Stone and Marcus Stone, The Family (Where and When It Began); Isidor Feinstein to Thomas Corcoran, August 20, 1937, Corcoran MSS; I.F. Stone to Jerome Frank, June 22, 1938 and July 22, 1938, Jerome Frank Collection.

³ "Browder Tells of Bribe Offer in '36 Election," New York Post, September 6, 1939, p.1. Browder actually went to Heywood Broun first, then, when Broun took no action, sought out Izzy, who introduced Browder to a colleague on the news desk. Unable to substantiate the story, the Post never published it, and nothing further was heard of the incident until Browder testified before the Dies Committee in 1939. Ironically it was during this appearance that Browder was asked if he'd ever traveled under a false passport. His admission that he had would later land him in Federal prison.

⁴ Michael Denning, The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century, (London: Verso, 1996), p. 13; interview with Celia Gilbert, September 31, 1991.

⁵ Franklin Folsom, Days of Anger, Days of Hope: A Memoir of the League of American Writers, 1937-1942 (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1994), pp. 266-333.

⁶ Interview with Nathalie Bodanskaya Gorman, November 5, 1991.

⁷ Isidor Feinstein to James Henle, January 8, 1937, and Isidor Feinstein to James T. Farrell, January 15, 1937. James T. Farrell Collection.

⁸ See William Barrett, The Truants: Adventures Among the Intellectuals (New York: Anchor Press, 1982), pp. 75-78 for a particularly mendacious and self-serving recitation of the myth.

⁹ Isidor Feinstein, "The Two-Edged Sword of Terror" New York Post, December 7, 1934, p. 10.

¹⁰ "Hobgoblins in Moscow" New York Post, January 10, 1935, p. 8.

¹¹ Such "realism" about Stalin was common on the American left. As Frank Warren points out, liberals like Nation editor Freda Kirchwey "based their sympathy for Russia on their belief in Russian economic democracy and in her consistent striving for peace in opposition to Fascism. Political and civil liberty did not play an important part. This is precisely why the trials were not a shattering blow.... They only demonstrated Russia's lack of something these liberals did not look for in Russia." Frank A. Warren III, Liberals and Communism: The "Red Decade" Revisited (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), p. 190.

¹² Robert Cottrell, Interview with I.F. Stone, October 16, 1981.

¹³ "Jitters in the Kremlin," New York Post, August 18, 1936, p.8.

¹⁴ Klehr, Haynes and Firsov, op. cit., p. 96.

¹⁵ Nathaniel Weyl to D.D. Guttenplan, September 13, 1996; Interview with Nathaniel Weyl, November 19, 1996.

¹⁶ Isidor Feinstein, "?????????" New York Post, January 26, 1937, p.6.

¹⁷ Isidor Feinstein, "The Real Question Behind the Russian Trials," New York Post, June 14, 1937, p. 6.

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- ¹⁸ see David Caute, The Fellow-Travelers: A Postscript to the Enlightenment (New York: Macmillan, 1973) p. 300, for a particularly acute discussion of the ironies inherent in such postures.
- ¹⁹ Archibald MacLeish, "Spain and American Writers," in Henry Hart, ed. The Writer in a Changing World (New York: Equinox Cooperative Press, 1937), p. 57.
- ²⁰ Isidor Feinstein, "The People's Front in Spain," New York Post, February 21, 1936.
- ²¹ "A Business Man on the Popular Front," New York Post, July 23, 1936, p. 6
- ²² Isidor Feinstein, "Democracy Fights For Its Life in Spain," New York Post, August 1, 1936, p. 6.
- ²³ "A Perversion of Neutrality," New York Post, August 6, 1936, p. 6.
- ²⁴ "The Lesson of Spain," New York Post, September 10, 1936, p. 6; "Russia Refuses to Cooperate," New York Post, January 10, 1937, p. 6; "The Rape of Spain," New York Post, January 3, 1937, p. 6.
- ²⁵ "The Fight For Peace," New York Post, February 8, 1937, p. 6.
- ²⁶ "The Rape of Spain," *loc. cit.*
- ²⁷ Ronald Fraser, Blood of Spain: An Oral History of the Spanish Civil War (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), p. 419.
- ²⁸ J. David Stern, Memoirs of a Maverick Publisher, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962), pp. 175-176.
- ²⁹ Thomas Corcoran to Felix Frankfurter, undated, Frankfurter MSS. Stern complained about the move to Corcoran.
- ³⁰ Dan Rottenberg, "The Rise of Albert M. Greenfield," in Murray Friedman, ed., Jewish Life in Philadelphia: 1830-1940 (Philadelphia: Ishi Publications, 1983), p. 232.
- ³¹ Andrew Patner, I.F. Stone: A Portrait, (New York, Anchor Books, 1990), pp. 37-38.
- ³² "Salute to Heroes," New York Post, February 9, 1937, p.6.
- ³³ Nathalie Robins, Alien Ink (New York: William Morrow, 1992), p. 88; Julia Dietrich, The Old Left in History and Literature (New York: Twayne, 1996), p. 131.
- ³⁴ "The Lines Shift in Spain," New York Post, May 21, 1937, p. 10.
- ³⁵ Murray Friedman, "Introduction," in Friedman, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
- ³⁶ Interview with Samuel Beer, 1994.
- ³⁷ Denning, *op. cit.*, pp. 285-295.
- ³⁸ Louis Adamic, My America (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1938), p. 409. Adamic cites Italian factory workers and Yugoslavian and Polish coal miners as precedents.
- ³⁹ Anthony J. Badger, The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933-1940 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), p. 131.
- ⁴⁰ Robert S. McElvaine, The Great Depression: America, 1929-1941 (New York: Times Books, 1984), p. 294.
- ⁴¹ Edward Levinson, "Labor on the March," Harper's CLXXIV (May, 1937), pp. 642-646.
- ⁴² Badger, *op. cit.*, p. 130
- ⁴³ McElvaine, *op. cit.*, p. 294.
- ⁴⁴ Levinson, *loc. cit.*
- ⁴⁵ Marc Blitzstein, The Cradle Will Rock, quoted in Harvey Swados, The American Writer and the Great Depression (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1977), p. 407.

⁴⁶ Badger, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-133.

⁴⁷ John J. Abt, Advocate and Activist: Memoirs of an American Communist Lawyer (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), p. 61.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 66-68; Badger, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

⁴⁹ Denning, *op. cit.*, pp. 286-287.

⁵⁰ "Presenting 'One-Sixth of the Earth'," Daily Worker, November 12, 1937, p.3.

⁵¹ Virgil Thompson, "In the Theatre" Modern Music (January-February 1938), pp. 112-114, quoted in Eric A. Gordon, Mark the Music: The Life and Work of Marc Blitzstein (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), p. 165.

⁵² See Harvey Klehr, The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade (New York: Basic Books, 1984), p. 414 for a typically strenuous depiction of the Party's marginality. For an account of the Popular Front which goes well beyond plausibility into paranoia (but contains some interesting tidbits of information) see Stephen Koch, Double Lives: Spies and Writers in the Soviet Secret War of Ideas Against the West (New York: Free Press, 1994).

⁵³ Ellen Schrecker, "McCarthyism and the Decline of American Communism, 1945-1960" in Michael E. Brown, Randy Martin, Frank Rosengarten, and George Snedeker, eds., New Studies in the Politics and Culture of U.S. Communism (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1993), pp. 123-133.

⁵⁴ Denning, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-128 contains an acute and persuasive discussion of these issues.

⁵⁵ Maurice Isserman, Which Side Were You On?: The American Communist Party During the Second World War (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1978), pp. 19-23 offers both the grounds for this belief and a sense of the internal contradictions.

⁵⁶ As a student in the last years of Trilling's tenure, I can still recall the Columbia English department's mandarin dismissal of any work of American literature beyond a tiny canon of some half-dozen classics. The personal motives for the rebirth of an American Jew as an English gentleman are not obscure, but the politics behind the Partisan Review critics' distaste for Popular Front culture is brilliantly elucidated by Denning, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-128.

⁵⁷ Alan Brinkley, The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), pp. 28-29.

⁵⁸ Nelson Lichtenstein, Labor's War at Home: The CIO in World War II (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 18-19.

⁵⁹ Brinkley, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁶⁰ Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 239. Of course the Trotskyists, who opposed the Popular Front, fastidiously condemned any accommodation with capitalism.

⁶¹ Isserman, *op. cit.*, p.25.

⁶² Morris Schonbach, Native American Fascism During the 1930s and 1940s, (London: Garland Publishing, 1985), p. 297; Dale Kramer, "The American Fascists," Harper's Magazine CLXXXI (September, 1940), pp. 380-393.

⁶³ Schonbach, *op. cit.*, pp. 183, 317.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

⁶⁵ Kramer, *loc. cit.*

⁶⁶ Brinkley, *op. cit.*, p. 55; Schonbach, *op. cit.*, p. 160, 232.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 193n; Isidore Feinstein to Thomas Corcoran, February 5, 1938, Corcoran MSS.

⁶⁸ The League of American Writers, Writers Takes Sides: Letters about the

war in Spain from 418 American authors, (New York: League of American Writers, 1938), p. 58.

⁶⁹ Isidor Feinstein, "Fascism in America," New York Post, November 21, 1934, p.8.

⁷⁰ Jordan A. Schwarz, The New Dealers: Power Politics in the Age of Roosevelt (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), pp. 144.

⁷¹ Polman, Dick. "Outcasts and icons," Philadelphia Inquirer, January 28, 1968, C1; Patner, op. cit., p. 13. Most of Stone's profilers were too polite to raise the question, but those that did seldom failed to elicit the note of regret.

⁷² Geoffrey Stone, "Neutrality—a Dangerous Myth," The Nation, September 18, 1937, pp. 283-285.

⁷³ Interview with Murray Kempton, December 15, 1991.

⁷⁴ Denning, op. cit., p. 153.

⁷⁵ I.F. Stone, "The Romans Would Understand," The Nation, October 2, 1937, pp. 345-346.

⁷⁶ Weyl, loc. cit.

⁷⁷ Isadore Feinstein, et al., Supreme Court: New York County, M309-38, January 6, 1938. Leonard Boudin was lawyer for the petitioner.

⁷⁸ Interview with Louis Stone, March 13, 1991.

⁷⁹ Interview with Jeremy Stone, November 20, 1991; Michael Blankfort, Draft Autobiography, (Blankfort MSS); Interview with George Seldes May 24, 1991; Interview with Jill Stern, December 9, 1992.

⁸⁰ Weyl, loc. cit.

⁸¹ Felix Frankfurter to I.F. Stone, January 24, 1938. Felix Frankfurter Papers.

⁸² I.F. Stone, "1937 is not 1914," The Nation, November 6, 1937, pp. 495-497.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Alfred Kazin, Starting Out In The Thirties, (London: Secker & Warburg, 1966), p. 85.

⁸⁵ Brinkley, op. cit., p. 48.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 294 n.3.

⁸⁷ I.F. Stone, "Our Reigning Families," The New Republic, December 29, 1937, p. 233.

⁸⁸ Brinkley, op. cit., pp. 56-57.

⁸⁹ I.F. Stone, "Hyde Park, Tennessee Style," The New Republic, October 20, 1937, pp. 317-318.

⁹⁰ Brinkley, op. cit., p. 48.

⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 57-58; Joseph P. Lash, Dealers and Dreamers: A New Look at the New Deal, (New York: Doubleday, 1988), pp. 352-353; I.F. Stone to Thomas Corcoran, "Monday nite" (January 1938), Corcoran MSS.

⁹² Lash, op. cit., pp. 291-295; Brinkley, op. cit., p. 55.

⁹³ Earl Latham, The Communist Controversy in Washington: From the New Deal to McCarthy, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 52.

⁹⁴ Ellen Schrecker, Many Are The Crimes: McCarthyism in America (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1998), p. 14. As Schrecker points out elsewhere, Party members "did not advertise their affiliation at the time; even today many of them remain reluctant to reveal that part of their lives.... Ironically, contemporary historians need the same kinds of confessions the congressional investigators of the 1950s did, including, if at all possible, the naming of other people's names." No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 25. Anyone who thinks, as I once did,

that the end of the Cold War might make such inquiries less contentious obviously hasn't had much experience interviewing former Communists.

