

**RADICAL  
VILLAGE**

**JAY  
SAPER**



**Radical Village**

Jay Saper

## Introduction

### Now I See Myself

Every year on Founders Day, Little Red School House and Elisabeth Irwin High School (LREI) holds an all school assembly to reenact its founding myth and pay homage to a gentile in pearls at an ice cream parlour. *Radical Village* presents quite a different story from this official narrative.

LREI was a hotbed of Jewish radicalism. The school's first students were Yiddish-speaking immigrants on the Lower East Side. The school served as a haven for politically active Jewish teachers and families who faced state repression and violence. The school was a cultural center for experimental and progressive Jewish artists. The school was a community, who informed by its own experience with oppression, cultivated deep solidarity with all those working to bring about a better world.

As I dug around and uncovered this history, I felt inspired by what I learned. I wanted to do my part to help ensure it would not be erased again and further forgotten. I created a walking tour of the Greenwich Village neighborhood and wrote this accompanying zine to tell the story of the school through its connections to social movements over the past century.

My interest in the history of LREI began before I started working at the school, when I read *Going South: Jewish Women in the Civil Rights Movement* by Debra Schultz as I prepared to go South myself for the 50th

anniversary of Mississippi Freedom Summer. Among the activists profiled in Schultz's book is Faith Holsaert, who at four years old prompted her mother to invite her beloved music teacher Charity Bailey to live in their home. As Charity faced housing discrimination as a Black woman, she took them up on the offer. Growing up in the LREI community, with a Jewish mother by birth and Black mother by affection, Faith went on to become a prominent activist in the Civil Rights Movement.

At Busboys and Poets in Washington DC, I attended a book talk by Bill Ayers of the Weather Underground. As he discussed his latest memoir, Angela Davis walked in and took a seat at a table in the back of the room. When Bill finished speaking, he rushed over to give her a hug, then returned to a table up front to sign books. As I handed him my copy of *Public Enemy: Confessions of an American Dissident*, I commented on what a joy it was to see Angela walk in. Bill's face lit up. He was thrilled too. She and Kathy, he said, referring to Kathy Boudin of the Weather Underground, had been longtime friends since their high school days when they were classmates at LREI.

Before long, I moved to New York City and started teaching at the school. On my nights and weekends, I researched more of its past, which led me to write *Radical Village*. In my final year working at LREI, I had the distinct privilege of advising a senior on her oral history project that examined the relationship between the school and the Greenwich Village neighborhood over the years. Talia had first become intrigued with helping out in the school's archives after she brushed dust off of an old black and white photograph of students. Captivated by what she saw, she wanted to learn more of their story.

At the culmination of Talia's senior project, she put together an interactive exhibit. She posted excerpts from her interviews on the wall with headphones to listen in. She pulled books to set on the table out of her canvas bag with the name of the Jewish day school she previously attended printed on the side. She placed Charity Bailey's old records on a shelf and invited the guests to take them down for a spin under the needle.

Talia also put out the black and white photographs that had originally sparked her interest. Before the exhibit opened to the community, she shared with me some words. Jay, I used to look at these pictures and was drawn to them simply because I thought that they were beautiful. Now I see something more in these pictures when I look at them. Now I see myself. Because of you, I feel like I now know where I come from.

**FREE**



**ANGELA**

## **Dylan Residence**

**94 MacDougal Street**

Two decades before LREI parent Robert Zimmerman was born in Duluth, Minnesota, his father witnessed a terrible event. The circus came to town for a parade and performance. The next evening a white mob took three Black circus workers from jail and hung them from a lamppost. Pictures of the horrific scene circulated as postcard souvenirs. In 1965, Bob Dylan released 'Desolation Row,' a song about this lynching he learned about from his father.

Bob cemented his commitment to strum his guitar for racial justice two years prior when he performed at the 1963 March on Washington. From the same stage where Dr. King delivered his 'I Have a Dream' speech, Bob played 'Only a Pawn in Their Game.' He wrote the song in response to the assassination earlier that summer of the Mississippi NAACP field secretary Medgar Evers, who was shot down in his driveway carrying a box of t-shirts that read, 'Jim Crow Must Go.'

