

# Red Paradise: A Long Life in the San Diego Communist Movement

By Toby Terrar

In December 2013, San Diego resident Milton Lessner, who has been a dues-paying member of the Communist Party, USA, since 1931, celebrated his 100th birthday. Like most of his comrades, he never held a leadership position in or publicly identified himself as a party member. He sees no purpose in using his last name now, but is otherwise happy with sharing an account of his life in the party's San Diego branch. For much of the twentieth century San Diego had a small community consisting of Communist Party members and their non-party friends. Milt comments that they lacked both the glamorous Hollywood connections enjoyed in Los Angeles and the large numbers of party members in New York and Chicago. They were practically invisible when compared to San Diego's local military-industrial complex.<sup>1</sup> But in an earlier period their work on behalf of the city's trade unions, civil rights, peace movement, consumer empowerment, and housing contributed positively to the city's history and should not be totally forgotten.

Milt was born on December 11, 1913, in New Haven, Connecticut, where his 24-year-old father Henry worked in a watch factory.<sup>2</sup> Henry and his wife Bessie were of Jewish heritage.<sup>3</sup> His father, although not political, was a member of Workmen's Circle, which was a Yiddish language, American Jewish fraternal organization.<sup>4</sup> Soon after Milt's birth, they settled at Scienceville near Youngstown, Ohio, and started a mom-and-pop grocery store.<sup>5</sup> Milt had an older brother Herbert, born in 1912, and a younger brother Eugene, born in 1920.<sup>6</sup>

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**Toby Terrar**, a native San Diegan, attended UCLA where he studied Catholic church history with Gary Nash. Terrar was motivated by Davis, Mayhew and Miller's *Under the Perfect Sun: The San Diego Tourists Never See* to write the present essay. Terrar's website is [www.angelfire.com/un/cwp](http://www.angelfire.com/un/cwp).

In 1921, when he was 8 years old, Milt's father developed an infection in his foot that led to gangrene and the amputation of his leg. Then the other foot became infected. He let the infection take its course rather than endure amputation, resulting in his death at the age of 31.<sup>7</sup> The family was not religious, but a rabbi came to the funeral. Bessie then took over operation of the grocery store. She was assisted by her brother Joe Kozakoff (1890-1960) and by her children who began waiting on customers when they were barely able to look over the counter. Bessie, who learned English as an adult, always spoke with an accent. She worked hard, from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm, seven days a week.<sup>8</sup>

The store was in a black neighborhood where most of the men were employed in the steel mills. The Youngstown workers had a history of attempting to organize trade unions. Their activism took off in the late 1920s and during the Depression. The main union organizer, a black man, traded at Bessie's store. Milt points out that being an organizer was a dangerous business. He had to go in secret at night to the homes of the workers to hold meetings. There was always the threat of betrayal. Milt experienced the pervasive hostility and constant fear promoted by the company towards the labor movement and its organizers.<sup>9</sup>

Milt's uncle Joe Kozakoff was influential in his political development. Joe was no stranger to dangerous politics. He had engaged in clandestine activity in Russia as a member of the Social Revolutionary Party, an organization that eventually became part of the Communist Party.<sup>10</sup> His activities had resulted in his imprisonment by the Czarist police, torture, malnourishment, and being bitten by rats.<sup>11</sup> He escaped and, with the financial help of a brother who had arrived earlier, came to America in 1910 where he continued to be politically active. As Milt puts it, "Joe used to read progressive journals and books. He was always supporting the underdog. He never had any use for the capitalist class, because it exploited and obtained its wealth from others."<sup>12</sup> He believed dogmatically in the Bolshevik Revolution and talked much to Milt about it. Joe eventually joined the American Communist Party. Milt describes him as a closed person with a secretive, paranoid side.<sup>13</sup>

Milt became acquainted with the union people who traded at Bessie's store. Some were communists and, in 1931, Milt himself joined the party at age 17. The Communist Party of America had been formed in 1919 after a split with the Socialist Labor Party. The two groups merged in May 1921. He notes that his mother allowed him freedom to make his own decisions. She herself was never involved with the party.<sup>14</sup> There was a steel workers club but no youth section, so Milt did not go to regular party meetings.<sup>15</sup> Milt admired Joe Dallet (1907-1937), the Youngstown chair and liked to visit his downtown office.<sup>16</sup> Milt's sponsor was full-time party organizer Johnny Gates (1913-1992). Both 17-years-

old, they became close friends.<sup>17</sup> Milt assisted him in activities such as helping with the organizing of unemployed workers, working in the campaign to free the Scottsboro Boys and running unsuccessfully for the Youngstown city council. Milt also worked with Gus Hall (1910-2000) who later was the party's general secretary from 1959 to 2000.

When he joined the party, Milt was still attending Rayen High School in Youngstown, Ohio, where he was an average student. His favorite activity was playing the violin in the school orchestra. His mother paid for him to take music lessons. He continued to play throughout his life. Only at age 90, needing to put more time into caring for his invalid wife, did he stop performing classical compositions with an amateur San Diego philharmonic group.<sup>18</sup>

After graduation, Milt enrolled at Ohio University in Athens, but remained there only one semester. He went back home and obtained a bachelor's degree at Youngstown College in 1933. Established by the YMCA in 1908, the school is now known as Youngstown State University. Following college Milt went to Ohio State University at Columbus. He wanted to study medicine and took a pre-med course. But he was prevented from entering medical school because of the prejudice against Jews. There was a quota system. Instead, as the next best thing, he obtained a master's degree in psychology in 1936. He comments, "I was interested in people and found their behavior intriguing. The more I understood, the more I liked them."<sup>19</sup> He also felt this would lead to a good career. For a time while still at Ohio State but back home for a period, he taught psychology at Youngstown College, which allowed his younger brother to take classes there for free.<sup>20</sup>

Milt was politically active while in school but he did not find allies among any of his teachers. Illustrative was the time when the right-wing, former preacher Gerald L.K. Smith (1898-1976) came to the campus to agitate for white supremacy. Milt took issue with him, but received no support from the faculty.<sup>21</sup> In 1929 Smith had become the national organizer of Senator Huey P. Long's "Share the Wealth" movement, a type of Nazism based on anti-communism, anti-Semitism, and racism. Father Charles Coughlin, a popular radio broadcaster, was an ally.

While in Columbus, Milt worked in a New Deal program run by the National Youth Administration (NYA), part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). He was paid \$12 per month. This was a generous amount, since meals cost only 25 cents.<sup>22</sup> He also worked in the kitchen of a fraternity house and in a restaurant. This allowed him to obtain free meals.<sup>23</sup> He did not live in a dorm but shared a room with other students in a house that they rented. He had female friends but no romantic relationships.

## California, 1936

Milt was still at Ohio State in a PhD program and working in the Juvenile Bureau of Research when he became ill with the flu during the winter of 1936. This developed into pneumonia and put him in the hospital for several weeks.<sup>24</sup> Those were the days before antibiotics. To recuperate, he moved back to Youngstown. The doctor warned his mother that he should move to a warmer environment. As a result, she sold her store and moved to Los Angeles with her brother-in-law Joe Kozakoff and her children, minus Herb, who was playing in a Cleveland dance band.<sup>25</sup> They owned a Chevrolet and Milt did most of the driving. Joe never learned to drive. They initially lived at 5822 Willoughby Street. Bessie opened up a liquor store in Los Angeles and, later, she ran a restaurant for a short time.<sup>26</sup> Milt's older brother Herb later became professional musician in Los Angeles, joining both the musician's union and the Communist Party.<sup>27</sup>

Milt recovered his health in Los Angeles and became acquainted with the local communist organization, which, as he puts it, "had a wide following."<sup>28</sup> He worked in, and later became chair of, the party's educational department. There he became acquainted with the fulltime party workers, Slim Connelly who "had a good personality;" county secretary Paul Cline "who was an exceptional leader;" and Max Silver who "I never could stand."<sup>29</sup> In early 1937, some of Milt's friends, including his first cousin, Nathan J. Abramowitz, volunteered to help the Popular-front led Republican government of Spain in its armed struggle against Nationalist forces led by Franco. Nathan was reported as missing in action in March 1938 and his body was never recovered.<sup>30</sup> Milt did not volunteer because he felt his mother needed his help and his health was doubtful.

Upon coming to California Milt obtained employment as a welfare worker with the State Relief Agency (SRA).<sup>31</sup> He interviewed and counseled people seeking public assistance. His colleague at the SRA and an activist in the local unit of the State, County and Municipal Workers of America (SCMWA) was Frank Wilkerson (1914-2006). Wilkerson spent a life-time advocating for the city's working people. Only later did Milt learn that he was a party member.<sup>32</sup>

With only a master's degree in psychology, Milt's future in welfare work was limited. As a result he enrolled in 1939 in a social work program at the University of California, Berkeley. The government was anxious to attract men into this field.<sup>33</sup> He found that his teachers at Berkeley all supported the system. He received no political encouragement. There was no party unit within the university. He met with a club in Berkeley.<sup>34</sup> Milt earned a certificate in social work which led to his employment at a Berkeley detention center.<sup>35</sup>

With the approach of World War II, Milt attempted to enlist, but the army



*Horton Plaza, USO Information, ca. 1940. ©SDHC #80:3568.*

would not take him because he had an inguinal hernia. He asked them to perform surgery on the problem, but they refused.<sup>36</sup> Wanting to help with the war effort, he went to work for the United Services Organization (USO). This was a coalition of six organizations that included the YMCA, Jewish Welfare Board, National Catholic Community Service, Travelers Aid, and the Salvation Army.<sup>37</sup> The focus of Milt's work was to help give morale support to the troops. He initially worked at Camp Stoneman in Pittsburg, California, which was near Walnut Creek and the Bay area. This was a point of embarkation for the troops.

## **World War II in San Diego**

In 1940 Milt transferred his USO employment to Southern California. He wanted to go to Los Angeles, but ended up in San Diego. During part of the war the USO center was at 635 C Street.<sup>38</sup> There, just as up north, he organized programs to help keep up the morale of the new soldiers. This included a weekly combination talent show and educational series with political discussions such as "Understanding Native Fascism" and "Small Nations Outlook."<sup>39</sup> In the latter discussion, Milt worked with Harley Knox, San Diego's mayor from 1943 to 1951. Also on the panel was local Catholic pastor, Joseph Luther, S.J., and the secretary of the Federated Trades and Labor Council, Robert E. Noonan. The featured guest was the Czech counsel Bohus Benes who came down from San Francisco.<sup>40</sup>

Through the USO, Milt became involved with both Travelers Aid and the



Jewish soldiers. In the latter work one of his colleagues was Captain Joshua Harley Knox, Mayor of San Diego, 1943-1951. Photo courtesy of the Sefton Family.