⁹⁵ Schrecker, Many Are The Crimes, pp. 236, 135.

⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 41, 110-111.

⁹⁷ I.F. Stone, "Company in the Doghouse," The New Republic January 5, 1938, p. 251

⁹⁸ Robert Cottrell, Interview with I.F. Stone, October 16, 1981.

⁹⁹ I.F. Stone, "Russia's Editors Follow Her Generals," New York Post, July 28, 1937, p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ "Stalin Takes Off His Mask," New York Post, February 15, 1938, p. 1;

"Thunder From the Left," New York Post, February 18, 1938, p. 18.

¹⁰¹ J. David Stern, op. cit., pp. 245-247.

¹⁰² Robert Cottrell, Interview with I.F. Stone, October 16, 1981.

¹⁰³ Heywood Broun, "The New York Post Handicap," The New Republic, March 9, 1938, p. 127.

¹⁰⁴ I.F. Stone to Freda Kirchwey, "Tuesday" [1938]; Freda Kirchwey to I.F. Stone, April 8, 1938, Nation Collection.

¹⁰⁵ I.F. Stone to Suzy Blankfort, September 11, 1938, Blankfort MSS.

¹⁰⁶ John Gunther, Inside U.S.A., (New York: Harper Brothers, 1947), p. 592.

¹⁰⁷ Dayton McKean, The Boss: The Hague Machine in Action, (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1940), p. 117.

¹⁰⁸ I.F. Stone, "Judicial Brief," The New Republic, August 31, 1938.

¹⁰⁹ Stephen Becker, Marshall Field III, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), p. 194.

¹¹⁰ I.F. Stone, "Jerome Frank's Dilemma," The Southern Review IV:2 (Autumn 1938

¹¹¹ I.F. Stone to Jerome Frank, June 23 and June 25, 1938, Jerome Frank Collection.

¹¹² Harry T. Saylor to Newspaper Guild of New York, March 28, 1939, Newspaper Guild Archives.

¹¹³ John W. Hevener, Which Side Are You On?: The Harlan County Coal Miners, 1931-39, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), p. 147.

¹¹⁴ I.F. Stone, "It Happened in Harlan," Current History, September 1938, pp. 29-31.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ I.F. Stone, "Bloody Harlan Reforms," The Nation, August 6, 1938, p. 121; Hevener, op. cit., p. 151.

¹¹⁷ I.F. Stone to Suzy Blankfort, September 11, 1938, Blankfort MSS.

¹¹⁸ I.F. Stone, "Max Lerner's Capitalist Collectivism," The Southern Review, IV:4 (Spring 1939), pp. 649-664.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ I.F. Stone to Matthew Josephson, November 1, 1938. Matthew Josephson Collection.

¹²¹ Patner, op. cit., pp. 30-32.

¹²² Interview with Samuel Grafton, April 25, 1991. Grafton mistakenly places the incident in June 1939—six months after Stone left the editorial desk. Recounting the same story to Robert Sherrill, Grafton said Stone "tried to solicit support from the other writers, but apparently he'd laid into them so often they were happy to be rid of him." (Interview with Robert Sherrill, July 29, 1998.) Newspaper Guild records show that Grafton was the only other editorial writer on the Post at the time.

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- ¹²³ J. David Stern Oral History, Columbia University Oral History Collection, pp. 89-90.
- ¹²⁴ I.F. Stone, "When Wall Street Goes Socialist: The End of New York's Five-Cent Fare," The New Republic, August 10, 1938, pp. 10-12.
- ¹²⁵ "Keep Politicians—Any Kind—From Running the Unions," New York Post, January 21, 1939, p. 6.
- ¹²⁶ Patner, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
- ¹²⁷ Jeremy Stone, *loc. cit.*
- ¹²⁸ I.F. Stone to Joint Newspaper Guild-New York Post Grievance Committee, March 22, 1939, Newspaper Guild Archives.
- ¹²⁹ I.F. Stone to Matthew Josephson, *loc. cit.*; I.F. Stone to Suzy Blankfort, *loc. cit.*
- ¹³⁰ Louis Boudin to Abraham Isserman, April 1, 1939; Francis Biddle, *In re Newspaper Guild of New York and New York Post, Inc.*, Case of I.F. Stone, July 7, 1939. Both in Newspaper Guild Archives.
- ¹³¹ I.F. Stone, "The New York 'Post' Changes Hands," The Nation, July 1, 1939.
- ¹³² Memorandum to the Secretary, March 15, 1939, Harold Ickes Collection.
- ¹³³ Patner, *op. cit.*, p. 36; Cottrell, Izzy: A Biography of I.F. Stone (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), p. 72.
- ¹³⁴ James Wechsler, "Stalin and Union Square," The Nation, September 30, 1939, pp. 342-345.
- ¹³⁵ Denning, *op. cit.*, pp. 299-309.
- ¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 325-327.
- ¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 335-336.
- ¹³⁸ Dizzy Gillespie, To Be or Not to Bop (New York: Da Capo Press, 1979), p. 377.
- ¹³⁹ "Monsieur Minsky's Deshabilleuses Tentatrices," in Press Time: A Book of Post Classics (New York: Books, Inc., 1936), pp. 308-310; The Nation, May 6, 1939, p. 541
- ¹⁴⁰ I.F. Stone, "Class Conflict, Sunkist Style," The Nation, August 5, 1939, pp. 150-151.
- ¹⁴¹ I.F. Stone, "The Associated Farmers," Propaganda Analysis II:12 (August 1, 1939), pp. 1-12.
- ¹⁴² Whittaker Chambers, Witness (New York: Random House, 1952), p. 472.
- ¹⁴³ I.F. Stone, "Remedies for Monopoly," The Nation, April 15, 1939, pp. 420-421; I.F. Stone, "Shuffle the Cards," The Nation, September 24, 1938, p. 286.
- ¹⁴⁴ I.F. Stone, "Liberals Never Learn," March 18, 1939, p. 308; I.F. Stone, "The Greatest Strike-Breaker of All," The Nation, March 25, 1939, pp. Freda Kirchwey to I.F. Stone, undated, Nation Collection.
- ¹⁴⁵ I.F. Stone, "America and the Next War: II," The New Republic, June 21, 1939, pp. 175-177.
- ¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴⁷ The Daily Worker, March 22, 1939, p. 5, lists Stone as a sponsor of the campaign to raise \$160,000 for the Disabled Veterans Fund of the Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.
- ¹⁴⁸ "Manifesto," and Freda Kirchwey, "Red Totalitarianism," The Nation, May 27, 1939, pp. 626, 605-606.
- ¹⁴⁹ Kirchwey, *op. cit.*
- ¹⁵⁰ Sidney Hook, "Red Totalitarianism Reply—," and Freda Kirchwey, "And Rebuttal," The Nation, June 17, 1939, pp. 710-711.
- ¹⁵¹ Freda Kirchwey, "Red Totalitarianism," *loc. cit.*

¹⁵² "Letters to the Editor, The Nation, August 24, 1939, p. 228.

¹⁵³ "The Moscow Trials: A Statement by American Progressives," The New Masses XXVII (May 3, 1938), p. 19.

¹⁵⁴ I.F. Stone to Freda Kirchwey, undated (October 1939), Freda Kirchwey Collection.

Chapter 5: War Years

¹ I.F. Stone to Michael Blankfort, October 15, 1939. Blankfort MSS.

² Cottrell, Izzy: A Biography of I.F. Stone (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), p. 85; telephone interview with Louis Stone, May 1999. Leibowitz was never a member of the Communist Party, or even a fellow traveller, but his campaign was built—and would break—along Popular Front lines.

³ Junius Scales, for example, joined the Communist Party in March 1939. The Party always had a high turnover and, like many new recruits, Scales was on the verge of dropping out after a few months when his experiences organizing cotton mill workers in Greensboro convinced him to stay. Compared to "my first picket line" with its "vision of the revolution to come," the pact barely registered. Junius Scales, Cause at Heart: A Former Communist Remembers, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987).

⁴ Paul Lyons, Philadelphia Communists, 1936-1956, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), *passim* and Isserman, Which Side Were You On?: The American Communist Party During the Second World War (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1978), pp. 38-54.

⁵ Denning, The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century, (London: Verso, 1996), p. 343; Isserman, *op. cit.*, p.55, and Alan Wald, The Responsibility of Intellectuals: Selected Essays on Marxist Traditions in Cultural Commitment, (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1992), p. 88.

⁶ Richard Rovere, New Masses, September 5, 1939, pp. 5-6.

⁷ I.F. Stone, "Chamberlain's Russo-German Pact," The Nation, September 23, 1939, pp. 313-316; "Hitler Will Be Addressing," p. 305 [unsigned, but by IFS]; "With Organized Minorities Deluging," The Nation, September 30, 1939, p. 335 [unsigned, by IFS]. The New York Public Library's collection of bound volumes of The Nation contain handwritten annotations giving authorship of unsigned editorials.

⁸ I.F. Stone to Freda Kirchwey, undated (October 1939), Freda Kirchwey Collection. Soviet Russia Today ran an identical text—but without Stone's name.

⁹ "Dictators at Work," The Nation, September 30, 1939, pp. 337-338.

¹⁰ Granville Hicks, "New Directions on the Left," The New Republic, June 17, 1940, pp. 815-818. Whether Hicks was right about Stone's willingness to join the CP will never be known, but the "G-String" was a staple of Stone's rhetoric, as was the twice-sold gold brick. Given that Hicks was writing about a tiny group of left intellectuals that included both Stone and himself, there is little doubt about his correspondent's identity.

¹¹ "Blackmailer's Peace," The Nation, October 14, 1939, p. 401. [unsigned]

¹² I.F. Stone to Michael Blankfort, October 21, 1939. Blankfort MSS.

¹³ W.H. Auden, "September 1, 1939," The English Auden, (New York: Random House, 1977).

¹⁴ Stephen Whitfield, A Critical American: The Politics of Dwight Macdonald, Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1984; Labor Action, May 27, 1940, p.1. and July 22, 1940, p. 1. Howe, who at least had the excuse of extreme youth, soon went into the Army, where he revised his views. But Macdonald never renounced his "plague on both your houses" approach to the Nazis and the British. Both men went on to greater achievements, and their early lapses of judgement, of whatever magnitude, would not be worth mentioning were it not for the legions of mythologizers who persist in depicting the Trotskyists of the 1930s and 1940s as clear-sighted anti-Stalinists, instead of sectarians who, though right about Stalin (frequently for the wrong reasons) were hardly models of political prescience. Anyone doubting the adage that there is no mythologizer like a self-mythologizer need only turn to The Truants, William Barrett's memoir of Partisan Review, where (on p. 76) he describes the period following the pact as the magazine's "most shining hour—certainly its period of greatest courage." This of a time when PR's July, 1941 "10 Propositions on the War," by Macdonald and Clement Greenberg, closed with the bland assertion that "all support of whatever kind must be withheld from Churchill and Roosevelt."

¹⁵ I.F. Stone, "Chamberlain's Russo-German Pact," loc. cit.; I.F. Stone, "The Chicken or the Egg?," The Nation, November 4, 1939, pp. 500-501; James T. Farrell to Freda Kirchwey, October 30, 1939, Freda Kirchwey Collection.

¹⁶ Granville Hicks, "The Fighting Decade," The Saturday Review of Literature, XII (July 6, 1940), pp. 3-17.

¹⁷ Sanford Lakoff, Max Lerner: Pilgrim in the Promised Land, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1998), p. 108.

¹⁸ Richard Rovere, Final Reports: Personal Reflections on Politics and History in Our Time, (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1984), p. 67

¹⁹ Granville Hicks to Richard Rovere, November 8, 1939, Richard Rovere Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ I.F. Stone, "Justice Frankfurter," The Nation, October 14, 1939, pp. 443-444.

²² Daniel Aaron, Writers on the Left: Episodes in American Literary Communism, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1961), p. 376.

²³ I.F. Stone to Michael Blankfort, October 15, 1939.

²⁴ The New York Times, December 2, 1939, p.1.