In 1971, Bob released a song about George Jackson. Arrested a decade prior for allegedly taking \$70 from a gas station, behind bars George devoted himself to study and Black liberation. Guards brutalized George and locked him in solitary confinement. On January 13, 1970 a white supremacist prison gang started a riot. A white guard responded by killing George's close friend and two other Black inmates. George, along with two others, known together as the Soledad Brothers, were charged with killing a guard four days later.

That summer, George's brother Jonathan raided a courtroom to demand the release of his brother. Jonathan was shot down in that process. The FBI wanted to pin the event on the scholar, activist, and LREI graduate Angela Davis, whom California Governor Ronald Reagan had tried to illegally fire from the philosophy department at UCLA for her political beliefs.

Angela was arrested and taken to the Women's House of Detention, which stood on the site that is now the Jefferson Market Garden. Lacking meaningful evidence, the government used love letters between Angela and George to try to sway the jury. A global movement emerged to demand freedom for Angela Davis and all political prisoners. The Rolling Stones wrote 'Sweet Black Angel.' John Lennon and Yoko Ono released 'Angela' in her support. Angela's brilliant testimony in the courtroom, combined with mounting global pressure, convinced the all-white jury of the absurdity of the claims against her. They acquitted her of all charges.

On August 21, 1971, guards shot George dead. His murder would inspire the Attica Prison Uprising a few weeks later, during which the prisoners demanded to be represented by LREI parent Bill Kunstler. Black August has grown into a month-long annual tribute to George Jackson and commemoration of Black



## Smith Residence

### 29 Washington Square West

In 1952, amidst the second Red Scare, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of New York's Feinberg Law, which was used to fire teachers from the public schools who were accused of being communists, a label that often targeted Jews with anti-racist politics. LREI became a refuge for educators who were critics of this policy: Morris Salz, Sarah Abelson, and Adele Lithauer.

Politically active artists also struggled with employment during these times. Pete Seeger, friend of the school and husband of LREI student Toshi Ohta, was intensely surveilled by the FBI and banned from performing for over a decade. Songwriter Earl Robinson, a friend of Pete and collaborator with 24 Charlton resident Paul Robeson, was kicked out of Hollywood and became the high school music teacher at LREI. Earl wrote the music for "Black and White," the song about school integration that was popularized by Three Dog Night. He also wrote the music for "Joe Hill," which honors the musician, activist, and martyr of the Industrial Workers of the World who proclaimed before he was killed by the State of Utah, "Don't mourn, organize!" The song was sung by the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in their fight against Franco in the Spanish Civil War and performed by Joan Baez at Woodstock.

Rank Smith, who became the director of LREI after Elisabeth Irwin passed away, was dragged before a federal committee, commonly referred to as the House Un-American Activities Committee, charged with investigating Subversive Influence in the Educational Process. His wife Grace and teacher Adele Lithauer also had to testify. Grace directed the WPA's statewide nursery school project and later taught at Harriet Johnson Nursery School, the precursor to the Bank Street School for Children. Adele organized private school teachers as an officer with the union.

All three refused to answer questions about their political affiliations. The committee would not allow them to object under the first amendment and only granted them permission under the fifth. Rank told the committee, "We are a private school, but essentially we don't believe in private education. We believe in a democracy the main scheme of education has to be public education...We are a private school by accident rather than intent...We would prefer to have a public school system where every citizen would take pride."

Despite the school long being targeted by the government, Eleanor Roosevelt, a fellow resident of 29 Washington Square West, was a supporter of LREI and served on its board for decades.