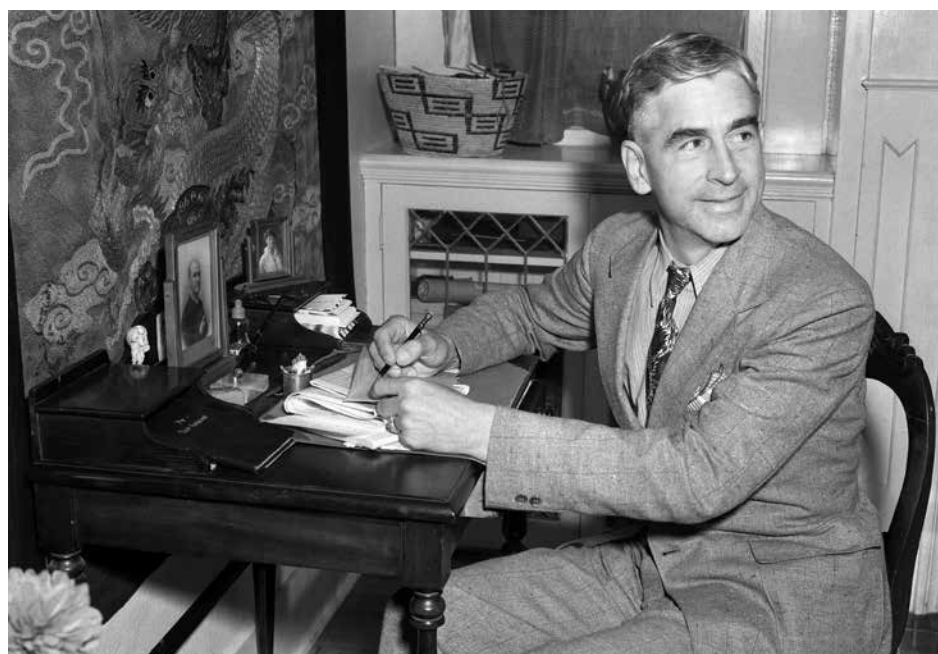
Goldberg (1896-1994), the first rabbi commissioned as a Navy chaplain.<sup>41</sup> Goldberg coordinated interfaith services with Protestant and Catholic clergy at naval bases around the world.

After a period with the USO, Milt became a probation officer for San Diego County.<sup>42</sup> He published several articles in academic journals that took a class-conscious approach to the social problems facing the country during the war. In an article for the *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, he advocated that the San Diego community take more responsibility for delinquent youth by providing better vocational training, decent schools, housing and recreational facilities.<sup>43</sup> Instead of blaming single, working mothers for the problems of their children or expecting the youth to rise up by rugged individualism, he suggested that schools were at fault. Many youths had no interest in, or aptitude for, pure academics but desired the kind of vocational training not offered by public schools at that time. Milt worked with the Eleventh Naval District in San Diego to expand its apprentice course for boys between the ages of 16 and 17½. The boys got jobs working forty-four hours per week with pay, assembling and repairing airships at its plant.<sup>44</sup> In another article, Milt advocated that the military allow probationers and parolees to enlist. He thought that military life could provide young people coming from “broken, poverty-stricken homes” the structure they needed to successfully adjust to society.<sup>45</sup>

Following the probation work, Milt took a job with the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) as a “project services advisor.” He helped provide and supervise public housing projects and did community organizing for the people who were coming to San Diego from all over the country to build airplanes. He points out that decent, affordable public housing had been an unmet demand of the city’s workers during the 1930s. With World War II, the military overwhelmed the opposing landlords, banks, and construction industry. By 1945 there were 75,000 people in the county’s public housing.

Milt worked mainly on the Los Altos and Bay View Terrace projects in Pacific Beach.<sup>46</sup> As he describes it, the projects lived up to the communist ideal.<sup>47</sup> They included schools, childcare, health clinics, adult education programs, libraries and religious facilities. Their recreation and cultural centers featured athletic fields, swimming pools, tennis courts, movie theaters and auditoriums for political events, plays, talent shows, dances and card parties.<sup>48</sup> The housing projects were governed by tenant councils that operated like New England town meetings.<sup>49</sup>

As a government worker Milt was active in his local of the State, County and Municipal Workers of America (SCMWA).<sup>50</sup> His activities with the union included working for political candidates who favored public housing. Several days before elections, he helped put up posters in the housing projects, at bus



*Edouard V. Izac, 1939. San Diego Congressman, 1937-1947. ©SDHC #UT 16810-1.*



*Wartime USO Office, 1945. ©SDHC #UT 8243-15.*

stops, and in front of management offices.<sup>51</sup> The posters had messages like “Save Your Home” and contained statements from candidates such as Harley Knox. A dairy farmer who literally built his own house, Knox helped establish the San Diego Housing Authority and rent controls in his role as city council member and mayor. Landlords criticized him for having “quite a lot of reds in his district.” He countered that most occupants of substandard housing could easily be convinced by the arguments of an agitator.<sup>52</sup>

Milt’s work with the FHA was cut short when, as he puts it, “A Trotskyist took issue with me and had me fired.”<sup>53</sup> Seeking to hold on to his job, he went for help to San Diego Congressman Edouard Izac (1891-1990). Izac had graduated from the Naval Academy in 1915, been a hero in World War I, worked on a San Diego newspaper in the 1920s, and served as the city’s congressman from 1937 to 1947. He was quite knowledgeable about the Navy and gave Milt a sympathetic hearing. He said that the Navy had a file on Milt an inch thick.<sup>54</sup>

## **Party work during World War II**

The Navy’s file on Milt’s political activity reflected his work with the Communist Party during the period that he had been employed with the USO, the San Diego County probation department, and the Federal Housing Administration. When Milt came to town in 1940, he came into contact with a communist organization



that had been functioning for twenty years in the labor and unemployment movement.<sup>55</sup> During the war the party continued its activity, doing what Milt calls “good progressive work.”

Progressive work involved holding regular club meetings, leafleting, fund raising, distribution of the *Peoples' World*, picnics, educational and social events, and engagement in various labor, government reform, civil rights, housing, health care, and civic activities.<sup>56</sup> In the early part of the 1940s Milt patronized a party bookstore run by Lolita Bunyard (Gibson), the daughter of a preacher. Her husband Howard Gibson ran a liquor store and was not a party member but came to meetings and supported the party. They were what Milt calls an “excellent couple.”<sup>57</sup> Eventually the comrades decided to shut the store down because it did not make enough money.<sup>58</sup> Among Milt’s activities that ended up in a government file was his attendance at party functions such as the annual “Lenin Memorial Dinner” in January 1942 at the U.S. Grant Hotel. He went to a similar function later that year at the Fraternal Hall.<sup>59</sup>

In the 1940s, the party press appealed to Milt, among others. The party’s then district organizer remembered:

*Peoples' World* was a respected and influential newspaper and had a mass following outside the ranks of the Party. It was especially popular with the labor movement. The *PW* was a daily while I was on the coast, and it was the kind of paper that anyone could pick up and read. There was a constant stream of fund raisers for the *PW*, some hosted by labor unions who saw the paper as an ally worth supporting.<sup>60</sup>

San Diego’s Communist Party had approximately 100 active members and friends during the war years.<sup>61</sup> Milt knew some of these well. Others, depending on where they lived or worked, he knew only superficially or not at all. There were eight or ten neighborhood and trade union clubs.<sup>62</sup> An African-American group met in Logan Heights while many Mexican immigrants who could not speak English joined a Spanish-language group.<sup>63</sup>

At this time Milt met Sol and Hermine Hilkowitz who had a ranch in Mission Valley that the party’s Los Angeles-based district organizer, Pettis Perry, liked to visit.<sup>64</sup> The Hilkowitizes owned real estate in North Park and made financial loans to Milt that helped him in his business. Milt was also close to Mort and his wife Ester, who came into the party during the 1930s and remained active for the rest of their lives.

At the Federal Housing Administration, Milt worked with long-time political

activist, Daisy Lee Worthington Worcester (1882-1960).<sup>65</sup> She and her husband Wood "Woodie" F. Worcester (1873-c.1950) came to San Diego in 1917. A 1907 Vassar College graduate, she became a social worker and school teacher. Woodie was a lawyer who worked as the county's chief probation officer for forty years. The Worcesters were liberal in their political views, not Communist Party members or participants in its activities, but friends to many in the organization. In 1954 when the party was under government attack, Daisy defended it, pointing out the positive nature of its program:

Those who attack Communism unintentionally pay high tribute to it. If workmen's compensation, old-age pensions, aid to dependent children, decent housing, social security, better education, adequate medical care, are all unquestioned parts of the communist program, there is no doubt that Communism will make a stronger appeal to the hungry and needy of the world than we shall, in whose country these benefits are under continuing attack from powerful groups that may assume majority control at any hour.<sup>66</sup>

Leading the San Diego party during the war period was a part-time, paid county organizer named Roberta.<sup>67</sup> Milt notes that "much of the stress of being part of a minority party that was looked down upon fell on the organizer as the public face of the organization, so that there was frequent turnover in the position."<sup>68</sup> However, the war period was one of those rare times when industry, unions, media, police, and politicians were focused on defeating Germany and Japan, not working against the Soviets and the party.<sup>69</sup>

Toward the end of the war, Steve Nelson was assigned as the Southern California district organizer. Milt only saw him occasionally. Nelson worked out of Los Angeles, the district headquarters, but San Diego County was under his purview. Being from the East Coast, he was impressed by what he called San Diego's and the state's working class traditions. In his biography he commented that there was "a freshness and vitality" that made it an extra special place to be a radical.