²⁵ Carl Rollyson, Lillian Hellman: Her Legend and Her Legacy, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), p. 148.

²⁶ Isserman, op. cit., pp. 53-54; I.F. Stone, "The Finns at Geneva," The Nation, December 16, 1939, p. 667-668. [unsigned]

²⁷ "They Cry War," The Nation, November 4, 1939, pp. 483.

²⁸ I.F. Stone, "Nineteenth-Century Bogeywoman," The Nation, October 14, 1939, p. 418.

²⁹ I.F. Stone, "Portrait of a Dollar-a-Year Man," The Nation, September 30, 1939, pp. 345-347.

³⁰ The Nation, November 25, 1939, p. 568.

³¹ Deborah E. Lipstadt, Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust 1933-1945, (New York: The Free Press, 1986) cites the Nation and PM as among a handful of publications that attempted to warn America of the magnitude of the Holocaust.

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- ³² Isidor Feinstein, "For an Investors' Union," The Nation, May 22, 1937, pp. 597-598.
- ³³ Interview with Shirley Kasdon (née Strauch), January 29, 1993.
- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ I.F. Stone, "Defense Hysteria and the Investor," Your Investments I:6 (July, 1940), pp. 4-5.
- ³⁶ Feinstein, op. cit.
- ³⁷ Eric A. Gordon, Mark the Music: The Life and Work of Marc Blitzstein, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), p. 136.
- ³⁸ Robert D. Leiter, The Musicians and Petrillo, (New York: Octagon Books, 1974), pp. 47.
- ³⁹ "The Worst Enemies of Labor" The Nation, September 7, 1940, p. 182
- ⁴⁰ Leiter, loc. cit.
- ⁴¹ Freda Kirchway to I.F. Stone, September 18, 1940. Nation Collection.
- ⁴² The Federal Writers' Project, The WPA Guide to Washington D.C., (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), p. 6.
- ⁴³ Interview with Creekmore Fath, August 14, 1998.
- ⁴⁴ Interview with Mairi Foreman, December 5, 1991; Interview with Virginia Durr, September 12, 1991. See also Patricia Sullivan, Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), *passim* for an account of this circle.
- ⁴⁵ Alan Brinkley, The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), p. 145.
- ⁴⁶ Interview with Virginia Durr.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid. Ironically, it was Michael Straus, the host of this brilliant evening, who'd talked his boss Ickes out of hiring Izzy when he first left the Post.
- ⁴⁸ "Memorandum for Mr. Tolson, January 12, 1941. Federal Bureau of Investigation New York Field Office File Number 100-NY-90640 (I.F. Stone).
- ⁴⁹ Interview with Steve Rosner, January 27, 1994.
- ⁵⁰ C.A. MacDonald, The United States, Britain, and Appeasement, 1936-1939, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), pp. 120-121.
- ⁵¹ Douglass Aircraft, for example, which sold \$18 million worth of planes in the first quarter of 1941, had a backlog of \$332 million, while Boeing, which had net sales of \$9 million in the first quarter, had a backlog of \$207 million according to I.F. Stone, Business as Usual: The First Year of Defense, (New York: Modern Age, 1941), p. 37.
- ⁵² Eliot Janeway, The Struggle For Survival: A Chronicle of Economic Mobilization in World War II, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951), p. 221.
- ⁵³ Ibid.
- ⁵⁴ Philip Murray, "For Full Production" in The CIO and National Defense, (Washington: American Council on Public Affairs, 1941) p. 7.
- ⁵⁵ Nelson Lichtenstein, Labor's War at Home: The CIO in World War II, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 84-85.
- ⁵⁶ I.F. Stone, "The Long View of Air Defense," The New York Post, December 29, 1938, p. 10.
- ⁵⁷ Lichtenstein, loc. cit.
- ⁵⁸ I.F. Stone, "Labor's Plan: 500 Planes a Day," The Nation, December 21, 1940, pp. 624-625; The New York Times, December 23, 1940, p.1.
- ⁵⁹ Lichtenstein, op. cit., p. 269, n.9. Also my telephone interview with Nelson Lichtenstein.
- ⁶⁰ Brinkley, op. cit., p. 208; Lichtenstein, op. cit., pp. 41, 85-87.

- ⁶¹ The New York Times, for example, editorialized: "the main issue is purely a technical one.... Airplane engines and other essential parts must be made by machine tools which are highly specialized." (January 31, 1941, p. 18).
- ⁶² Lichtenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 88; Brinkley, *loc. cit.*
- ⁶³ Bruce Catton, The Warlords of Washington, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1948), pp. 91-93.
- ⁶⁴ Lichtenstein, *loc. cit.*
- ⁶⁵ Brinkley, *op. cit.*, p. 212.
- ⁶⁶ John Kenneth Galbraith, A Life in our Times: Memoirs, (London: Andre Deutsch, 1981), pp. 157-158.
- ⁶⁷ David Brinkley, Washington Goes To War, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), pp. 172-173.
- ⁶⁸ Ralph Ingersoll, "A Proposition to Create a New Newspaper," Appendix 1 in Roy Hoopes, Ralph Ingersoll, (New York: Atheneum, 1985), p. 399.
- ⁶⁹ Hoopes, *op. cit.*, *passim*, and David Margolick, "PM's Impossible Dream," Vanity Fair, January, 1999, pp. 118-132.
- ⁷⁰ Photographer Morris Engel, quoted in Margolick, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
- ⁷¹ Penn Kimball, The File, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), p. 80.
- ⁷² Ingersoll, *op. cit.*, p. 401.
- ⁷³ Paul Milkman, PM: A New Deal In Journalism, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), p. 66.
- ⁷⁴ I.F. Stone, "Labor Formulates Plane Speed-Up Plan to Help President End Defense Log Jam," PM, December 22, 1940, pp. 1 and 9. See also Stone, "Labor Seeks President's Answer Today on Plan," PM, December 23, 1940 and issues for December 24-30.
- ⁷⁵ I.F. Stone, "His Majesty—Martin Dies," PM, February 24, 1941, p.8.
- ⁷⁶ Ingersoll, *loc. cit.*
- ⁷⁷ J. Anthony Lukas, "Where Are You Now, PM Spinney?," The New Republic, September 9, 1972, pp. 26-30.
- ⁷⁸ Benjamin Stolberg, "Muddled Millions," The Saturday Evening Post, February 15, 1941, pp. 9-10, 88-93.
- ⁷⁹ Lukas, *loc. cit.*
- ⁸⁰ Michael Corris, "The Difficult Freedom of Ad Reinhardt," in John Roberts, ed., Art Has No History: The Making and Unmaking of Modern Art (London: Verso, 1994), pp. 63-110.
- ⁸¹ PM, April 26, 1942, p. 19. See also Philip Nel, "'Said a Bird in the Midst of a Blitz...': How World War II Created Dr. Seuss," Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature XXXIV: ii (June 2001), pp. 65-85, and Richard H. Minear, Dr. Seuss Goes To War: The World War II Editorial Cartoons of Theodor Seuss Geisel, (New York: The New Press, 1999), *passim*.
- ⁸² Abe C. Ravitz, Leanne Zugsmith: Thunder on the Left (New York: International, 1992), *passim*.
- ⁸³ Ralph Ingersoll to the staff of PM, June 18, 1940, reproduced in Federal Bureau of Investigation Headquarters file on PM, 100-36, pp. 37-38. [ck in Milkman]
- ⁸⁴ Ralph Ingersoll, "Volunteer Gestapo," PM, July 12, 1940, p. 8.
- ⁸⁵ I.F. Stone, "Murphy Puts Shoe on Wrong Foot," PM, February 21, 1941, p. 8, and I.F. Stone, "Making Defense Safe for Alcoa," The Nation, September 27, 1941, pp. 271-273; October 4, 1941, pp. 299-301, and October 18, 1941, pp. 363-364.

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- ⁸⁶ Interview with Penn Kimball, December 13, 1991. In his 1954 memoir The Age of Suspicion Wechsler says he “felt personally sorry for Huberman and uncertain about the propriety of replacing him,” (p. 167), but in an interview with the author Wechsler’s protégé, Arnold Beichman, described Huberman’s dismissal, with evident satisfaction, as “a purge.”
- ⁸⁷ Kenneth Stewart, “The People Who Made PM and the Star,” unpublished ms. in Kenneth Stewart Collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.
- ⁸⁸ Milkman, op. cit., p. 111.
- ⁸⁹ I.F. Stone, “Louis D. Brandeis, the Attorney for the People, is Dead,” PM, October 6, 1941, p. 9.
- ⁹⁰ Leon Edel, letter to the author, March 28, 1992.
- ⁹¹ I.F. Stone to Michael Blankfort, January 15, 1941, Blankfort MSS.
- ⁹² James Wechsler, The Age of Suspicion, (London: Andre Deutsch, 1954), p. 172.
- ⁹³ Lichtenstein, op. cit., pp. 61-62. Lichtenstein writes that there were 4,288 strikes involving 2.4 million workers in 1941—more than any year since 1919 (p. 46).
- ⁹⁴ According to Milkman, op. cit., p. 67, Stone believed it was the sinking of the Reuben James that really forced America in the war. I.F. Stone to Michael Blankfort, January 15, 1941, Blankfort MSS.
- ⁹⁵ Clement Greenberg and Dwight Macdonald, “10 Propositions on the War,” Partisan Review, (July-August, 1941), p. 275.
- ⁹⁶ I.F. Stone, “F.D.R.’s First Task,” The Nation, August 23, 1941, pp. 155-156.
- ⁹⁷ Turner Catledge, The New York Times, June 24, 1941, cited in I.F. Stone, The Truman Era, (New York: Little, Brown, 1972), pp. 14-15.
- ⁹⁸ George Orwell, “Letter from London,” Partisan Review VIII:6 (November-December 1941, p. 498.
- ⁹⁹ I.F. Stone, “The G-String Conspiracy,” The Nation, July 26, 1941, pp. 66-67; see also David Milton, loc. cit.
- ¹⁰⁰ I.F. Stone, “War Comes to Washington,” The Nation, December 13, 1941.
- ¹⁰¹ Jordan Schwarz, The New Dealers (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), p. 152.
- ¹⁰² I.F. Stone, “In the First Line of Defense,” in Murray, Brophy, Carey and Stone, The CIO and National Defense,” (Washington: American Council on Public Affairs, 1941), p. 1.
- ¹⁰³ I.F. Stone, Business As Usual: The First Year of Defense, (New York: Modern Age, 1941), pp. 258, 265.
- ¹⁰⁴ Janeway, op. cit., p. 170.
- ¹⁰⁵ Alan Brinkley, op. cit., pp. 240-241.
- ¹⁰⁶ Michael Straight, “The First Year and the Next,” The New Republic, September 1, 1941, p. 284; Lewis Corey, “Monopoly and Defense,” The Nation, September 6, 1941, p. 204; Dwight Macdonald, “Democracy and the War Effort,” Partisan Review, September-October, 1941, pp. 438-439.
- ¹⁰⁷ I.F. Stone to Freda Kirchwey, “Weds. nite” (December 1940); Freda Kirchwey to I.F. Stone, February 27, 1941; Stephen Early to Freda Kirchwey, March 1, 1941; I.F. Stone to Freda Kirchwey, “Wednesday morning” (September 1941); Freda Kirchwey to I.F. Stone, September 25, 1941; Nation Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard.
- ¹⁰⁸ Schwarz, op. cit., p. 303. Harold Ickes to I.F. Stone, September 27, 1941 and Harold L. Ickes, Secret Diary, p. 6187 (January 4, 1942), Harold L. Ickes

Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress; Freda Kirchwey to I.F. Stone, May 23, 1941, Nation Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard.

¹⁰⁹ Ickes, Secret Diary, p. 6187 (January 4, 1942).

¹¹⁰ Joseph Borkin, The Crime and Punishment of I.G. Farben, (New York: the Free Press, 1978), pp. 77-82.

¹¹¹ Freda Kirchwey to I.F. Stone, March 31, 1942.

¹¹² Neither did Robert LaFollette, who echoed Izzy's language in describing the cartel agreements as "industrial treason." See Alonzo Hamby, Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and American Liberalism, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), p. 6.