The Left and the Communist Party in California had an authentic niche in the state's cultural and political heritage and reflected the vibrancy of its working-class movements. California was known even then as a sort of maverick state. All kinds of people drifted there during the Depression, and they provided the basis of support for a variety of populist and radical ventures. And there was a clearly

identifiable financial and industrial class to target for responsibility for the state's problems. The labor movement had tackled these interests time and time again.... The Left had participated in these struggles, and it prospered in California's fertile political soil. Radicals were not outside the working class looking in but were part of it. The overwhelming majority of Communists were workers.<sup>70</sup>

For a time in 1944 and 1945 the national Communist Party under the influence of Earl Browder, who was the party's general secretary from 1934 to 1945, liquidated itself and became a left-wing adjunct to the Democratic Party. But, according to Milt, the party did not liquidate itself in San Diego and continued as usual.<sup>71</sup> He feels the attempted change at the national level from being an independent political party to that of an "association" was disruptive and he calls it a "sellout."<sup>72</sup> He speculates that Browder felt obligated to Franklin Roosevelt because the president granted him a pardon for a prison term he started to serve at the beginning of the war.

Milt, taking to heart the admonition "workers of the world unite," married Irma F. Tompkins, a San Diegan born in 1911. At the time she was living in Los Angeles and working at the union-friendly *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner* in the advertising department. Older than Milt, she had already been married and divorced twice. Her father worked as the chief detective at Convair, the aircraft manufacturing company, during the war.<sup>73</sup> He was aware of Milt's politics, but accepted the marriage. She was his only daughter.<sup>74</sup> Irma was artistic and had endearing qualities. She became politically active after meeting Milt.<sup>75</sup> They lived in the Los Altos public housing project at 1153 Tourmaline Street in Pacific



*Los Altos Terrace at Bay View Heights. Hope collection. ©SDHC #2008.41.*

Beach while Milt was employed there.<sup>76</sup> From this union came two children, a son in 1941 and a daughter in 1943.

### **Post-war Years 1946-1953**

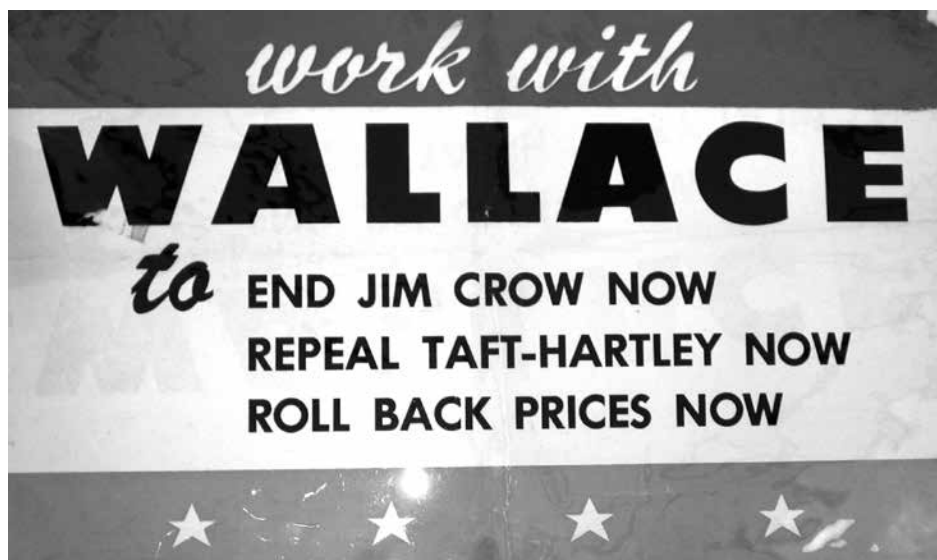
Until 1953, the party carried on as it had during the war. This contrasted with the national party, which went underground after 12 members of the national board were indicted under the Smith Act in 1948.<sup>77</sup> William Schneiderman, who was the party's general secretary at the time, opposed the decision to go underground. He was a Californian. He came home and kept the state party above ground. The local activities centered around club meetings, engagement in the labor and civil rights movement, leafleting, fund raising, distribution of the *People's World*, picnics, and educational and social events.<sup>78</sup>

Milt and others associated with the party, including Alva Chester "A.C." Rogers (1896-1976), helped defend the public housing program from dismantlement after the Republicans won both Houses of Congress in 1946. The Chamber of Commerce did not want the expansion of public housing, thinking that it had helped empower the working class in Europe and subverted usury-based special interests. San Diego's newly elected Republican congressman Charles Fletcher (1902-1985) was involved in the local dismantling. A manager and president of Home Federal Savings and Loan since 1934, he had opposed public housing from the start. To help discredit the program, he chaired Congressional Hearings in San Diego in 1947 and 1948.<sup>79</sup> They were similar to hearings held all over the country.

Rogers, chair of the local chapter of Progressive Citizens of American, testified at the hearings. He maintained the city needed more, not less, public housing. Pointing out that 7,000 people in San Diego sought public housing, including 3,000 families of veterans who were living in single rooms or doubled-up with other families, he commented:

These are the kind of facts which make insistence upon private enterprise's ability to solve the problem impossible to understand or to condone, and which force us to the conclusion that the only real solution to America's housing problem lies in a combination of public and private housing with federal government taking the responsibility for housing those of its citizenry who are inadequately housed due primarily to their inability to pay the exorbitant costs demanded by private housing interests.<sup>80</sup>

By the late 1940s, Milt had joined a "professional" group within the party, as



*Henry A. Wallace presidential campaign poster, 1948. Government documents campaign materials.*

opposed to a trade union or neighborhood club. The professional club had a city-wide constituency composed of white collar workers, teachers, social workers, and nurses.<sup>81</sup> Other comrades and friends were organized in ten neighborhood and trade union units in places like North Park, Normal Heights, South Park, Pacific Beach, and La Jolla.<sup>82</sup> As always, a steady stream of people came into and went out of the organization. A few stayed a lifetime; others never joined but became supporters and friends.

Journalist Charles H. Garrigues (1902-1974) was one of the few San Diego party members who eventually publicly identified himself as such. In his autobiography, he described the attraction of the organization.<sup>83</sup> Some members hated capitalism and wanted a revolutionary party that would overthrow the government. Others came because they sought to reform the capitalist system. They were not against co-existence with capitalism but wanted something better than the Democratic and Republican parties, which did not represent workers and made concessions only begrudgingly and out of fear of the Communist Party. For them the Communist Party was effective not directly in politics but indirectly, in coercing the other parties and politicians and in showing them, as in the Soviet Union, that health care, social security, housing, and a full-employment economy were possible. There was also a third group who joined the party or were friendly to it from only a desire to obtain a job, either directly because the party provided jobs as organizers or because being part of its network, they looked out for each other. This aspect attracted the ambitious, job conscious professionals who saw and



*Pickwick Hotel, ca. 1940s. ©SDHC Sensor #33-13.*

used the party as an employment agency.<sup>84</sup>

Milt observes that, over a period of time, most individuals embodied a mix of the motivations discussed by Garrigues; this sometimes gave rise to inter-party difficulties. Illustrative of mixed motivations around the party's political activism was the 1948 campaign of Henry A. Wallace (1888-1965) for U.S. president. The San Diego party gained the support of many reformist-minded Democrats who disliked Truman. Milt and the other comrades worked hard for Wallace and the local Independent Progressive Party (IPP) candidates who were on the ballot with him.<sup>85</sup> The chair of the IPP in San Diego was party ally "A.C." Rogers. He worked as a bookkeeper for a stucco company. In the mid-1930s he had been the secretary-treasurer of the San Diego Federated Trades and Labor Council and a founder of the Office Employees Union. Richard Henriksen chaired the local Young Progressives, which was the IPP's youth group. He, too, was close to the communists.<sup>86</sup>

At the national level, the communists were similarly reformist and did not field a presidential candidate; instead, they endorsed Wallace. Milt viewed the IPP as the peace party of the post-war era. Its platform advocated friendly relations

with the Soviet Union, an end to the Cold War, an end to segregation, full voting rights for blacks, and universal government health insurance.<sup>87</sup> Milt found I.F. Stone's (1907-89) views about Wallace and anti-Sovietism to be persuasive.<sup>88</sup> A disappointment to Milt was that Wallace did not come to San Diego during the campaign.<sup>89</sup> Milt had no use for Truman and felt his use of the nuclear bomb in Japan was unforgivable.<sup>90</sup>

Besides the Wallace campaign Milt put much of his political activity into the peace movement during the post-war era. As part of the IPP, he supported its fight against American involvement in the Korean War. Illustrative of an event he subsidized was a lecture on August 9, 1950 at the Pickwick Hotel located at First and Broadway. Joseph Starobin (1913-1976), the foreign affairs editor of the *Daily Worker*, spoke to an audience of 68 people. In addition to the speech, there was a discussion and singing of folks songs. One of their songs went to the tune of the black spiritual, "Oh Mary, Don't You Weep" and referred to the fact that the Korean communists were beating the American Army:

Truman's army getting grounded—O, Margaret [Truman]  
don't you weep; people's army getting stronger—O, people, don't  
you weep.<sup>91</sup>

Around this time, Milt started an automobile retail seat cover and carpeting business called Superior Fabrics that lasted for thirty-five years, into the 1980s. He was introduced into the business by his younger brother, Gene, who had returned to Los Angeles to stay with Bessie, his mother, after his discharge from the army.<sup>92</sup> She was renting an apartment from a Mr. Jackson who manufactured auto seat covers. Gene and Jackson liked each other. Jackson offered to help Gene start a retail seat cover store. In turn, Gene helped Milt.<sup>93</sup>

Milt commented on the circumstances surrounding the favorable origins of the business:

Never has there been a time like it. People had come to San Diego to work in industry during the war. Both husbands and wives worked at Convair making planes. They could not buy clothing, furniture or cars because of the rationing and shortages. So they accumulated money. With the war's end, they all had good bank accounts.<sup>94</sup>

Milt's seat covers were able to patch old cars that were still running. His first dealings took place when he was still working with Travelers' Aid and the USO. He obtained from Jackson several seat covers and brought them back to San



*Anti-Communist propaganda editorial. Author's collection.*

Diego. Then he and Irma took the noon hour off and sold the covers. During one lunch period he went to a still-existing Chevrolet dealer in San Diego. The dealer gave him an order worth \$1,500 on the spot. He wanted to dress-up and renovate used cars for resale. Milt commented, "I was able to make more money there in five minutes than in a whole month of working for Travelers Aid."<sup>95</sup> Within a year he and Irma had landed an account at Sears and Roebuck as well as business with a number of local auto upholsterers. In time they were

doing a million dollars per year in sales, all without investing any capital. Milt summarized, "It was all about being in the right place at the right time."<sup>96</sup>

## The McCarthy Period, 1953-1960.

For Milt, the prosperity of the war and post-war period ended when the U.S. government began to persecute Communists in the 1950s. Fighting back, Milt became chair of the local section of the National Committee to Secure Justice for the Rosenbergs and Morton Sobell. The Rosenbergs were executed on June 19, 1953, while Sobell received a thirty-year sentence for espionage. The committee organized educational events and vigils.

One of the memorable events in Milt's life occurred on April 21, 1954. On that date, because of FBI informers and collaborators, twelve local residents, including Milt, were subpoenaed to appear before a hearing at the San Diego Civic Center. The hearing was conducted by a Sub-Committee of the U.S. Congress's House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC).<sup>97</sup> The FBI informers were a crippled Pacific Beach photographer and Mildred Berman, a heavy-set woman who had taken many party jobs. It turned out she was being paid by the government to do party work. According to Milt, she was more "political" than many of the comrades.<sup>98</sup> As noted previously, most of those subpoenaed before HUAC were not party members, but only sustainers who attended meetings and helped with the work.<sup>99</sup>

At the hearing, which was broadcast to San Diego on radio and TV, Milt refused



to answer the questioning but he gave the Congressmen a lecture on the U.S. Constitution and thought control. He told them:

First, this hearing, as I see it, is unlawful, essentially because it is a denial of the due process of law. For example, there is no cross-examination of stool pigeons and informers when these things are brought up.

Secondly, this is an unlawful attempt to search into my conscience, and I would like at this point to quote from the declaration of conscience, as spoken by Senator Margaret Smith before the House and Senate, in which she said:

“I think it is high time that we remember that we have sworn to uphold and defend the Constitution. I think it is high time that we remember that the Constitution, as amended, speaks not only for the freedom of speech but also of the trial by jury instead of the trial by accusation. Those of us who shout the loudest about Americanism and making character assassinations are all too frequently those who by our own words and actions ignore some of the basic principles of Americanism, the right to criticize, the right to hold unpopular beliefs, the right to protest, the right of independent thought.

The exercise of these rights should not cost one single American citizen his reputation or his right to a livelihood nor should he be in danger of losing his reputation or livelihood merely because he happens to know someone who holds unpopular beliefs. Who of us does not; otherwise none of us could call our souls our own; otherwise thought control would upset him.”

Thirdly, according to the Constitution, I have a right to my own beliefs, a right to associate with those that I prefer to associate with, and this is guaranteed me, and this committee has undertaken to invade my conscience.

Fourthly, as a businessman, many of my customers have the impression that this is a court, and that I am being tried on criminal charges, and that it is up to this particular court to determine whether I am innocent or guilty. I want to make it known now that this hearing is unlawful, that you are not a judge, jury, prosecutor, and that you cannot try me or punish me.<sup>100</sup>

Another local comrade who equally stood his ground before the HUAC subcommittee was Lee Major (1924-2004), a black, former Navy cook. He was active in the Congress of Racial Equality and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. At the time he was the proprietor of a Southern-style restaurant at 40th and Market Street where Milt, his family, and friends liked to eat.<sup>101</sup> Milt comments that, at the HUAC hearing, those subpoenaed were fearful because of the government pressure and invoked the Fifth Amendment. Looking back at the hearings and publicity, Milt summarizes, "We fought back and came through without too much damage."<sup>102</sup> The worst of it was that several comrades lost



*Milt Loessner on April 20, 1954 before the US Congress House Committee on Un-American Activities in San Diego. Authors's Collection.*

their jobs and their children were attacked at school and on the streets as traitors to the American cause.<sup>103</sup> As Milt puts it, "They were questioned about why they did not accept the life here as the only way."<sup>104</sup>

Milt remembers that many of those associated with the party were not too damaged by the persecution and considered it as the price one paid for associating with an organization that was effective in resisting the established order. The community and trade union clubs, however, met less often and some not at all. Large numbers drifted away from the party, including Lee Major who became a Catholic. A few of the comrades had mental breakdowns, including a young

black female about 22-years old, who succumbed under government questioning and became an informer.<sup>105</sup>

At the time, Milt's Superior Fabrics business was located at 4421 Park Boulevard. The FBI occasionally would come into the store and attempt to induce the employees to be informers, asking them if they were communists or knew any communists. One of the employees quit because of the harassment. Some of Milt's suppliers refused to sell him merchandise or extend him credit. An insurance company man would not deal with him and a number of customers said they would not buy from a communist. Others, however, were what Milt calls "progressive." Among those who went out of their way to support him were members of the Community Unitarian Fellowship at 4561 North Avenue where Milt sometimes led discussions.<sup>106</sup> On April 7, 1956, he spoke on the subject, "Near East Value Clashes." While Milt was Jewish, he was not a Zionist. His talk focused on the unity of interests between working class Arab and Jews. He argued that

nationalism was the ideology of capitalism, used to divide working people and prevent them from uniting against the real enemy.<sup>107</sup>

Unfortunately, the 1950s was a difficult period for Milt's marriage. Irma was unsteady and tended to have what he called a borderline personality disorder.<sup>108</sup> In looking back, Milt, who was later a licensed psychologist, commented that this illness is characterized by black-and-white thinking, marked impulsivity, and chaotic interpersonal relationships.<sup>109</sup> After some ten years of marriage, she was attracted to a group led by George Adamski (1891-1965) that ran a farm and restaurant on Palomar Mountain from the 1940s to the 1960s. They claimed to be in communication with aliens from outer space.<sup>110</sup>

Irma left Milt and filed for a divorce on April 21, 1954, the day he appeared before the HUAC committee.<sup>111</sup> The children stayed with Milt for about a year. Then, Irma kidnapped their daughter and told the divorce judge that Milt was a communist. Milt felt that if his children felt an affinity for their mother, he would not stand in the way of them going with her. Later Irma died in her mid-50s from the complications of alcohol abuse.<sup>112</sup>

## **Vietnam and After, 1960s-1991**

For Milt, World War II and the post-war period was the most prosperous period for the San Diego Communist party. It was never the same after the McCarthy era. In his view, however, the persecution was only part of—and not the most important reason for—the decline of the movement. He reflects:

The party is a product of the times. Communism will only come when a majority of the workers are conscious of their class and see the need for it. In the 1930s the party had a large following because many working people including myself were convinced that capitalism was failing their economic needs and the party was effective at addressing their demands. Within a year of the demonstrations and marches led by the unemployed councils the federal government expanded its relief programs and funded giant projects under the Works Progress Administration (WPA). In the summer of 1935, Congress passed the Social Security Act. This bill incorporated the party's main goal of unemployment compensation as well as a pension system.<sup>113</sup>

From Milt's perspective, the post-World War II economic prosperity made workers identify with capitalism. In those circumstances, the party was reduced to a program of reformism and limited achievement. The party could not obtain

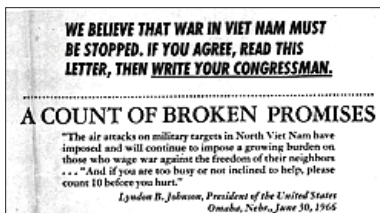
full employment, a slow-down in evictions, decent schooling, health care for everyone, or an end to the arms race and aggression in Central America.<sup>114</sup> But that did not stop Milt from thinking that communism is better than capitalism.

By the beginning of the 1960s, Milt's neighborhood club and the communist community was down to a handful of people. Six or eight of them met in Milt's store at night.<sup>115</sup> Among those who remained steady were Lolita Gibson and Ted Prager (1912-1984). He was a Spanish Civil War veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and active in Local 333 of the Painters Union.<sup>116</sup> In later years he owned an interior house painting business. His wife was not a party member but did not object to his activities. Milt speculates that some continued in the movement as much for social and psychological reasons as for employment opportunities. Communism was a way of life as well as an ideology. At club meetings, they caught up with the news of each other's families, served as a sounding board, and assisted one other in times of difficulty.<sup>117</sup>

They were reassured by the fact that the movement was international and strong elsewhere. In July 1962, Milt went to the Soviet Union as a delegate of the U.S. Peace Council to the World Peace Council's World Congress for Peace and Disarmament. There were 1,500 people from all over the world, including Spain, Germany and England. Nikita Khrushchev and Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) spoke. Milt shook hands with Spanish Civil War heroine Delores Ibaruri (1895-1989) and he obtained the autograph of Yuri Gagarin (1934-1968), the first man in space. A negative part of his trip was that, shortly after returning home, the government brought a bogus charge against him of filing false tax returns for the period 1958 to 1961. After a four day trial in 1965, the government admitted that it had used an incorrect accounting method and that Milt overpaid his taxes. U.S. Judge Fred Kunzel dismissed the case, but Milt was still out \$75,000 in attorney's fees.<sup>118</sup>

Milt views his difficulties as bottoming out with the tax case. The civil rights and antiwar movements brought new members into the party. Others, who had earlier drifted away, came back. There were also older comrades from the east and north who, in their retirement or in job transfers, came to San Diego. At a meeting in 1970, some twenty people crowded together on a long bench for

a meeting in Milt's store where they heard district organizer, Bill Taylor.<sup>119</sup> Carl (b. 1947), a younger member there, joined in 1967, his parents having been involved in the party.<sup>120</sup> By way of contrast, neither of Milt's children was attracted to the party. They knew he was a member but never looked into its ideology. Milt remarks, "It was a different generation



*Anti-Vietnam War pamphlet, June 30, 1965. Author's collection.*

and communism for them was not important."<sup>121</sup>

On the other hand, young recruit Carl, for whom Milt has a high regard, was a political activist while still in school. He was the student body president of a local college in 1968-69 and served as an officer of the National Student Association. After

school, he became an industrial electrician and eventually ran as a California state assembly candidate on the Peace and Freedom ticket, gaining 3,500 votes. He now serves as the chief officer of his union local, representing 2,000 workers.<sup>122</sup>