¹¹³ I.F. Stone, "An Open Letter to John D. Rockefeller, Jr.," PM, April 5-12, 1942.

¹¹⁴ Borkin, op. cit., pp. 91-94; Interview with Creekmore Fath.

¹¹⁵ Schwarz, loc. cit.; Ickes Secret Diary, pp. 6702-6704 (June 14, 1942); I.F. Stone, "The Baruch Report," The Nation, September 19, 1942, pp. 227-228; Harold Ickes to I.F. Stone, September 28, 1942; I.F. Stone, "PM Expose Breaks Russian Aid Blockade," PM, September 29, 1942, p. 11; Harold Ickes to I.F. Stone, September 30, 1942.

¹¹⁶ Ickes Secret Diary, pp. 7037-7039 (October 4, 1942) and pp. 7070-7071 (October 10, 1942).

¹¹⁷ I.F. Stone, "F.D.R. and the May Bill," The Nation, July 19, 1941, pp. 46-47;

I.F. Stone, "Ask U.S. Probe of Eugene Cox," PM, March 29, 1942, p. 12; see also PM, May 14, 1943, p. 3 and I.F. Stone, "Mr. Biddle Is Afraid," The Nation, May 22, 1943, pp. 735-736.

¹¹⁸ Or so it seemed. The FCC's champion in Congress was Clifford Durr's close friend Lyndon Johnson, who according to Robert Caro used his influence with Sam Rayburn to counter Cox. During the FCC fight Johnson kept his distance from Durr, but (again according to Caro) conferred constantly with Durr's chief assistant, Red James. Caro argues persuasively that Johnson acted neither out of friendship nor political principle, but rather to further his wife Lady Bird's application to purchase KTBC, the Texas radio station that was the foundation of the Johnsons' personal fortune. Robert Caro, The Years Of Lyndon Johnson: Volume 2, Means of Ascent, (London: Pimlico, 2002), pp. 89-93.

¹¹⁹ Freda Kirchwey to I.F. Stone, September 9, 1941; I.F. Stone, "Next Step on Bridges," The Nation, October 11, 1941, pp. 329-330.

¹²⁰ Freda Kirchwey to I. F. Stone, July 15, 1941 and December 20, 1943.

¹²¹ Interview with Robert Bendiner, 1994.

¹²² I.F. Stone to Max Lerner, March 27, 1943, Max Lerner Collection, Yale University Library.

¹²³ Celia Gilbert, "The Sacred Fire," in Sara Ruddick and Pamela Daniels, eds., Working It Out, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), pp. 306-319.

¹²⁴ Robert Bendiner to I.F. Stone, January 28, 1943. Nation Collection, Harvard University Library.

¹²⁵ Federal Bureau of Investigation, Headquarters File 100-90640 (I.F. Stone). The program for the Artists' Front to Win the War benefit was in the files of J.B. Mathews, research director of the Dies Committee. J.B. Mathews Papers, Special Collections, Duke University Library.

¹²⁶ Interview with Albert Silverman, April 15, 1994.

¹²⁷ I.F. Stone, "Washington Notes," The Nation, May 23, 1942, p. 591.

¹²⁸ Hugo Black, FRED KOREMATSU v. UNITED STATES: 323 U.S. 214, 65 S. Ct. 193, 89 L. Ed. 194; I.F. Stone, (unsigned) "The Supreme Court and Racialism,"

The Nation, December 30, 1944, pp. 788-789.

¹²⁹ I.F. Stone, "Biddle and the Facts," The Nation, June 13, 1942, pp. 674-677.

¹³⁰ I.F. Stone to Freda Kirchwey, "Wednesday morning," (September 1941).

¹³¹ I.F. Stone, "The Case of the Trotskyites," PM, December 31, 1943, p. 2.

¹³² "American Monopolies and the War," Daily Worker, April 24, 1942; I.F. Stone, "Our Slacker Patents," The Nation, May 2, 1942, p. 506.

¹³³ Paul Willen, "Who 'Collaborated' with Russia?," Antioch Review, Fall 1954, pp. 259-283. Willen also cites James Reston, Wendell Willkie and Walter Winchell.

¹³⁴ Luncheon program and list of sponsors from Newspaper Guild archives.

¹³⁵ David Brinkley, op. cit., pp. 246-247; H.G. Nicholas, ed., Washington Despatches, 1941-1945, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 146.

¹³⁶ I.F. Stone, "Capital Notes," The Nation, April 10, 1943, pp. 512-513. Stone's departure was noted by W.E.B. Du Bois in "A Chronicle of Race Relations," Phylon, IV:3 (1943), pp. 270-289. His resignation was also covered extensively in the black press, prompting The Capital Press Club, an association of black journalists, to offer Izzy a membership, which he accepted.

¹³⁷ I.F. Stone, "Aid and Comfort to the Enemy," The Nation, January 3, 1942, pp. 6-7.

¹³⁸ I.F. Stone, "Fighting the Fighting French," The Nation, November 28, 1942, pp. 565-566.

¹³⁹ I.F. Stone, "Who OK'd Franco Deal?," PM, February 18, 1942, p. 12 ; Blind memo, April 30, 1942 re: Joseph L. Rauh, Jr., Federal Bureau of Investigation, Headquarters File 100-90640 (I.F. Stone), Section 2, p. 49.

¹⁴⁰ I.F. Stone, "Did Hull and Welles Tell the Truth?," The Nation, January 9, 1943, pp. 42-44; Memo from W.D. Puleston, January 14, 1943, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Headquarters File 100-90640 (I.F. Stone). Puleston, a security officer for the BEW, wrote: "it is believed that a crime as provided in the Espionage Act has been committed." But as Sumner Welles informed J. Edgar Hoover, the cable, though in the secret "brown" code, were not themselves classified SECRET or CONFIDENTIAL.

¹⁴¹ I.F. Stone, "Peyrouton, Vichy Anti-Semite, Was Named Governor of Algeria With Approval of U.S. Minister," PM, January 22, 1942, p. 3.

¹⁴² "Hull Lets African Tick Get Under His Skin," PM, January 29, 1943.

¹⁴³ Congressional Record, 89th Congress, 478, (February 1, 1943) and 89th Congress, 511, (February 2, 1943), Remarks of Rep. John Rankin. Cited in Robert Cottrell, Izzy, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), p. 332, n. 14.

¹⁴⁴ Michael Straus, "Memorandum for the Secretary," October 31, 1942; Harold Ickes to Freda Kirchwey, November 2, 1942; Michael Straus to Harold Ickes, January 29, 1943; Harold Ickes to I.F. Stone, January 30, 1943; I.F. Stone to Harold Ickes, February 4, 1943, all in the Harold Ickes collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. A copy of the official State Department transcript of the press conference is also in the Ickes papers.

¹⁴⁵ Federal Bureau of Investigation, Headquarters File 100-90640 (I.F. Stone), Documents 1 and 2 (July 1941).

¹⁴⁶ XXX, "Washington Gestapo," The Nation, July 17, 1943, pp. 64-66 and July 24, 1943, pp. 92-95.

¹⁴⁷ Federal Bureau of Investigation, Headquarters File 100-90640 (I.F. Stone), Hoover to Tolson and Nichols, November 18, 1943; Morris Ernst, "Another Witness," The Nation, September 25, 1943, p. 362.

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- ¹⁴⁸ I.F. Stone, "XXX and the F.B.I.," The Nation, September 25, 1943, p. 342.
- ¹⁴⁹ Harold Ickes Secret Diary, p. 7534 (March 14, 1943) and p. 7267 (April 10, 1943); I.F. Stone, "Shipsaw: Jesse Jones Finances Public Power Plant for Aluminum, Ltd., But Public Projects in U.S.A. Are Stalled," PM, March 22, 1943, p.3; I.F. Stone, "The Shipsaw Scandal," The Nation, April 3, 1943, pp. 475-477.
- ¹⁵⁰ Graydon Forrer and Elise Glickman, Interview with I.F. Stone, 1979. Courtesy of Graydon Forrer.
- ¹⁵¹ Harold Ickes Secret Diary, p. 7704 (May 9, 1943) ; pp. 7779-7780 (May 23, 1943); pp. 8244-8245 (October 10, 1943); Harold Ickes to I.F. Stone, "PERSONAL," May 21, 1943; I.F. Stone to Harold Ickes, May 22, 1943.
- ¹⁵² I.F. Stone, "Wallace Betrayed," The Nation, July 24, 1943, pp. 89-90. Freda Kirchwey was particularly distressed by "the violence of your language." In a letter dated July 29, 1943 she said "you sounded as if you let your anger override every other consideration."
- ¹⁵³ I.F. Stone, "What F.D.R. Forgot," The Nation, January 8, 1944, p. 34-35; I.F. Stone, "Some Facts of Life," PM, April 14, 1944, p.2.
- ¹⁵⁴ I.F. Stone, "One Year After Pearl Harbor," The Nation, December 12, 1942, pp. 639-640.
- ¹⁵⁵ Richard Harris Smith, OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 1981, pp. 12, 70.
- ¹⁵⁶ I.F. Stone, "Cordell Hull and the Peace," PM, November 27, 1944, p. 2.
- ¹⁵⁷ Deborah E. Lipstadt, Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust 1933-1945, (New York: The Free Press, 1986), *passim*.
- ¹⁵⁸ "Jews Reveal Story of Slaughter by Nazis ... FDR is Shocked by Verified Records," PM, December 9, 1942, pp. 12, 18-20.
- ¹⁵⁹ Philip S. Bernstein, "The Jews of Europe: The Remnants of a People," The Nation, January 2, 1943.
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- ¹⁶¹ Freda Kirchwey, "While the Jews Die," The Nation, March 13, 1943, pp. 366-367.
- ¹⁶² I.F. Stone, "The Indian Skeleton at Atlantic City," The Nation, December 11, 1943, pp. 686-687.
- ¹⁶³ PM, February 15, 1943, , p. 14; August 27, 1943, pp. 12-13; December 10, 1944, p. 2.
- ¹⁶⁴ I.F. Stone, "For the Jews--Life or Death?," The Nation, June 10, 1944, pp. 670-671.
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- ¹⁶⁷ I.F. Stone, "Washington Underground," PM, April 5, 1945, p. 2.
- ¹⁶⁸ I.F. Stone for the Editors of PM, "Franklin Delano Roosevelt," April 13, 1945, p. 1; I.F. Stone, "Farewell to F.D.R.," The Nation, April 21, 1945, pp. 436-437.

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- ² I.F. Stone, "Saluting the Red Army," *PM*, February, 1, 1945, p. 2.
- ³ R. Alton Lee, *Truman and Taft-Hartley*, (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966), p. 18.
- ⁴ *PM* staff chart, Ralph Ingersoll Collection, Mugar Library, Boston University (Ingersoll MSS).
- ⁵ Kenneth Stewart, "The People Who Made *PM* and the Star," p. 92; Ralph Ingersoll to "J.P.L and M.L.," March 31, 1946, Ingersoll MSS.
- ⁶ Drew Pearson Papers, Box F 150, Lyndon B. Johnson Library.
- ⁷ I.F. Stone, "The Dies Challenge to Free Speech," *PM*, March 22, 1944, p. 2; Ralph Ingersoll, "Complete Index of *PM* Accomplishments," p. 20, Ingersoll MSS.
- ⁸ I.F. Stone, "The Same Old Codgers," *The Nation*, May 5, 1945, pp. 506-507.
- ⁹ Michael Blankfort to I.F. Stone, May 14, 1945, Blankfort MSS.
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- ¹³ Interview with Sidney Roger, January 31, 1994.
- ¹⁴ Harvey Klehr and Ronald Radosh, *The Amerasia Spy Case: Prelude to McCarthyism* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. 53; Robert P. Newman, *Owen Lattimore and the "Loss" of China*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), *passim*.
- ¹⁵ "Pacificus," "Dangerous Experts," *The Nation*, February 3, 1945, pp. 128-129.
- ¹⁶ I.F. Stone, *Underground to Palestine*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), p. 7.
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- ¹⁸ Interview with Jesse Zel Lurie, May 25, 1993.
- ¹⁹ Eliahu Elath (Epstein), *Zionism at the UN: A Diary of the First Days* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2001), pp. 242, 246.
- ²⁰ I.F. Stone, "Back in Washington," *PM*, May 29, 1945, p.2.
- ²¹ Ronald Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980), pp. 420-422.
- ²² Stone, *loc. cit.*
- ²³ Though far from an objective account, Klehr and Radosh's *The Amerasia Spy Case: Prelude to McCarthyism* is an invaluable reference to which I am indebted here and in the following paragraphs relating to the case.
- ²⁴ "I.F. Stone," Federal Bureau of Investigation, Headquarters File 100-37078, Section 1, Document 30 A, p. 113; see also Klehr and Radosh, *op. cit.*, p. 77.
- ²⁵ Interview with Andrew Roth, November 18, 2004.
- ²⁶ I.F. Stone, "What's Behind the Arrest of the Six?," *PM*, June 8, 1945, p. 2.
- ²⁷ I.F. Stone, "Arrest of 'the Six'," *The Nation*, June 16, 1945, pp. 666-667.
- ²⁸ *New York Times*, June 8, 1945, p. 1, cited in Klehr and Radosh, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 99.
- ³⁰ I.F. Stone, "The Red Issue and The Six," *PM*, June 11, 1945, p. 2.
- ³¹ Klehr and Radosh, *op. cit.*, p. 131.
- ³² *Ibid.*, p. 135; David McCullough, *Truman* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), p. 475.
- ³³ I.F. Stone, *loc.cit.*
- ³⁴ Interview with Christopher Stone, May 8, 1994; I.F. Stone, "What About the Emperor?," *PM*, August 13, 1945, p.2.
- ³⁵ I.F. Stone, "What Russia's Participation Means," *PM*, August 9, 1945, p. 2.
- ³⁶ I.F. Stone, "Inside Palestine, How the Jews and Arabs Get Along," *PM*, November 8, 1945, p. 2.
- ³⁷ I.F. Stone, "The Harrison Report: A Revelation and a Challenge," *PM*, October 1, 1945, p. 2.
- ³⁸ I.F. Stone, "Anti-British Campaign Won't Help Palestine," *PM*, December 7, 1945, p. 8.
- ³⁹ I.F. Stone, "Palestine Pilgrimage," *The Nation*, December 8, 1945, pp. 615-617.
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- ⁴¹ I.F. Stone, "Why Palestine is 'Home' to Jews," *PM*, December 4, 1945, p. 4; "Palestine Pilgrimage."
- ⁴² I.F. Stone, "Bi-Nationalism As Solution for Palestine," *PM*, December 24, 1945, p. 6.
- ⁴³ I.F. Stone, "Russia—and the British Policy in Palestine," *PM*, December 11, 1945, p. 7.
- ⁴⁴ I.F. Stone, "Palestine Pilgrimage"; see also I.F. Stone, "Egypt's Misery a Contrast to Rebirth in Palestine," *PM*, December 23, 1945, p. 6.
- ⁴⁵ I.F. Stone, "Jewry in a Blind Alley," *The Nation*, November 24, 1945, p. 543.
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- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁸ R.I. [Ralph Ingersoll] to J.P.L. [John Lewis] and M.L. [Max Lerner] , March 31, 1946, Ralph Ingersoll MSS.
- ⁴⁹ Kenneth Stewart, "The People Who Made PM and the Star," p. 114-118; Interview with Arnold Beichman.
- ⁵⁰ "The Press," *Time*, February 25, 1946; I.F. Stone, "Salute to Harold Ickes," *PM*, February 14, 1946, p. 2.
- ⁵¹ I.F. Stone, "Where There Is No Vision," *The Nation*, February 2, 1946.
- ⁵² Mark L. Kleinman, *A World of Hope, A World of Fear: Henry A. Wallace, Reinhold Neibuhr, and American Liberalism*, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2000), pp. xii-xv, 207-214. See also Norman D. Markowitz, *The Rise and Fall of the People's Century: Henry Wallace and American Liberalism, 1941-1948*, (New York: The Free Press, 1973).
- ⁵³ D.D. Guttenplan, "The Death of a Reporter," *Media Studies Journal*, (Winter 1996) X: 4, pp. 173-183. See also Edmund Keeley, *The Salonika Bay Murder*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), Kati Marton, *The Polk Conspiracy*, (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1990), and Elias Vlantou, *Who Killed George Polk*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996).
- ⁵⁴ Marton, *Op. cit.*, p. 23.
- ⁵⁵ I.F. Stone, "Wallace Won't Quit—Unless Asked to," *PM*, September 16, 1946, p.3; "Wallace's Appeal to Truman—For Peace," *PM*, September 18, 1946, p. 3; "The Story of Truman versus Wallace," *PM*, September 22, 1946, p.2. See also

Richard J. Walton, Henry Wallace, Harry Truman, and the Cold War, (New York: Viking Press, 1976), *passim*.

⁵⁶ George F. Kennan, "The Long Telegram," February 22, 1946. Published in Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946, vol. VI; full text at <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/coldwar/documents/episode-1/kennan.htm>.

⁵⁷ "X" (George F. Kennan), "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," Foreign Affairs, XXVI: 2, pp. 566-82.

⁵⁸ "Meet the Press," September 20, 1946, Meet the Press Collection, Library of Congress, Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Sound Division.

⁵⁹ Interview with Martha Rountree, May 26, 1994.

⁶⁰ I.F. Stone, "Some Questions for J. Edgar Hoover," October 6, 1946, p. 2.

According to Paul Buhle in The Encyclopedia of the American Left, McKenney and her husband Richard Bransten were expelled for refusing to "condemn the discredited leadership of Earl Browder."

⁶¹ Curtis D. MacDougall, Gideon's Army, (New York: Marzani & Munsell, 1965), pp. 110-112.

⁶² "I.F. Stone," Federal Bureau of Investigation, Headquarters File 100-37078, Section 1, Document 30 A, p. 150. According to the file entry CIO attorney Lee Pressman and his wife were also invited but were unable to attend. However David Karr, one of Drew Pearson's legmen and his wife Madeline, who wrote for the Nation, were present.

⁶³ Far and away the best account of Whittaker Chambers is Sam Tanenhaus, Whittaker Chambers: A Biography, (New York: Random House, 1997), which I personally found largely persuasive, including on the contentious question of Alger Hiss. Of the numerous dissenters, the most credible is John Lowenthal, "Venona and Alger Hiss," Intelligence and National Security, XV:3 (Autumn 2000), pp. 98-130.

⁶⁴ John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 93-115, 129-152. For background on Bentley see Kathryn S. Olmsted, Red Spy Queen: A Biography of Elizabeth Bentley, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

⁶⁵ "I.F. Stone," Federal Bureau of Investigation, Headquarters File 100-37078, Section 1, Document 34, pp. 66-67. The document, a summary of Remington's testimony before a Federal Loyalty board, goes on to say that Bentley handed him articles from PM written by Stone and Crawford, with the implication that she had been assisting both writers—a scenario that, given Crawford's vigorous anti-Communism, seems unlikely. On the other hand Bentley's implication of Crawford may explain why James Wechsler, who normally had little time for radicals who didn't become active anti-Communists, rushed to defend Remington in print. Wechsler's defense of Remington is mentioned in Alonzo Hamby, Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and American Liberalism, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), who cites Wechsler, "The Remington Loyalty Case," The New Republic, CXX (February 28, 1949), pp. 18-20.

⁶⁶ Haynes and Klehr, Op. Cit., pp. 218-221. The authors note that "several dozen International Brigades veterans served in the OSS units that worked with resistance forces in enemy-occupied areas" though given what happened to Marzani, who ended up serving a 32 month prison sentence for perjury, it was perhaps inevitable that very few of them felt inclined to come forward after the war. Klehr and Haynes also note (on p. 219) that CPUSA General

Secretary Eugene Dennis himself negotiated with Donovan the details of the party's collaboration with the OSS.

⁶⁷ I.F. Stone, "Indicted Ex-U.S. Aide Wrote 'Radical' Film," *PM*, January 19, 1947, p. 6.

⁶⁸ *PM*, January 27, 1947, p. 3.

⁶⁹ I.F. Stone, "Labor Dept., Unlike War Dept., Grants Hearing to 4 Accused.," *PM*, January 29, 1947, p. 3.

⁷⁰ I.F. Stone, "Patterson Replies: 'We're Still at War'," *PM*, February 2, 1947, p. 4.

⁷¹ Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1998), pp. 122-129.

⁷² I.F. Stone, "The Eisler Affair as Spectacle and Warning," *PM*, February 9, 1947, p. 5.

⁷³ *The Daily Worker*, February 20, 1947, pp. 5, 8.

⁷⁴ "I.F. Stone," Federal Bureau of Investigation, Headquarters File 100-37078, Section 1, clipping of I.F. Stone, "Is the District of Columbia Becoming Police State?," *PM*, June 15, 1947, p. 8.

⁷⁵ Arnold Offner, *Another Such Victory: President Truman and the Cold War, 1945-1953*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), pp. 197-199. For a more sympathetic view, see Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986).

⁷⁶ Carl Bernstein, *Loyalties: A Son's Memoir* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989) pp. 190-198.

⁷⁷ I.F. Stone, "It's Not the Heat, It's the Hysteria," *PM*, July 2, 1947, p. 2.

⁷⁸ I.F. Stone, "Confessions of a Dupe," *New York Star*, August 25, 1948, p. 13.

⁷⁹ Andrew Patner, *I.F. Stone: A Portrait*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), p. 67; see also Patricia Bosworth's memoir of her parents, *Every Little Thing Your Heart Desires: An American Family Story*, (New York: Touchstone Books, 1998).

⁸⁰ Bartley Crum, "Escape From Europe," *The Nation*, January 25, 1947, pp. 104-105.

⁸¹ Stone, "Confessions of a Dupe."

⁸² I.F. Stone, *The Truman Era: 1945-1952*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972) p. 161.

⁸³ I.F. Stone, "Washington Perspective," *New York Star*, June 30, 1948, p. 19.

⁸⁴ Stone, "Confessions of a Dupe."

⁸⁵ I.F. Stone, "The Last Chance," *PM*, December 21, 1947, p. 16, and "The Wallace Plan and the Communists," *PM*, January 2, 1948, p. 10.

⁸⁶ I.F. Stone, "Mr. Truman's Police State," *The Nation*, October 25, 1947, pp. 436-437.

⁸⁷ I.F. Stone, "Count Me In, Too," *PM*, March 15, 1948, p. 8.

⁸⁸ "Gerhard P. Van Arkel, 77, Former NLRB Counsel," *Washington Post*, October 19, 1984, p. D6.

⁸⁹ R. Alton Lee, *Op. Cit.*, p. 50.

⁹⁰ There is also the question of whether Truman's outrage at Taft-Hartley was genuine. In Robert H. Zieger, *The CIO: 1935-1955*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995) the author, citing James A. Gross, *The Reshaping of the National Labor Relations Board* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1981), pp. 258-259, says that NLRB member James Reynolds reported a conversation with Truman in which the President said he expected his veto to be overridden. "Taft-Hartley was essentially a good and needed law," Reynolds

reports Truman as saying, but “if he did not veto Taft-Hartley, he would lose labor support and most likely the election....”

⁹¹ Alonzo Hamby, Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and American Liberalism, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), pp. 30-37 offers a comprehensive, conventional account of the origins of the ADA. (For example Hamby describes the membership of the ICC-ASP as “politically naïve” adding that “its leadership showed no concern about the Stalinists and their fellow travellers.” Mark L. Kleinman offers a more nuanced (and more sympathetic to the dilemmas facing popular front leftists) account in A World of Hope, A World of Fear. Hamby also says the ICC-ASP was the most heavily Communist-infiltrated liberal group, a distinction that more properly belongs to the American Jewish Committee [see Paul Lyons, “Philadelphia Jews and Radicalism,” in Murray Friedman, ed., Philadelphia Jewish Life: 1940-1984, (Philadelphia: Seth Press, 1986), p. 120.]

⁹² I.F. Stone, “The Case of the Legless Veteran,” in The Truman Era: 1945-1952, pp. 86-88.