By the late 1960s and continuing until 1991, San Diego had two party units. One was called the Workers Club. While Milt was not a member of this club, he knew many of the fifteen-or-so members and friends who met monthly in the evenings, most of whom were younger people and trade unionists.<sup>123</sup> A routine part of their agenda at club meetings was discussion of the work being carried out in the San Diego-Imperial County Labor Council. The council had some 103 local union affiliates and represented 108,000 members.<sup>124</sup> For many years they promoted "Jobs or

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*A flyer for San Diego's Communist Party bookstore that was called "Spark for Freedom Books" under Helen Robello's management in the 1980s. Author's collection.*

Income Now" (JOIN), a type of unemployment council.<sup>125</sup> They also worked in the electoral campaigns of those who were favorable to labor.<sup>126</sup> A few had weekly paper routes where they distributed the party's newspaper, the *Daily World* (New York), and ran a small bookstore.<sup>127</sup>

A second unit was called the Daytime Club. After Southern California district organizer William Taylor died in 1978, it renamed itself the "Bill Taylor" club in his honor.<sup>128</sup> Milt belonged to it. It, too, held monthly meetings in the homes of various comrades and consisted of roughly fifteen members, most of them either older, retired people or those who had jobs that allowed them the freedom



Angela Davis, ca. 1970. Internet photo.

to attend meetings and activities during the day.<sup>129</sup> Milt observes that for these comrades, politics was their life. They were engaged in political activities on a daily basis.<sup>130</sup> Most had been involved in the party since the 1930s, and a few since the 1920s.<sup>131</sup>

Milt had a particular regard for John Porter (1915-1996), a member of the Daytime Club. A Harvard-educated lawyer, he lived in La Mesa. Before coming to town in the 1950s, he worked for the New Deal in Washington, D.C., as one of Felix Frankfurter's Wiz Kids.<sup>132</sup> Philip Honor (1904-1986) was another of Milt's well-regarded comrades. His history in the movement dated back to 1926.<sup>133</sup> Before coming to San Diego in 1967, he had spent

thirty-five years as the city editor of the Yiddish-language *Freiheit* newspaper under Moyshe Olgin (1878-1939) in New York City. Honor continued his journalism in retirement. There was also Ted Prager, who, as noted, was a veteran of the Spanish Civil War.<sup>134</sup>

The flamboyant Dorothy Healey (1914-2006) served as the link between the local units and the organization's national leadership until her resignation in 1968. She headed the party's Southern California District.<sup>135</sup> Milt remembers her coming to town only one time in the Vietnam period to settle a dispute. She acted as the judge in a trial of a married couple who had, in Milt's words, "acted up."<sup>136</sup> During the trial, which Milt feels was a mistake, the couple became loud and hysterical. They were expelled.

Healey was not popular with many of the comrades. She rarely came to town because she was not welcome. According to Milt, the dissatisfaction went back to the 1950s rift between those who sided with William Foster's class-struggle-revolutionary line and those who sided with Gil Green's reformist-liberal line.<sup>137</sup> The main link between San Diego and the national party was William "Bill" C. Taylor (1910-1978), a black comrade. He was the district's second in command. Describing Taylor, Milt summarizes, "Bill was a good leader, even tempered, hard to get aroused and influential, a close friend to Henry Winston. He and his wife, Shirley, a white comrade, came to town frequently and were well regarded."<sup>138</sup> Taylor was a big man, standing 6 feet, 4 inches. He was obese toward the end of his life, because of what Milt calls Shirley's "good cooking."<sup>139</sup> After Healey resigned as the district organizer in 1968, Taylor took over until his death. He


soon made the local news. On May 3, 1968 officials at Grossmont Junior College refused to let him speak to a student group that had invited him.<sup>140</sup>

Along with visits from Bill Taylor, the local units held periodic county-wide conferences on weekends, when the workers and daytime clubs met jointly. These meetings included reports about the activities of the party at the California and national level. In preparation for the state and national conventions held every four years, the clubs would discuss the issues, draft resolutions and elect delegates.

A well-publicized event in which Milt and both the daytime and workers club played a role during the early 1970s was the campaign to free Angela Davis (b. 1944). In the late 1960s she had been a graduate student at the University of California, San Diego.<sup>141</sup> However, she did not meet in a San Diego unit. Her political activity took place in Los Angeles, where she had friends. Nevertheless she was admired by Milt because she helped make attractive the party to those of her generation. This brought in some recruits, especially among the African-Americans.


At this time, Milt also took an active role in San Diego's peace movement. He observes that the party was unique in American society in combating anti-Sovietism. This was done through support for the local chapter of the US Soviet Friendship Society, of which Rose Sparer (1912-2005) was the chairperson for many years.<sup>142</sup> This group had a mailing list of 300 people and regularly drew 150 to the monthly meetings at its hall at 3011 Beech Street in Golden Hill.<sup>143</sup> There, they celebrated seasonal and national holidays, such as Christmas, May Day, and the Fourth of July, viewed films and heard invited speakers. The lectures dealt with the Soviet Union and international and local politics. Among those who regularly lectured at the Society

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*A flyer for the June 25, 1983 meeting of the San Diego Society for U.S.-Soviet Friendship. Author's collection.*

was Floyd Morrow, a deputy city attorney, a Democratic member of the city council from 1965 to 1978, and later a candidate for judge. Through the Friendship Society, Milt helped sponsor and entertain delegations of Soviet visitors to San Diego and took part in sending delegations of local residents to the USSR.<sup>144</sup> Milt raised money for the visitors' hotel and food bill.<sup>145</sup> He himself was part of a 1982 delegation to the USSR.<sup>146</sup>

Milt's peace work also involved support of coalitions such as the Peace Resource Center, which was located at 30th and Grape Street. For a \$5 admission fee, music-lovers heard folksinger-and-sometime-comrade Pete Seeger on February 25, 1983.<sup>147</sup>

Milt took on the role of financial benefactor after becoming the administrator of a million-dollar trust between 1984 and 2009. The trust originated with Wilmer Breeden (1901-1986) who, for fifty years, was close to the communists. Milt summarized Breeden's philosophy:

He believed that exploitation of man by man had to be replaced by a system that eliminated profit and greed, and consequently, he concluded that only through the education of the mass majority of people would it be possible to make fundamental changes in our political and economical arena. He discussed with me, from time to time, his conviction that only through the advocacy of socialistic principles would it be possible to improve the standard of living of the many.<sup>148</sup>

Breeden had served as a Naval chief petty officer during and, for a period, after World War I. While at sea, he studied law by a correspondence course, took the bar exam, and became a San Diego lawyer. His courtroom style was not polished. In the 1930s he defended groups such as the Cannery and Agricultural Worker Industrial Union. This was dangerous. In 1934 at Brawley in the Imperial Valley, he was beaten and his car destroyed near the courthouse by vigilantes employed by the growers and shippers.<sup>149</sup>

Breeden never married, lived frugally, and accumulated a sizable estate. He also inherited some apartments from his uncle Edward Schmidt (1886-1972) who had requested that the proceeds be devoted to the spread of socialism. In his will, Breeden gave both his uncle's money and his own to Milt "to be used for socialist purposes."<sup>150</sup> Milt established the Schmidt-Breeden Foundation, invested in stocks through Merrill Lynch, and gave the proceeds to various San Diego groups such as the United Farm Workers local and other local unions; the Sandinistas; candidates for political office; the People's World Party; and the Communist Party.



After twenty years, the progressive lawyer, Irwin, who drew up the foundation incorporation papers and helped manage it, began to lose sight of his fiduciary duties. In Milt's words, "he became greedy."<sup>151</sup> He bought thoroughbred horses, moved to Las Vegas in 2002, and attempted to liquidate the foundation for his own benefit. Milt cut short the lawyer by contacting the Communist Party's national chair. With a stroke of his pen, Milt signed over a million dollars to an educational trust in Chicago that is close to the party.<sup>152</sup>

Milt's coalition work includes the entertainment of progressives, including party leaders such as Sam Web who vacationed in the city.<sup>153</sup> Milt particularly enjoyed the regular visits of Scott Nearing (1883-1983) and his wife Helen, vegetarians with a broad outlook.<sup>154</sup> They had already lived long, progressive lives when they began coming to San Diego in the 1950s.<sup>155</sup> From 1928 to 1930, Scott Nearing had been on the staff of the *Daily Worker*.<sup>156</sup>

Milt remarried in the early 1960s to Anna M. Rda. They had no children together, but he helped raise the children she had by a previous marriage. This marriage only lasted until 1969. In 1971 Milt again embarked upon marriage, this one proving to be long-lasting, ending only with his wife's death in 2011. His new wife, Johanna, was Jewish and had migrated to America from Vienna with her family in 1938. She operated a family counseling service center and was not politically active, though she did serve a term as president of the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists. In all, Milt helped raise ten children and now has a multitude of grandchildren and great grandchildren.

About the time Milt married Johanna, he went back to school and did something he had started to do in the 1930s. He obtained a PhD in psychology from the United States International University in San Diego.<sup>157</sup> He then opened a counseling center that continues in operation to the present.<sup>158</sup> One of his services is to do assessments and written evaluations of those who enter assisted living facilities and nursing homes to determine the level of care they will need. Each assessment takes several days. In doing his work he still drives his car, cooks for himself, and lives in the home he bought in the 1960s. His wife was an invalid during the last ten years of her life; Milt took care of her.

## **Post-Soviet Era: 1991-2000s**

The collapse of the Soviet Union was an unwelcome development for Milt and members of the local Communist community. He points out that, for seventy years, the Soviets had in their planned economy what Communists around the world hope for: full employment, trade unionism for all, free or inexpensive housing, free education at all levels, free health care, and a cultural, psychological and



*Milt at home in San Diego, December 2011. Author's collection.*

spiritual life free from the coercion of profit-making and envy.<sup>159</sup>

A debate was set off among Communists throughout the world, echoed by Milt and local San Diego Communists and by the national party. At the American party's national convention in 1991, a large group which called itself the Committees of Correspondence split off and established an independent organization. In San Diego, about twenty comrades and sustainers, including all the African-Americans, sided with the Committees and withdrew.<sup>160</sup> By 2014 the local party is, in terms of numbers, back to where it was in the early 1960s. A party club meets monthly around Milt's dining room table, but with only six or eight comrades and friends. They include a college teacher, trade unionists, students, and retirees. Party leaders from the East Coast or northern California also occasionally attend to report on national developments.<sup>161</sup> The reduction in size reflects similar shrinkage nationally. Even the print edition of the party's newspaper and theoretical journal are defunct because of financial considerations.