⁹³ Murray Polner, review of James Kutcher, The Case of the Legless Veteran, posted on HNN January 9, 2005:

<http://hnn.us/roundup/comments/9491.html>.

⁹⁴ I.F. Stone, “The Shadow Cast at Foley Square,” in The Truman Era: 1945-1952, pp. 93-96.

⁹⁵ Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., “History of the Week,” The New York Post, July 7, 1951 and September 2, 1951, cited in Victor S. Navasky, Naming Names (London: Penguin Books, 1991), pp. 53-54.

⁹⁶ Was White a spy? For the most persuasive version of the affirmative case see John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, In Denial: Historians, Communism and Espionage, (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2003), pp. 182-192. For the most convincing rebuttal, see James M. Boughton and Roger Sandilands, “Politics and the Attack on FDR’s Economists,” Intelligence and National Security, (Spring 2002). For a nuanced, credible account somewhere between the two see R. Bruce Craig, Treasonable Doubt: The Harry Dexter White Spy Case (Lawrence: The University of Kansas Press), 2004.

⁹⁷ Interview with Simon Gerson, October 3, 1991; see also Simon Gerson, Pete: The Story of Peter V. Cacchione, New York’s First Communist Councilman, (New York: International Publishers, 1976), p. 203.

⁹⁸ Selma R. Williams, Red Listed: Haunted by the Washington Witch Hunt, (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1993), pp. 218-220; “I.F. Stone,” Federal Bureau of Investigation, Headquarters File 100-37078, Section 1,

⁹⁹ I.F. Stone, “Free Speech is Worth the Risk,” in The Truman Era: 1945-1952, pp. 108-111.

Chapter 7: The Great Freeze

¹ Patricia Sullivan, Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), *passim*.

² Interview with Mairi Foreman, December 5, 1991.

³ “Meet the Press,” May 6, 1949, Meet the Press Collection, Library of Congress, Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Sound Division.

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- ⁴ "Meet the Press," November 26, 1949, Meet the Press Collection, Library of Congress, Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Sound Division.
- ⁵ I.F. Stone, "Palestine Run-Around," *The Nation*, March 18, 1944, pp. 326-328. For a more sympathetic portrayal of Hurley as an "anti-imperial imperialist" see Christopher Hitchens, *Blood, Class and Nostalgia: Anglo-American Ironies*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1990), pp. 227-228.
- ⁶ "Meet the Press," August 15, 1949, Lawrence Spivak Collection, The Library of Congress, Manuscript Division.
- ⁷ "Below-Belt Video," August 17, 1949, in Spivak Collection.
- ⁸ John Crosby, "Temper, Temper, on the Air," New York *Herald Tribune*, August 20, 1949, in Spivak Collection.
- ⁹ Robert Cottrell, *Izzy: A Biography of I.F. Stone*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), pp. 157-158; "Meet the Press" audience information from an April 1994 interview with Susan Shicone of A.C. Nielsen.
- ¹⁰ I.F. Stone to Kenneth Stewart, January 26, 1950, in Kenneth Stewart Collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.
- ¹¹ A.J. Liebling, "Toward a One-Paper Town," in *The Press* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975), pp. 45-55.
- ¹² Andrew Patner, *I.F. Stone: A Portrait*, (New York, Anchor Books, 1990), pp. 76-78; Cottrell, *op. cit.*, p. 148.
- ¹³ Cottrell, *loc. cit.*; I.F. Stone, "Can America Plan Without Planning?" *The New Republic*, January 24, 1949, pp. 11-12; Harold Field to I.F. Stone, January 17, 1949, Nation Collection.
- ¹⁴ "I.F. Stone," Federal Bureau of Investigation, Headquarters File 100-37078, Correlation Summary, p. 345.
- ¹⁵ I.F. Stone, "Agit-Prop Defense," *The New York Post*, March 14, 1949, p. 37; "Decorum and Frame-Ups," *The Daily Worker*, (undated, clipping in author's possession.)
- ¹⁶ I.F. Stone, "Lenin and Locke," *The New York Post*, February 28, 1949, p. 48.
- ¹⁷ "I.F. Stone," Federal Bureau of Investigation, Headquarters File 100-37078, Section 3.
- ¹⁸ "Red Visitors Cause Rumpus," *Life*, XXVI: 14 (April 4, 1949), pp. 40-43.
- ¹⁹ Dwight McDonald, "The Waldorf Conference," *Politics* VI (Winter, 1949) pp. 32A-32D. Though McDonald predictably found himself beset by villains on all sides, the lone hero of his account, excepting himself, was a fledgling novelist named Norman Mailer. Mailer's determination to plow his own furrow was signalled by his presence, months before the Waldorf affair, on the letterhead of the Kutcher Civil Rights committee, along with I.F. Stone.
- ²⁰ I.F. Stone, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office File 100-NY-90640, Document 10.
- ²¹ New York Public Library, Dorothy Schiff Collection, Finding Aid, <http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/rbk/faids/schiff.html>.
- ²² T.O. Thackrey, "The Compass Story—Some Lessons Learned in Failure," *Editor and Publisher*, December 26, 1953, pp. 9, 50-51.
- ²³ *Ibid.*
- ²⁴ Interview with Christopher Stone, May 8, 1994.
- ²⁵ Michael J. Ybarra, *Washington Gone Crazy: Senator Pat McCarran and the Great American Communist Hunt*, (Hanover, N.H.: Steerforth Press, 2004), pp. 433-458.
- ²⁶ Selma R. Williams, *Red Listed: Haunted by the Washington Witch Hunt*, (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1993), p. 218.

²⁷ 89th Congress, Congressional Record 511 (February 2, 1943), remarks of Congressman Rankin.

²⁸ Jessica Wang, "Edward Condon and the Cold War Politics of Loyalty," Physics Today, LIV:12 (December 2001), pp. 35-41.

²⁹ "I.F. Stone," Federal Bureau of Investigation, Headquarters File 100-37078.

³⁰ I.F. Stone, The Truman Era: 1945-1952 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953), p. xxi.

³¹ J. Edgar Hoover to George E. Allen, May 29, 1946, file "FBI-Atomic Bomb," in subject file "President's Secretary's File," Harry S. Truman Papers, Truman Library, cited in Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Secrecy: The American Experience, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 63-68.

³² Moynihan, op. cit., p. 68.

³³ Wang, loc. cit.

³⁴ John Kenneth Galbraith, A Life in our Times: Memoirs, (London: Andre Deutsch, 1981), p. 23. Silvermaster's Berkeley doctoral thesis was titled "Lenin's Economic Thought Before the October Revolution."

³⁵ John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 158-160; Ellen Schrecker, Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1998), pp. 175-176; Susan Braudy, Family Circle: The Boudins and the Aristocracy of the Left (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), pp. 58-66. In differing degrees all of these sources are problematic. Though Klehr and Haynes offer a typically detailed account of the evidence against Coplton, they skate over FBI misconduct with cryptic references to "the complex standards of U.S. criminal justice" and "legal technicality." There is nothing either technical or complex about the law guaranteeing the confidentiality of attorney-client communications. Schrecker, also typically, is equally frank about Coplton's espionage, but doesn't go into detail about her legal strategy. And Braudy is so often unreliable on other matters that I have only used her as a last resort, and because the detailed account she gives of Leonard Boudin's approach is backed up by contemporary reports.

³⁶ United States v. Coplton, 185 F.2d 629 (2d Cir. 1950); I.F. Stone, "Vice Squad Methods in the Coplton Case," The Daily Compass, June 23, 1949, p. 5; I.F. Stone, "The Coplton Verdict," The Daily Compass, July 3, 1949, p. 5.

³⁷ I.F. Stone, "Whittaker Chambers: Martyrdom Lavishly Buttered," The Daily Compass, February 12, 1952, p. 5.

³⁸ Interview with Nathaniel Weyl, November 19, 1996; also Nathaniel Weyl, "I Was in a Communist Unit With Hiss," U.S. News & World Report, 34 (January 9, 1953), pp. 22-40.

³⁹ Andrew Patner, I.F. Stone: A Portrait (New York: Pantheon, 1988), p. 85

⁴⁰ I.F. Stone, "The Curtain Rises on the UN at San Francisco," PM, April 26, 1945.

⁴¹ "I.F. Stone," Electronic Surveillance (ELSUR) summaries (November 1949), Federal Bureau of Investigation, Headquarters File 100-37078.

⁴² "Meet the Press," November 11, 1949, Lawrence Spivak Collection, The Library of Congress, Manuscript Division.

⁴³ I.F. Stone, "Me and Marxism: Invitation to a Dog-Fight," The Daily Compass, November 14, 1949.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Robert H. Zieger, The CIO: 1935-1955, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), pp. 253-293.

⁴⁶ I.F. Stone, "The CIO Purges Labor's Own Liberties," The Daily Compass, December 22, 1949. The American Jewish Congress launched a similar purge—made even more striking by the fact that up until 1948 the AJC was by far the most left-wing of the mainstream Jewish organizations, with councils in Detroit, Los Angeles, and several boroughs of New York controlled by Communists or radicals. Though the immediate effect was harder to discern, the silencing of radical voices within the politically active American Jewish community was arguably of almost as much long-term significance as organized labor's self-mutilation. See Schrecker, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40 and Paul Lyons, "Philadelphia Jews and Radicalism," in Murray Friedman, ed., Philadelphia Jewish Life: 1940-1985 (Ardmore, PA: Seth Press, 1986), pp. 114-120.

⁴⁷ I.F. Stone, "Has the ADA Stopped Being a Truman Front?" The Daily Compass, April 6, 1950

⁴⁸ Albert Fried, McCarthyism: The Great American Red Scare—A Documentary History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 78-80; Schrecker, *op. cit.*, pp. 240-245, 248.

⁴⁹ Robert P. Newman, Owen Lattimore and the "Loss" of China, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), *passim*.

⁵⁰ Owen Lattimore, "New Road in Asia," National Geographic, LXXXVI (December 1944), pp. 641-76, cited in Elinor Lipper, Eleven Years in Soviet Prison Camps, (London: Hollis and Carter, 1951), p. 114-116. In I.F. Stone: A Portrait, Izzy describes Lipper's expose as "a terrific book." See Patner, p. 49.

⁵¹ I.F. Stone, "'Budenz: Portrait of a Christian Hero," The Daily Compass, April 23, 1950; also The Truman Era, pp. 190-193.

⁵² I.F. Stone (unsigned), "There is no divinity...", The Nation, March 30, 1940, p. 405.

⁵³ Herbert L. Packer, Ex-Communist Witnesses: Four Studies in Fact Finding, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), p. 129.

⁵⁴ Isidor Feinstein, "Justice at Scottsboro," The Philadelphia Record, November 9, 1932, p. 8.

⁵⁵ Heywood Patterson and Earl Conrad, Scottsboro Boy, (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1950). According to cultural historian Alan Wald, Earl Conrad (whose real name was Earl Cohen) though celebrated by American Communists for his part in Scottsboro Boy, was later driven from party circles for allegedly portraying blacks as degraded in his anti-racist novel Rock Bottom. See Alan Wald, "The Urban Landscape of Marxist Noir," <http://www.crimetime.co.uk/features/marxistnoir.php>.

⁵⁶ I.F. Stone, "Fugitive's Book Tells of Nazi-Like Horror Camps in Southland, U.S.A.," The Daily Compass, June 2, 1950.

⁵⁷ I.F. Stone, "A Look at the South," The Daily Compass, June 7, 1950.

⁵⁸ I.F. Stone, "Tribute to Joe Brodsky," letter to The Daily Worker, August 2, 1947, p. 7. Brodsky was the party lawyer who'd headed the ILD at the time of the Scottsboro campaign. In his letter Izzy wrote that he'd "served justice and the working class faithfully according to his lights."

⁵⁹ I.F. Stone, "Gov. Folsom Last Hope to Wipe Slate Clean of Scottsboro Case," The Daily Compass, June 5, 1950.

⁶⁰ United States Congress, 81st Congress, 2nd Session, Congressional Record, pp.10708-10712.

⁶¹ "I.F. Stone," Federal Bureau of Investigation, Headquarters file, Section 2, Part 2, p. 397; also New York Field Office File, NY 100-90640-14A.

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- ⁶² Interview with Celia Gilbert, September 31, 1991.
- ⁶³ Interview with Christopher Stone, May 8, 1994; Interview with Jeremy Stone, November 20, 1991.
- ⁶⁴ I.F. Stone, "Nehru's Job Harder Than Gandhi Faced," The Daily Compass, September 12, 1950, p. 5.
- ⁶⁵ I.F. Stone, "Marshall Tito Grants Interview," The Daily Compass, October 19, 1950, p. 5; "Freedom of Speech Found in Yugoslavia," The Daily Compass, October 24, 1950, p. 5; "Tito's Dilemma: The Bureaucracy," The Daily Compass, October 31, 1950, p.4; "Labor Has Real Say in Big Yugoslav Plant," The Daily Compass, November 8, 1950, p.4.
- ⁶⁶ I.F. Stone, "Looking at America from 3,000 Miles," The Daily Compass, October 1, 1950, p. 5; "Rip Van Winklish
- ⁶⁷ Robert Cottrell, interview with I.F. Stone, October 16, 1981, transcript made available by Robert Cottrell.
- ⁶⁸ Interviews with Celia Gilbert, Christopher Stone and Jeremy Stone.
- ⁶⁹ Interview with Stanley Karnow, July 12, 2005.
- ⁷⁰ Interviews with Celia Gilbert, Christopher Stone, and Jeremy Stone.
- ⁷¹ Patner, op. cit., p. 64.
- ⁷² Interview with Jeremy Stone.
- ⁷³ Interview with Christopher Stone.
- ⁷⁴ Patner, op. cit., p. 62.
- ⁷⁵ Interview with Ralph Ginzburg, Spring 1992. After serving his apprenticeship at the Compass Ginzburg later gained infamy—and a footnote in Supreme Court history—when he served a prison sentence for obscenity as the publisher of Eros, "America's first major magazine of mass circulation that took a psychologically mature view of sex."
- ⁷⁶ I.F. Stone, "On July 4, 1951," The Daily Compass, July 4, 1951, p. 4.
- ⁷⁷ Interview with Paul Sweezy, April 10, 1992. See also Leo Huberman and Paul Sweezy, "Publisher's Foreword," The Hidden History of the Korean War, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1952), p. xiii. Brought into being to publish Hidden History, Monthly Review Press went on to publish works by Régis Debray, Eduardo Galeano, Ernest Mandel, as well as Sweezy and Paul Baran's classic study Monopoly Capital.
- ⁷⁸ I.F. Stone, "Les Origines de la Guerre de Coree," L'Observateur, March 8, 1951, pp. 12-14. See also Huberman and Sweezy, op. cit., p. ix.
- ⁷⁹ Cottrell, op. cit., p. 166.
- ⁸⁰ John Pittman, "I.F. Stone's 'Hidden History' Debunks Korean War Myths," Daily Worker, June 29, 1952, p. 9; Art Preis, "A Trotskyist Defends New I.F. Stone Book," The Daily Compass, May 26, 1952, p. 12.
- ⁸¹ Interview with Murray Kempton, December 15, 1991. Kempton's hunch—really more of a certainty—is borne out by James Wechsler to Richard Rovere, April 29, 1952, Richard Rovere Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin. In the letter Wechsler responds to Rovere's first draft, suggesting a few changes and apparently correcting Rovere's implication (no copy of the first draft survives) that Izzy had also once been a Party member. Wechsler also credits Stone with "a sense of humor and a kind of ebullience not characteristic of the fellow traveller," an emendation ignored by Rovere, perhaps because, according to Kempton, "Dick really hated Izzy."
- ⁸² Interview with Murray Kempton.

⁸³ Norman Kaner, "I.F. Stone and the Korean War," in Thomas G. Paterson, ed., Cold War Critics: Alternatives to American Foreign Policy in the Truman Years, (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971), pp. 240-265.

⁸⁴For the full text of NSC-68 see <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68.htm>. Drafted, largely by Paul Nitze, in April 1950, the document remained on Truman's desk, unsigned, for over six months, until events in Korea rendered Nitze's proactive approach irresistible. See also Melvyn P. Leffler, A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration and the Cold War, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), pp. 313-314, 355-360.

⁸⁵ I.F. Stone, The Hidden History of the Korean War, p. 44.

⁸⁶ Kathryn Weatherby, "To Attack, or Not to Attack: Stalin, Kim Il Sung, and the Prelude to War," Cold War International History Project Bulletin V (Spring 1995), pp. 1-9. Weatherby argues that the war was indeed Stalin's blunder, though Bruce Cumings's robust response in CWIHP Bulletin VI-VII (Winter 1995/1996), pp. 120-121, makes it clear that even this question is far from settled. My own view is that comparing Stalin's role in the Korean War to the starter of a race, as Adam Ulam does in his December 10, 1993 letter to the CWIHP, and as Weatherby appears to accept in her response (CWIHP Bulletin IV), is misleading. In Vietnam, for example, the ARVN staged numerous raids and the U.S. shelled repeatedly offshore. Any of these could have been seen as starters' guns, though as it turned out in Tonkin Gulf the runners were off the mark with only a fictive firing of the gun. War is not a race; in order for a war to start both sides need to believe that they are indeed at war. It may have been the difficulty of applying such analogies to the situation in Korean that lead Cumings, in his response to Weatherby, to describe the controversy over who started the Korean War as "the question we ought all try to forget."

⁸⁷ John Lewis Gaddis, We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 70. See also Sergei Goncharov, John W. Lewis, Xue Litai, Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao and the Korean War (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 130-168.

⁸⁸ Stephen E. Ambrose, "Preface to the Second Paperback Edition," in Stone, The Hidden History of the Korean War, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), p. xii.

⁸⁹ Bruce Cumings, "Preface," in Stone, The Hidden History of the Korean War, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1988), pp. ix-xx.

⁹⁰ Stone, op. cit., pp. 193, 196.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 75.

⁹² I.F. Stone, Department of State file, documents PO 56.

⁹³ Interview with Stanley Karnow; Klehr and Radosh, op. cit., p. 30; Ybarra, op. cit., pp. 633-635.

⁹⁴ I.F. Stone to Willis Young, November 2, 1951, in I.F. Stone, Department of State file, PO 16.

⁹⁵ "Acheson to AmConsul, Jerusalem," in I.F. Stone, Department of State File, PO 51.

⁹⁶ I.F. Stone, Hidden History, pp. 23-27. Bruce Cumings observed that "Dulles's own memoranda now show that Stone was exactly on the money in saying that after Dulles joined the Truman administration in April, 1950, he 'discreetly but unmistakably joined forces with MacArthur on Formosa policy'." (Cumings, loc. cit.)

⁹⁷ I.F. Stone, Hidden History, pp. 203-206.

⁹⁸ John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 25-25; see also the interview with Meredith Gardner on the PBS documentary "Secrets, Lies, and Atomic Spies," transcript at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/transcripts/2904_venona.html.

⁹⁹ Haynes and Klehr, loc. cit.; Moynihan, op. cit., pp. 60-62. The message decoded in December 1946 is reproduced by Moynihan as Figure 6. on p. 151.

¹⁰⁰ Haynes and Klehr, op. cit., pp. 304-311.

¹⁰¹ Venona 1433, 1435 KGB New York to Moscow, October 10, 1944. All the Venona decrypts that have been released to date by the National Security Agency are available at www.nsa.gov/venona/venon00017.cfm.

¹⁰² Venona 1313 KGB New York to Moscow, September 13, 1944.

¹⁰³ Venona 1506 KGB New York to Moscow, October 23, 1944.

¹⁰⁴ "Isidor Feinstein Stone," Blind memorandum dated February 1, 1951, Document Number 51-010, released to the author by the FBI in response to a Freedom of Information request to the National Security Agency.

¹⁰⁵ Venona 1506; "I.F. Stone" Federal Bureau of Investigation, Headquarters File 65-6065, Section 1, Document 1, which includes a copy of Washington Field Office File 65-5685, "SAC Washington to Director," March 30, 1951. In 1944 Izzy's combined salary from the Nation and PM was \$ 975.

¹⁰⁶ "I.F. Stone" Federal Bureau of Investigation, Headquarters File 65-6065, Section 1, Document 1; see also New York Field Office File NY 100-90640, Document 33, SAC New York to Director, April 9, 1951; NYFO 100-90640, Document 34, SAC New York to Director, April 20, 1951.

¹⁰⁷ "I.F. Stone" Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington Field Office File 100-22286-22.

¹⁰⁸ "I.F. Stone" Federal Bureau of Investigation, Headquarters File 65-6065, Section 1, Document 1, Director to SAC New York, August 1, 1951.

¹⁰⁹ "I.F. Stone" Federal Bureau of Investigation, Headquarters File 65-6065, Section 1, Document 1, SA Scheidt to Director, August 22, 1951.

¹¹⁰ "I.F. Stone" Federal Bureau of Investigation, Headquarters File 65-6065, Section 1, Document 1, SAC New York to Director, September 18, 1951.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² "BLIN=I.F. Stone" in "Top Secret Umbra," untitled ms. pp. 422-424 released by The National Security Agency in response to my Freedom of Information request. This appears to be an excerpt from Robert Louis Benson, and Michael Warner, eds., VENONA: Soviet Espionage and the American Response, 1939-1957, (Washington, DC: National Security Agency/Central Intelligence Agency, 1996. Laguna Hills, CA: Aegean Park Press, 1996).

¹¹³ Even J. Edgar Hoover had his doubts. In a May 1952 memo Hoover cautioned "Stone has only been tentatively identified as Soviet agent 'Blin' and ... investigation conducted to date has developed no indication that Stone may be currently be engaged in espionage activity." See "I.F. Stone" Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office File NY 100-90640, Document 81, Director to SAC New York, May 15, 1952. The extensive Venona Project material released by the National Security Agency since 1995 adds nothing to Lamphere's four-pronged argument cited above (which initially failed to convince even his own colleagues). And though it seems to have so far escaped notice, BLIN also appears in Allen Weinstein and Alexander

Vassiliev's history of Soviet Espionage, where he is described as "a New York Post reporter code-named 'Blin' [who] volunteered information" about publisher William Randolph Hearst. I.F. Stone was an editorial writer, not a reporter, for the Post. Nor would he have ever been in a position to provide inside information regarding Hearst. But what makes this mention especially problematic is that this BLIN was apparently already active in the 1930s—and hence would not need to be recruited in 1944. Weinstein and Vassiliev's use of "closed" KGB archives is especially frustrating in this regard, and while such exclusivity may be excusable, the book's shoddy footnotes, which give no dates for the material quoted, are not. See Weinstein and Vassiliev, The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America—the Stalin Era, (New York: Random House, 1999), p. 31, n. 37, which cites "KGB Archive, File 3463, Vol1, p. 285."

¹¹⁴ Venona 1805 KGB New York to Moscow, December 23, 1944.

¹¹⁵ It is this ample public record, rather than any revelations contained in secret files, that should have weighed most heavily in assessing the charge, first aired in the early 1990s, that I.F. Stone had ever been a "paid KGB agent." In March 1992 Oleg Kalugin, a retired general of the KGB who was trying to find a publisher for his memoirs, told a London audience "we had an agent—a well-known American journalist with a good reputation—who severed his ties with us in 1956." After a considerable transatlantic furor—and with a book contract now in his pocket—Kalugin "clarified" his remarks, explaining that while he had indeed been referring to I.F. Stone, he merely meant that Izzy had been a source or contact, someone who was willing to meet with him from time to time, and not an intelligence asset. Any attempt to suggest otherwise, said Kalugin, a TASS correspondent whose other contacts included Nicholas Daniloff of U.S. News & World Report and Washington Post editorial editor Stephen Rosenfeld, was "a malicious misinterpretation." See Herbert Romerstein, "The KGB Penetration of the Media," Human Events, June 6, 1992, p.5 for the initial accusation, and D.D. Guttenplan, "Izzy an Agent?," The Nation, August 3/10, 1992, pp. 124-125 and "Stone Unturned," The Nation, September 28, 1992, pp. 312-313; also Andrew Brown, "The Attack on I.F. Stone," The New York Review of Books, October 8, 1992, p. 21 and Elaine Sciolino, "K.G.B. Telltale Is Tattling, But Is He Telling U.S. All?," The New York Times, January 20, 1992, p. A1. When the Venona transcripts were released in 1995 Romerstein and his friends at Accuracy in Media, a neo-McCarthyite pressure group, tried to revive the issue but with little success.