## **Conclusion**

Milt, at age 100, comments that he is reaching the limits of his biological existence. He states that "if you live a good life, you die a happy death." In his view the party during his lifetime has voiced the aspiration of the city's unprivileged and backed every great social advance—it has not been wholly a failure.

## NOTES

1. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 7.
2. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 5. His birth certificate listed him as Moses, but he always went by the name of Milton or Milt.
3. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 7; and Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, p. 4. Henry, whose father was a merchant, was born in 1889 in Starodub, a village on the Babinets River in the lower Dnieper basin. This was a Ukrainian Cossack (East Slavic) region, not far from the Polish and Lithuanian border and under Russian control. Henry migrated to the United States in 1906, where he met and married Bessie Kozakoff (1889-1967). She was born near the Ukrainian town of Yekaterinoslave, which was later renamed Dnipropetrovsk. Her parents were farmers. She was one of thirteen children. At age 19 she migrated in 1907 with a sister, aged 17. They joined a brother, Harry H. Kozakoff, born in 1886, who came earlier.
4. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 5. Established in 1900, the Workmen's Circle offered life insurance as well as working class-oriented social and educational benefits, including a newspaper (*The Forward*), schools, camps, retreats, year-round programs of concerts, lectures, and secular holiday celebrations. It supported the labor movement through its Jewish Labor Committee. The San Diego Branch was No. 358. See Judah Shapiro, *The Friendly Society: A History of the Workmen's Circle* (New York, Media Judaica, 1970); Maximilian Hurwitz, *The Workmen's Circle; Its History, Ideals, Organization and Institutions* (New York, The Workmen's Circle, 1936).
5. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 12.
6. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 7.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 3.
9. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 7. Milt notes that eventually the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO), which had John L. Lewis and the United Mine Workers behind it, gave its support to the struggle. But there were still multiple killings before the steel industry finally started to bargain collectively with the United Steel Workers in the 1940s.
10. See Manfred Hildermeier, *The Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party Before the First World War* (1978; New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Christopher Rice, *Russian Workers and the Socialist Revolutionary Party Through the Revolution of 1905-07* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988).
11. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 8.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 19; Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 16. Joe regularly read the New York city-based *Morgen Freiheit* (English: *Morning Freedom*), which was a daily Yiddish language newspaper close to the Communist Party during much of its existence. Founded in 1922, it folded in 1988.
13. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 8.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-11; Milt, interviewed by author, October 22, 1983, 1.
15. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 5.
16. See Joseph Dallet, *Letters from Spain* (New York, Workers Library, 1938).
17. John Gates, *The Story of an American Communist* (New York: Nelson, 1958). Later Gates served with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Spain and the American armed forces in World War II. He was imprisoned for five years in the 1950s and was the last editor of the *Daily Worker*.
18. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 7.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 4. Milt's mentor at Ohio State was Henry Goddard (1866-1957), who was the first to translate the Binet intelligence test into English in 1908 and then led in advocating that

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- public schools provide special education for those with disabilities. See Leila Zenderland, *Measuring Minds: Henry Herbert Goddard and the Origins of American Intelligence Testing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
20. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 4.
  21. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 11.
  22. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 2; see also, David Tyack, *Public Schools in Hard Times: The Great Depression and Recent Years* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1984); Richard Reiman, *The New Deal & American Youth: Ideas & Ideals in a Depression Decade* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992).
  23. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 6.
  24. *Ibid.*, 4.
  25. Joe Kozakoff continued to be politically active in Los Angeles. He was a long-time member of the Communist Party's Venice-Santa Monica Club. They held a memorial service for him when he died on April 26, 1960. He was struck by a car and killed while aiding a woman friend. He had gone to a grocery store on her behalf on a rainy night. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 8.
  26. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 9. When Bessie was sixty years old, in the early 1950s, she decided to become a naturalized citizen. It was a dangerous time for non-citizens, some of whom were being deported because of their beliefs. In processing Bessie's application, Milt was called by the government and asked why he could adhere to communism. He answered that his mother's request for citizenship had nothing to do with his communism. She had paid taxes and was a good citizen. She obtained her citizenship on March 10, 1950.
  27. *Ibid.*, 8. Herb had played the violin and base violin in high school, but took up the base horn to be in a band and later a dance orchestra. He performed in upscale venues, such as the Beverley Hills Hotel. One of the bands in which he played was led by Rudy Vallée (1901–86). During World War II Herb was in the NBC orchestra, which was hired to entertain the troops. Because of his politics, he was ostracized during the McCarthy era.
  28. Milt, interviewed by author, October 22, 1983, 1. Milt commented that some mass meetings had 10,000 people in attendance. Party leaders Clarence "Charlie" Hathaway (1892-1963) and Earl Browder (1891-1973) were among those who came to speak.
  29. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 7, 10. Philip M. "Slim" Connolly (1904-1981) worked in the 1920s as a reporter in Los Angeles for the *Examiner* and *Herald-Express*. In 1936 he became the first president of the Los Angeles chapter of the Newspaper Guild and a fulltime union organizer. By 1952 he was editor of the West Coast communist paper, *The People's World*. At that time he and thirteen others were convicted after a six month trial under the Smith Act of 1940. He received a five year sentence and a \$10,000 fine. See Wolfgang Saxon, "Obituary: Philip (Slim) Connolly" *New York Times*, June 3, 1981. Max Silver was a fulltime party worker originally from Philadelphia, having joined in 1929. He concentrated on press distribution, such as the *Daily Worker*. Transferred to Los Angeles in 1934, he was the organization director working under the county chair, Pettis Perry by 1938. The latter was a former migrant farm worker. See Richard Boyer, *Pettis Perry: The Story of a Working Class Leader* (New York: Self-Defense Committee of the 17 Smith Act Victims, 1952).
  30. At the time Nat Abramowitz volunteered, he was working as a salesman. He arrived in Spain on June 6, 1937. The following year between March 10 and 12, 1938, he was reported as missing in action at Belchite in Spain. See Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 12; Anonymous, "Nathan J. Abramowitz," The Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives, accessed April 1, 2012, at <http://www.alba-valb.org/volunteers/nathan-j-abramowitz>.
  31. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 9.
  32. Robert Sherrill, *First Amendment Felon: The Story of Frank Wilkerson, His 132,000-Page FBI File*,

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*and His Epic Fight for Civil Rights and Liberties* (New York: Nation Books, 2005).

33. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 9.
34. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 11.
35. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 11.
36. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 8.
37. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 11.
38. "USO Dedicates New Unit" *San Diego Union*, November 14, 1943, 25.
39. "Announcement of Educational Series," *San Diego Union*, May 31, 1945.
40. "Small Nations Outlook" *San Diego Union* (July 8, 1945), 32; Philip Paneth, *Eduard Benes: A Leader of Democracy* (London: Alliance Press, 1945), 5. Benes maintained Poland and England had betrayed his country in making a 1938 deal with the Nazis to give his country to Germany. He stated that, in order to survive, small countries had to align themselves with larger countries. In 1943 the Czech government in exile allied itself with the Soviets. It rejected an alliance with London.
41. "Joshua Louis Goldberg," *Wikipedia*, accessed April 1, 2012, at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joshua\\_L.\\_Goldberg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joshua_L._Goldberg). See also "USO Dedicates New Unit Today," *San Diego Union*, November 14, 1943, 25, for a story about Milt's participation in the dedication of the USO center at 635 C Street.
42. Milt worked under Arthur Flakoll and earned \$225 per month as an assistant probation officer. "Appointment as Assistant Probation Officer," *San Diego Union*, February 4, 1945, 20.
43. Milt, "Controlling War-Time Juvenile Delinquency," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 35 (November-December 1945): 242-248; see also, Milt, "War Production," *Probation*, National Probation Association, 21, no. 1 (October 1942), 26.
44. Milt, "Controlling War-Time Juvenile Delinquency," 248.
45. Milt, "Why Can't Probationers Enlist?" *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 33 (May-June, 1942), 47-48.
46. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 11, 15.
47. Ibid. See also, United States Congress, *Investigation of Public Housing Authority at San Diego and Los Angeles: Hearings before the Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments, Subcommittee on Publicity and Propaganda, House of Representatives, April 15, 16 and 21, 1948*. (Eightieth Congress, Second Session, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1948); Daisy Worcester, *Grim the Battles: A Semi-Autobiographical Account of the War Against Want in the United States During the First Half of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Exposition Press, 1954), 344.
48. Worcester, *Grim the Battles*, 346-347, 368.
49. Ibid., 348.
50. United States Congress, *Study and Investigation of Housing: Hearings Before the Joint Committee on Housing* (Eightieth Congress, First Session, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1948), part 5, 1072.
51. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 15. The SCMWA originated in 1937 after a number of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) local unions, composed mainly of caseworkers, disaffiliated from that union and joined the Committee for Industrial Organizations (CIO). They were sympathetic to the communist program and grew to 48,000 members by 1946, when they merged with the United Public Workers of America (UPWA). See Sterling Spero and Albert Blum, *Government as Employer* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972); Walter Galenson, *The CIO Challenge to the AFL: A History of the American Labor Movement* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1960).
52. Iris Engstrand and Paul Campuzano, *Harley Knox: San Diego's Mayor for the People: 1943-1951*