¹¹⁶ E-mail communication from Ron Radosh to the author, September 24, 1996.

¹¹⁷ "I.F. Stone" Federal Bureau of Investigation New York Field Office File NY 100-90640, Sub A. Ironically the "Surveillance Log" for March 26, 1952 shows Izzy, Esther and Celia going to the movies, but fails to note that the film is by Bunuel, a Communist.

¹¹⁸ "I.F. Stone," Federal Bureau of Investigation Headquarters File 100-37078, Section 3, Document 33.

¹¹⁹ Not that having his phone calls bugged was a new experience for Izzy. His file in the FBI's Washington Field Office, WMFO 100-22286, Section 10, contains 295 pages of transcribed wiretaps of calls either made by I.F. Stone or where he is mentioned. The targets include longshoremen's union leader Harry Bridges, the United Federal Workers Union in Washington, a lawyer's office (probably Leonard Boudin, judging from the tone of his conversations

with Izzy), the Washington Cooperative Bookshop, and several figures in the Amerasia case. All of the hundreds of calls in this file date from before 1951, i.e. before Stone himself became a target of Federal investigators.

¹²⁰ Interview with Jeremy Stone; "I.F. Stone" Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington Field Office File WMFO 100-22286, Section Sub B, Volume IC, Serial B-48.

¹²¹ "I.F. Stone" Federal Bureau of Investigation Headquarters File Document 177, also Department of Justice File, "Raymond Farrell to J. Edgar Hoover," December 17, 1953.

¹²² M. Wesley Swearingen, interviewed for CNN Series The Cold War, with transcript at: <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/coldwar/interviews/episode-6/swearingen1.html>.

¹²³ Ybarra, op. cit., pp. 518-523.

¹²⁴ Christopher Phelps, "Introduction: A Socialist Magazine in the American Century," Monthly Review LI:1 (May 1999), or <http://www.monthlyreview.org/599phelp.htm>.

¹²⁵ Michael Blankfort to George Sokolosky, Blankfort mss.

¹²⁶ U.S. Congress, House Committee on Un-American Activities, Communist Infiltration of Hollywood Motion Picture Industry, Hearings, Eighty-Second Congress, 1952, Part 7, January 24, cited in Navasky, op. cit., pp. 101-102, 377, 445. According to Navasky Blankfort's remark naming his ex-wife and cousin, though expunged from the record at the request of Blankfort's attorney Marvin Gang, was widely reported at the time. In 1950 Blankfort and Maltz had been close enough for Blankfort to serve as the "front" for his blacklisted friend's screenplay for Broken Arrow, which was nominated for an Academy Award. But after Blankfort appeared before HUAC as a "cooperative witness" Maltz never forgave him.

¹²⁷ "I.F. Stone Speaks," New York Herald Tribune, November 4, 1951, p.11; I.F. Stone, "Me and the Red Underground," The Daily Compass, November 11, 1951, p. 5.

¹²⁸ Ogden R. Reid, New York Herald Tribune, March 23, 1952, p. 9; I.F. Stone, The Daily Compass, March 25, 1952, p. 5.

¹²⁹ I.F. Stone, "The Right to Travel and the ACLU's Split Personality," The Daily Compass, February 22, 1952, and "What Are the Links Between the ACLU And the FBI?," The Daily Compass, September 2, 1952, p. 5: "Many of us have wondered whether the dual role of Morris L. Ernst had led to undercover relations between the FBI and the ACLU." Stone was right to wonder. In the 1950s Ernst went from advising Hoover to informing for him. See Anthony Marro, "F.B.I. Files Disclose '50s Tie to A.C.L.U.; F.B.I.'s Files Disclose A.C.L.U. Gave Data on Activities and Members to Bureau in 1950's," The New York Times, August 4, 1977, p.1.

¹³⁰ Max Gordon and Howard Rodman, "National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee: The First Quarter Century," Bill of Rights Journal IX (December 1976), pp. 4-30.

¹³¹ Interview with Edith Tiger, September 20, 1991.

¹³² Sidney Hook to Richard Rovere, April 2, 1952, and Sidney Hook to Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., April 16, 1952, both in Rovere Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

¹³³ Interviews with Paul Lehmann, October 18 and 24, 1991.

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- ¹³⁴ I.F. Stone, "The Man Who Protects Budenz," The Daily Compass, October 13, 1951, p. 5, and "The Ethics of the Knife in the Back," The Daily Compass, October 14, 1951, p. 5.
- ¹³⁵ I.F. Stone, "The Rosenberg Case," The Daily Compass, October 15, 1952, p. 5.
- ¹³⁶ I.F. Stone, "What's the Government Afraid Of?," The Daily Compass, July 14, 1951, p. 5.
- ¹³⁷ Dashiell Hammett to I.F. Stone, March 18, 1952, V.J. Jerome Papers, Sterling Library, Yale University. Stone's refusal is handwritten on the bottom of the letter—his habitual method of replying to correspondents.
- ¹³⁸ I.F. Stone, New York Star, October 20, 1948, cited in Vlantou and Mettger, op. cit., p. 89.
- ¹³⁹ Vlantou and Mettger, op. cit., pp. 91-92.
- ¹⁴⁰ Vlantou and Mettger, op. cit., pp. 16-17; Keeley, op. cit., p. 102-104.
- ¹⁴¹ I.F. Stone, "I.F. Stone Exposes Polk Murder Case Whitewash," Daily Compass, August 6-10, 1952; see also Guttenplan, "The Death of a Reporter," Media Studies Journal, (Winter 1996) X: 4, pp. 173-183.
- ¹⁴² Vlantou and Mettger, op. cit., pp. 147-148, 267 n.73.
- ¹⁴³ I.F. Stone, "Devoted Teacher's Reward," The Daily Compass, October 3, 1952, p. 5. As a footnote to this footnote it may be worth noting that Mildred Flacks was also the mother of SDS activist and historian Richard Flacks, co-drafter of the Port Huron Statement and author of Making History. In the 1970s the New York City Board of Education, in settlement of a suit brought by Mildred Flacks, her husband, and a number of other blacklisted teachers, agreed to pay a substantial settlement to each teacher as well as issuing a public apology for the dismissals.
- ¹⁴⁴ I.F. Stone, "What are YOU Going to Do About School Witch Hunt?," The Daily Compass, October 8, 1952, p.5.
- ¹⁴⁵ I.F. Stone, "Yale May be Weak on God, But It Still Believes in Man," The Daily Compass, February 19, 1952, p. 5.
- ¹⁴⁶ I.F. Stone, "Eisenhower, Korea, and World Peace," The Daily Compass, June 3, 1952, p. 5.
- ¹⁴⁷ I.F. Stone, "Adlai's Stand Offers Chance for Peace," The Daily Compass, October 1, 1952, p. 5.
- ¹⁴⁸ I.F. Stone, "Progressives Kick Off Campaign," The Daily Compass, July 7, 1952, p. 1.
- ¹⁴⁹ C.B. Baldwin to Editor, The Daily Compass, July 20, 1950.
- ¹⁵⁰ I.F. Stone, "Memo on How to Function as a Peace Party," The Daily Compass, August 3, 1952, p. 5.
- ¹⁵¹ I.F. Stone, "Democrats Little Man's Party," The Daily Compass, July 23, 1952, p.5, and "Dead Past Still Rules Dems," The Daily Compass, July 24, 1952, p.5.
- ¹⁵² I.F. Stone, "Why I'm For Adlai Stevenson," The Daily Compass, September 21, 1952, p. 5.
- ¹⁵³ I.F. Stone, "Why You Should Vote for Corliss Lamont," The Daily Compass, October 26, 1952, p. 5.
- ¹⁵⁴ Corliss Lamont to Virginia Durr, December 5, 1952, Virginia Durr collection, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College.
- ¹⁵⁵ Thackrey, loc. cit.

¹⁵⁶ Freda Kirchwey to I.F. Stone, April 16, 1952; I.F. Stone to Freda Kirchwey, November 19, 1952, Kirchwey Collection, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College. See also Cottrell, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Jeremy Stone.

¹⁵⁸ Stone, *The Truman Era*, p. xvii.

Epilogue

¹ Clancy Sigal, *The Secret Defector*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), p. 9.

² Andrew Patner, *I.F. Stone: A Portrait*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), p. 121.

³ Interview with Richard Dudman, May 15, 1991.

⁴ I.F. Stone, "Stalinism is Far From Liquidated," *I.F. Stone's Weekly*, IV:19 (May 28, 1956), p. 1.

⁵ I.F. Stone, "What Few Knew About the Tonkin Bay Incidents," *I.F. Stone's Weekly*, XII: 28 (August 24, 1964), p. 1. James Miller, *Democracy Is In the Streets*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), p. 221 credits Stone's analysis with sparking the entire SDS Peace Research and Education Project. SDS also invited Stone to address its National Council on "America and the Third World."

⁶ Interview with Marcus Raskin, November 20, 1991.

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I.F. Stone left very little of what biographers and historians think of as "papers." He did, of course, publish several million words in newspapers, magazines and books. He also left behind what might best be described as "personal effects." During my research Stone's oldest son, Jeremy Stone, granted me generous access to his late father's study, where I consulted various materials including a black ring binder with notes for The Hidden History of the Korean War.

Unsigned Nation articles and editorials attributed to Stone have been verified by checking the annotated set of The Nation deposited in the New York Public Library, or the set contained in the Nation collection at Harvard. Identifying Stone's unsigned newspaper editorials is much more difficult, but in the case of the New York Post I have principally relied on the memory of Samuel Grafton, who ran the paper's editorial page with Stone from 1934 to 1938.

With the exception of a very few notes from Albert Einstein and Bertrand Russell, Stone saved none of his own correspondence. I have therefore been obliged to trawl for his letters in the papers of his friends and associates, and was immeasurably cheered to find a sizeable cache of Stone material in the Michael Blankfort collection (cited as MB MSS) at the Mugar Memorial Library, Boston University. Blankfort was a

prodigious correspondent and a lifelong friend of Stone's, and his papers include a wealth of material on their whole circle at the University of Pennsylvania.

I am also deeply grateful to Robert Cottrell, author of Izzy: A Biography of I.F. Stone (1992) which began life as his Ph.D. dissertation 10 years earlier. Not only did Cottrell vastly simplify my task in tracking down many of Stone's early articles, he also responded with generosity and forbearance above and beyond the call of scholarly duty, culminating in his entrusting to me not only his own notes of conversations with I.F. Stone, but also the actual cassette tapes from which those notes were made. I also learned a great deal from Jerry Buckley's undergraduate thesis "I.F. Stone: Journalist and Prophet." Graydon Forrer, Robert Gershon, John Greenya and Andrew Moursund all gave me tapes of their own interviews with Stone, as did Sidney Rogers, who also proved a vivid and precise source himself.

As was the case with so many writers, I.F. Stone first attracted the malign attentions of J. Edgar Hoover by writing critically about the institution Hoover personified.* By the time of Stone's death his file at the Federal Bureau of Investigation totalled over 4000 pages (not in the same league as the 16,000 pages the Bureau collected on Martin Luther King, Jr. or the 13,000 pages in Abbie Hoffman's file, but well ahead of Al Capone's 2,300-page total.) There were periods of time when Hoover's men were literally watching Stone's every move, and however much one disapproves, Stone's F.B.I. File provides

* See Herbert Mitgang, Dangerous Dossiers: Exposing the Secret War against America's greatest Writers (1988) and Natalie Robins, Alien Ink: The FBI's War on Freedom of Expression (1992) for a full account.

priceless documentary material both about his actions and about the political climate within which he functioned. I.F. Stone's FBI Main File is number 100-37038; his N.Y. Field Office File is: NY 100-90640. Both were obtained under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

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