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- (San Diego: San Diego Historical Society, 2002), 32.
53. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 12.
  54. Ibid.
  55. The founding of the Communist Party in San Diego in 1919 and its history during the Depression is summarized in Jim Miller, "Just Another Day in Paradise? An Episodic History of Rebellion and Repression in America's Finest City," in Mike Davis, Kelly Mayhew and Jim Miller, *Under the Perfect Sun: The San Diego Tourists Never See* (New York: New Press, 2003), pp. 202, 204, 379; Toby Terrar, "The San Diego Communist Party's Trade Unions Role During the Great Depression," unpublished manuscript in possession of the author, June 1984; Frederick Ryan, *The Labor Movement in SD: Problems and Development from 1887 to 1957* (San Diego: San Diego State College Press, 1959), pp. 70, 82, 138, 140, 147; Ella R. Bloor, *We Are Many: An Autobiography* (NY: International Publishers, 1940), pp. 162, 179. Some of the older comrades Milt met in 1940 had begun their political lives at the beginning of the century as part of the city's Socialist Party, Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) or Syndicalist League of North America.
  56. Milt, interviewed by author, October 22, 1983, 2; Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 12.
  57. Milt, interviewed by author, October 22, 1983, 2; Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 15. Lolita and her husband Howard, lived in the 6800 block of Delaware Avenue, La Mesa.
  58. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 17.
  59. Jack Tenney, Chairman, *Report, Joint Fact-Finding Committee on Un-American Activities in California to California Legislature* (Sacramento: California State Printing Office, 1943), p. 63. This is available online as Anonymous, "California. Legislature. Joint Fact-Finding Committee on Un-American Activities in California," accessed April 1, 2012, at [www.archive.org/stream/.../reportofjointfac00calirich\\_djvu.txt](http://www.archive.org/stream/.../reportofjointfac00calirich_djvu.txt).
  60. Steve Nelson and James Barrett, *Steve Nelson American Radical* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1981), 257.
  61. "Friendly and Hostile Witnesses Before House Red Probers," *The San Diego Union*, April 21, 1954, lists the names of seventy-five purported San Diego party members during the war period that were publicized at the Jackson Subcommittee Hearing of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, which was held in San Diego at the Civic Center. See also, Castanien Collection, Subject files, Communist, Jackson Hearing, 1954, Box 7, file 17, San Diego History Center. Milt maintains that most of those named were merely party sustainers who attended meetings, not members.
  62. Milt, interviewed by author, October 22, 1983, 3. According to Steve Nelson, the Southern California District organizer for the party, there were 7,000 party members in the state at that time. See Nelson and Barrett, *Steve Nelson American Radical*, 254.
  63. Milt, interviewed by author, October 22, 1983, 5.
  64. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 18; Anonymous, *Report, Joint Fact-Finding Committee on Un-American Activities in California to California Legislature* (Sacramento: California State Printing Office, 1943), 73. Hermine Hilkowitz lived to be 92 years old.
  65. Daisy Worcester, *Grim the Battles*, 344.
  66. Ibid., 23; Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 11, comments that of the two, Daisy talked for both. She was "wonderful, bright and knowledgeable." Woodie was "repressed and avoidant." She had a problem with alcohol.
  67. Milt, interviewed by author, October 22, 1983, 5.
  68. Ibid.

69. Such was also the opinion of the district organizer. See Nelson and Barrett, *Steve Nelson American Radical*, 254.
70. Nelson and Barrett, *Steve Nelson American Radical*, 253-254.
71. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 11.
72. Browder had been convicted of using a false name on a passport, a charge instigated by the anti-communist Congressman Martin Dies. Steve Nelson was more favorable to the association idea than Milt. Nelson felt it was realistic to expect that the Soviet-American, communist-capitalist unity expressed at the Teheran Conference in December 1943 would continue after the war. Stalin's remarks at the time seemed to indicate this. Because of Germany's military aggression, Stalin was desperate and willing to compromise his politics. Indicative of this was that the Comintern, which had been the chief international weapon against capitalism, was disbanded at this time. Nelson and Barrett, *Steve Nelson American Radical*, 270-271.
73. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 15.
74. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 7.
75. *Ibid.*, 9.
76. *Ibid.*, 11.
77. Ten of those indicted served five-year prison terms "for conspiracy to teach and advocate the overthrow of the U.S. government by force and violence." In 1950 the national leadership concluded that the Smith Act made it impossible to function as an open, legal party and established an underground party. The communist parties in Nazi-occupied Europe did the same in their resistance. See Erwin Marquit, *Memoirs of a Lifelong Communist*, (Minneapolis: c.2014), 129, accessed January 10, 2014, at <http://www.tc.umn.edu/~marqu002/memoirs.html>.
78. Milt, interviewed by author, October 22, 1983, 2; Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 12.
79. United States Congress, *Study and Investigation of Housing: Hearings Before the Joint Committee on Housing*, Committee Appointed to Investigate Publicity and Propaganda, September 10 and 19, 1947, January 12-28, 1948 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1948), part 5, 1072; United States Congress, *Investigation of Public Housing Authority at San Diego and Los Angeles: Hearings before the Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments, Subcommittee on Publicity and Propaganda, House of Representatives*, April 15, 16 and 21, 1948 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1948).
80. Alva Rogers, "Testimony," in United States Congress, *Study and Investigation of Housing: Hearings Before the Joint Committee on Housing*, Committee Appointed to Investigate Publicity and Propaganda, September 10 and 19, 1947, January 12-28, 1948, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1948), Part 5 (vols. 3-4). 3609.
81. Harold Velde, Chairman, "Investigation of Communist Activities in the State of California—Part 7," *Hearing before the Committee on Un-American Activities, House of Representatives: April 20, 1954*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1954), 4814.
82. Milt, interviewed by author, October 22, 1983, 3; Anonymous, "Friendly and Hostile Witnesses Before House Red Probers," *San Diego Union*, April 21, 1954; Castanien Collection, SDHC Subject files, Communist, Jackson Hearing, 1954, Box 7, file 17; Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 16.
83. Garrigues grew up in San Diego and in 1937 was a Newspaper Guild member and editor of the *San Diego Labor Leader* when he joined the party. The *Labor Leader*, with a circulation of 10,000, was the organ of the San Diego Federated Trades and Labor Council. See George Garrigues, *He Usually Lived with a Female: The Life of a California Newspaperman* (Los Angeles: Quail Creek Press, 2006), 158.
84. Garrigues also wrote for the party press using the name Vincent Sutherland. His greatest opus

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- was a political treatise titled *You're Paying for It: A Guide to Graft* (New York: Funk and Wagnalis, 1936), 8, 39, 189. In it he explained in class terms the political science of capitalist politics. In his analysis, the system from top to bottom was the product of petroleum, military, bank, public utility, insurance, agricultural and other special interests whose vote-graft paid to elect politicians in order to obtain special privileges. The three branches of government and both mainline parties were bought off. The real government was corporations and by eliminating them and establishing a planned economy, communism would end graft.
85. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 15-16. Wallace had served Franklin D. Roosevelt as Secretary of Agriculture, Vice President, and Secretary of Commerce. He was fired by President Harry S. Truman because he denounced Truman's foreign policy regarding the Cold War.
  86. *Ibid.*, 15-16. The following year on June 6, 1949, Bernadette Doyle, who attended college at Berkeley from 1938 to 1944 during the period when Milt was there, and who was the San Diego party's full-time paid county organizer in the late 1940s, received 376,000 votes in her IPP campaign for governor. See "Communist File: 1932-1959," manuscript in Castanien Collection, Box 7, file 16, SDHC; Toby Terrar, "Castanien Collection Notes: December 18, 2012," manuscript in the possession of the author, 7.
  87. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 16. He pointed out that the Wallace campaign was unusual for the time in that it included African American candidates campaigning alongside white candidates in the American South. During the campaign its candidates refused to appear before segregated audiences or eat or stay in segregated establishments. It also refused to expel those close to the communist party who were running as IPP candidates for local offices or those who were in the IPP leadership such as screen actor Paul Robeson.
  88. See I.F. Stone, *Hidden History of the Korean War: 1950-1951* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1952) and Stone, *The Truman Era* (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1953).
  89. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 16.
  90. *Ibid.*, 15-16.
  91. See "Anti-War Protest," *San Diego Union*, August 9, 1950, B-14; "Communist File: 1932-1959," MS in Castanien Collection, Box 7, file 16, SDHC; Terrar, "Castanien Collection Notes: December 18, 2012," 13. One of the party slogans was "Peace Not A-Bomb." On another occasion William Schneiderman, one of the party's state functionaries, was brought to town to address a May Day rally. The auditorium at Washington School at 621 Fourth Avenue was rented for the occasion. See "May Day Event," *San Diego Union*, April 29, 1949; Terrar, "Castanien Collection Notes: December 18, 2012," 13.
  92. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 9. Gene was in his third year in college when he dropped out to enlist in the Army. He served in the artillery under General Eisenhower. During the European invasion in June 1944, Gene was assigned to be a spotter in an airplane. He was always close to the party, but not a member. He did not complete college.
  93. *Ibid.*, 10.
  94. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 13.
  95. *Ibid.*, p 14.
  96. *Ibid.*
  97. Milt, interviewed by author, October 22, 1983, 3.
  98. *Ibid.*
  99. *Ibid.*
  100. Velde, "Investigation of Communist Activities in the State of California" *Hearing before the Committee on Un-American Activities* (1954), 4815. Margaret Chase Smith (1897-1995), whom



Milt quoted above, was a Republican U.S. Senator from Maine when on June 1, 1950 she made her fifteen-minute speech on the Senate floor condemning McCarthyism without naming McCarthy directly. Titled "Declaration of Conscience," six other Senators, all Republicans, signed on to it. They were Wayne Morse, George Aiken, Edward Thye, Irving Ives, Charles Tobey and Robert C. Hendrickson. In response to the speech McCarthy, who chaired the Permanent Committee on Investigations, removed Smith as a member and gave the seat to Richard Nixon. See Patricia Wallace, *Politics of Conscience: A Biography of Margaret Chase Smith* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1955).

101. Milt, interviewed by author, October 22, 1983, 3; Jack Williams, "Obituary of Lee W. Major" *San Diego Union*, November 20, 2004. In later years Lee Major and his family lived in the 4400 block of Kansas Street.
102. Ibid.
103. Ibid.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid., 4.
106. Ibid., 3-4; Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 13-14.
107. "Near East Value Clashes," *San Diego Union*, April 7, 1956, 4.
108. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 15.
109. Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) is discussed in Anonymous, "Borderline personality disorder," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borderline\\_personality\\_disorder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borderline_personality_disorder) (accessed April 1, 2012).
110. George Adamski published several books describing his alien encounters along with several science fiction works. See "George Adamski," *Wikipedia*, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George\\_Adamski](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Adamski) (accessed April 1, 2012).
111. "Divorce Filings," *San Diego Union*, May 4, 1954, 22.
112. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 15.
113. Milt, interviewed by author, October 22, 1983, 2.
114. Ibid., 2.
115. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 12, 16. Philip, whose time in the party was even longer than Milt's, agreed with this view. The younger generation, however, who came into the party in the Vietnam period, such as Carl, who perhaps did not have the benefit of the earlier history, took a different view. See Philip, "Interviews: February 11, 1983," manuscript in possession of Toby Terrar, 6 (P-1723, Bx 3.3, pt. 1).
116. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 17.
117. Kathleen A. Brown, "The 'Savagely Fathered and Un-Mothered World' of the Communist Party, U.S.A.: Feminism, Maternalism, and 'Mother Blood,'" *Feminist Studies* 25 (Autumn, 1999), 522, 547. Brown writes that the reason rank and filers stay loyal despite oppression is that they view their fellow workers as an extended family. Efforts at resisting McCarthyism or, in other times at halting evictions and foreclosures, conducting rent strikes, restoring utilities and demanding relief, not to mention jobs, peace and anti-racism are family issues. Along with family, for some comrades, allegiance to the party is part of their religion. Milt Felsen in his biography, *The Anti-Warrior: A Memoir* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989), 137, comments simply that the Ten Commandments are communism and breaking them is capitalism. Felsen is Jewish. The Catholic comrade Philip Bonosky in "In the Mainstream," *Mainstream* (New York: January 1962), 15:9, gives a New Testament (*Acts* 5:1-11) version of his beliefs, "The founder of Christianity was a Communist with eleven faithful Apostles, chief of whom struck a man [Ananias] and his wife [Sapphira] dead for keeping back their money from the common pool instead of sharing it." Bonosky finds a parallel between Peter's leveling and that of Stalin against the Kulaks.

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118. "Income Tax Charge Is Dismissed," *San Diego Union*, July 3, 1965; Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 23.
119. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 10.
120. Carl's sister, Roberta, in Judy Kaplan and Linn Shapiro (eds.), *Red Diapers: Growing Up in the Communist Left* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 299-301, discusses the family history. She was in the minority among those studied, in that she felt positive about her upbringing. For the majority, the persecution suffered by their parents gave them a negative view of the party.
121. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 19.
122. Carl, interviewed by author, December 19, 2011.
123. *Ibid.*, 8-9; Toby Terrar, "Miscellaneous Letters," September 25, 1984, manuscript in possession of author, Bx 1.8.5.3.1, pt. 1; Toby Terrar, "Diary," August 1-September 9, 1983, manuscript in possession of author, 16:981; *Ibid.*, December 9, 1983, 993; Toby Terrar, "Diary-Notes: 1983," September 28, 1983, manuscript in possession of author, 2, 7. Unions in which these party members held membership were the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the Utilities Workers Union of America (UWUA), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA). Those in the club included Florence in Pacific Beach, Helen in Chula Vista, Paul (a teacher) and his wife Aurora, Danny, who was of Puerto Rican heritage from New York and worked at the ship yard, Paul, who headed the city's 100-member International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) local, Lolita and her husband Henry, Sam and Sara, Jerry and Rita.
124. Carl, interviewed by author, December 19, 2011, 8.
125. Terrar, "Diary-Notes: 1983," 3.
126. Terrar, "Miscellaneous Letters," May 1, 1983. The club's political work sometimes meant going with the "lesser evil," as in the special election for mayor held on May 3, 1983. This election was to fill the position vacated by Pete Wilson, who had been elected to the U.S. Senate the previous fall. The comrades worked for the Democrat Maureen O'Connor since she was endorsed by labor. However, she lost to Roger Hedgecock by 10,000 votes.
127. Terrar, "Diary-Notes: 1983," 5.
128. See Healy, *California Red*, 126-127, 168.
129. Terrar, "Diary-Notes: 1983," 2, 7.
130. Terrar, "Diary-Notes: 1983," 3-5. Milt observed that Club meetings were a place where one could gain a broad understanding of the city's working class politics. Some of their organizations about which they regularly talked at club meetings were: Concerned Unionists of San Diego (CUSED), Gray Panthers, Jobs or Income Now (JOIN), Labor-Community Coalition, San Diego Labor Council, San Diego Tenants Union, Senior Center at Broadway & 10th Street, where comrade Rita worked and Urban League.
131. Terrar, "Diary-Notes: 1983," 2, 7. Milt, interviewed by author, October 22, 1983, 5.
132. Talking about his motivation for joining the party, Porter commented, "I saw in the early 1930s the Depression, people unemployed, and the best way to fight it was to join the Communist Party. It was as simple as that. I had no blueprints or plans." John Porter, interviewed by author, December 23, 1982," P-1803, 1/, Box 3.1, pt. 2, December 23, 1982, 1.6.
133. Philip Honor, interviewed by author, February 11, 1983, P-1723, Bx 3.3, pt. 1, p. 6. Philip initially belonged to one of the foreign language (Yiddish-Lithuanian) federations in New York that were part of the communist movement. He was self-educated with no college experience. He first worked as the cultural director of the International Workers Organization (IWO), which was an umbrella insurance organization, composed of local fraternal social and cultural clubs.

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134. Terrar, "Diary-Notes: 1983," 2. At the time of his death, Ted Prager was living in the 5800 block of Malvern Court.
135. Dorothy Healy, *California Red: A Life in the American Communist Party, Dorothy Healy Remembers* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1993).
136. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 18.
137. Carl, interviewed by author, December 19, 2011, 5-6. The reformers played down the importance of the Soviets and opposed their intervention in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968.
138. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 18.
139. Ibid.
140. "William Taylor not Allowed to Speak," *San Diego Union*, May 3, 1968, 20.
141. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, p. 16; Angela Davis, *Angela Davis: An Autobiography* (New York: Random House, 1974).
142. The history of the Friendship Society in America and in San Diego went back to the 1920s. It grew out of the American-Soviet Friendship Council and its predecessor, the Friends of Soviet Russia, an organization set up immediately after the 1917 Revolution to foster goodwill between the American and Soviet people. See Nelson and Barrett, *Steve Nelson American Radical*, 440, n9.
143. Terrar, Miscellaneous Letters, December 27, 1982.
144. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 16; Terrar, "Diary-Notes: 1983," 3. Among those whom Milt helped sponsor for a tour of the Soviet Union in the 1970s was Lee Major's wife. He also helped Lee's daughter attend a youth conference in East Germany. The daughter had no political inclinations but Milt felt that the travel might open her eyes. But this did not happen. She did not see the trip as a privilege but acted as if she was doing the Friendship Society a favor. During the McCarthy period Lee stopped his party membership and much of his political activity. But he remained personally close to the communist community.
145. Milt, interviewed by author, October 22, 1983, 2; Terrar, "Miscellaneous Letters," December 27, 1982. Illustrative in the summer of 1982 was the visit of a Soviet theatrical delegation to the Old Globe Theater in Balboa Park at which Mayor Pete Wilson spoke. On another occasion the Society held a reception at its hall for fifteen Soviet musicians on February 27, 1983. The following day it hosted a dinner for the group. Southern California was an attractive travel destination to the Soviets, who as many others liked its beaches, parks, zoo, weather and hospitality. See Terrar, "Miscellaneous Letters," February 22, 1983.
146. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 16.
147. In 1960 the San Diego Board of Education unsuccessfully attempted to cancel Seeger's performance at Hoover High School because he would not sign a non-communist statement. See Bianca Gonzalez, "Longtime Attorney Fought for Civil Rights," *San Diego Union*, April 19, 2008.
148. Milt, quoted in "Estate of Breeden," 208 Cal.App.3d 981 (1989), 988.
149. Irving Bernstein, *Turbulent Years: A History of the American Worker, 1933-1941* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 167.
150. "Estate of Breeden," 208 Cal.App.3d 981 (1989).
151. Milt, interviewed by author, October 10, 2013, 21-23.
152. Ibid.
153. The history of comrades visiting San Diego is as old as the party itself. In 1922 Ella Reeve Bloor ("Mother Bloor") an organizer for the new party, had the good sense to spend the winter in town and help with recruitment and the holding of instructional classes. See Frederick Ryan, *The Labor Movement in SD: Problems and Development from 1887 to 1957* (San Diego: San Diego

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- State College Press, 1959), 70, 82, 138, 140, 147; Ella R. Bloor, *We Are Many: An Autobiography* (NY: International Publishers, 1940), 162, 179.
154. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 6. See Scott Nearing, *The Making of a Radical: A Political Autobiography* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972). Scott Nearing grew up in Pennsylvania and earned a Bachelor's and PhD degree from the University of Pennsylvania in the early part of the century. He then taught economics there until 1915 when he was fired because of his support of the Socialist Party. He authored a series of pamphlets and spoke out against America's participation in World War I. For this he was prosecuted under the Espionage Act for "obstruction to the recruiting and enlistment of service." A jury refused to convict him.
  155. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 6. In the 1920s Scott Nearing had taught at the Socialist Party-affiliated Rand School of Social Science but, like many others, switched his allegiance to the newly formed Workers Party which became the Communist Party.
  156. Nearing, *The Making of a Radical*, 142. The Nearings were not party members in the later years but rather independent socialists who were friends to the party. In the early 1960s the party's New Century Publishers produced their pamphlets on Cuba and Eastern Europe. When Scott was nearly 100 years old he became dysfunctional and committed suicide from malnourishment. Milt feels this was wrong. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 7.
  157. Milt's dissertation is titled, "Self-Actualization Study of the Small Entrepreneur," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, United States International University, 1973.
  158. Milt, interviewed by author, December 17, 2011, 15.
  159. *Ibid.*, 16.
  160. *Ibid.*
  161. The discussion at the October 2013 meeting was about the national convention of the AFL-CIO, which is held every four years. The most recent convention had taken place the previous month in Los Angeles. Two club trade unionists attended, one a veteran electrician in his 60s and the other a grocery clerk in his 20s. Their report summarized the philosophy and history of American trade unionism going back to the 19th century. Among the positive developments they noted that the AFL is back to organizing along industrial and global, that is, class lines, rather than craft and national lines. The leadership is more class conscious compared to the 1950s and 1960s. Some such as United Steel Workers president Leo Gerard, born in 1947, come from communist families. Leo's father, Wilfred, was an organizer for the International Mine Mill and Smelter Workers' Union. He was fired in the 1950s for being a communist. Such activist leadership makes labor a political force for public education, universal health care, emigration reform and resistance to neo-liberal foreign trade and military policy. In making his report, the younger trade unionist felt that increased militancy was needed. The centenarian agreed, and went on to discuss the problem which class differences make for reformism. Toby Terrar, "Notes: Oct. 10, 2013," manuscript in possession of author.