## Hansberry Residence

112 Waverly Place and 337 Bleecker Street

Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* became the first play written by a Black woman to be performed on Broadway when it opened in 1959. Her friend James Baldwin, who lived at 81 Horatio Street, praised her by writing, "Never before, in the entire history of the American theater, had so much of the truth of black people's lives been seen on the stage." She wrote the play at 337 Bleecker Street and used the money she earned from its success to move to 112 Waverly Place.

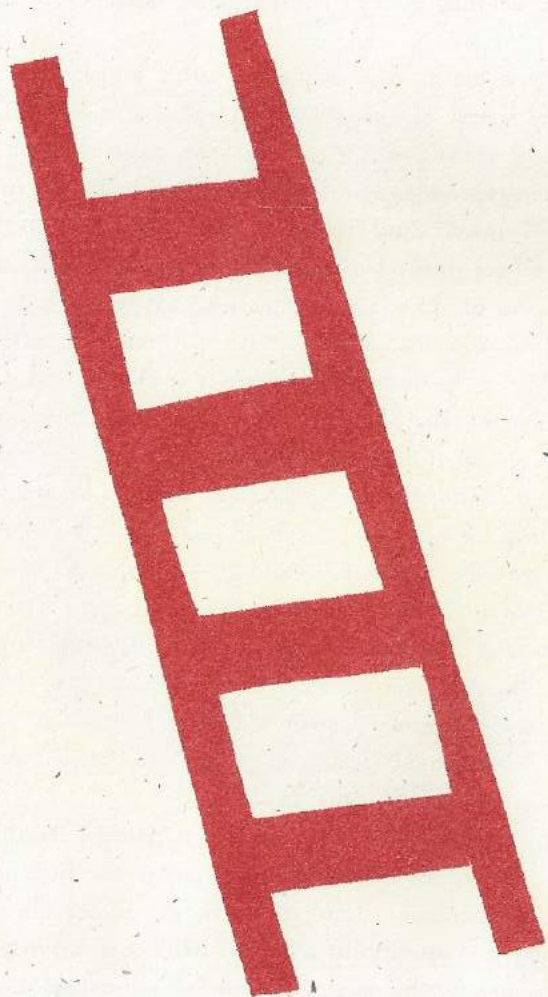
Lorraine was able to capture so much of the truth of the challenges faced by Black families moving into white neighborhoods because she had lived the experience. Growing up in Chicago, Lorraine's family moved into an all-white neighborhood and faced violent backlash for doing so. Her father worked with the NAACP to bring a legal challenge to the restrictive housing covenants. The case made its way all the way to the Supreme Court and paved the way for outlawing housing discrimination.

After moving from the Midwest to New York City, Lorraine landed a job at *Freedom*, the Black newspaper published by Paul Robeson. She took classes on African history with W.E.B. DuBois at the Jefferson School for Social Science run by the Communist Party.

Lorraine married the Robert Nemiroff in 1953. The evening before the wedding ceremony, the couple protested the execution of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg. Lorraine and Robert separated a few years later, though remained close friends. Lorraine dated women, wrote anonymous letters to the lesbian magazine *The Ladder*, and joined the Daughters of Bilitis, one of the first lesbian organizations.

Lorraine spoke in Washington Square Park to raise money for the NAACP. She started a Greenwich Village branch of the organization, which LREI students joined. When the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee sought to release a book of Danny Lyon's photographs of the Black Freedom Movement, Lorraine wrote the accompanying text. She urged whites to "stop being a liberal and become an American radical." The FBI closely monitored Lorraine's work for racial justice and compiled a file on her that exceeded a thousand pages.

When Lorraine died from pancreatic cancer at the age of 34, her friend Nina Simone wrote "To Be Young, Gifted and Black" with Weldon Irvine in her memory.



## Triangle Shirtwaist Factory

23-29 Washington Place (245 Greene Street)



The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory epitomized the brutal conditions workers faced in early twentieth century garment sweatshops. In 1909, just down the street at the Cooper Union Great Hall, Clara Lemlich moved for a general strike. Undeterred by beatings and arrests, nearly 30,000 Yiddish-speaking immigrants carried out the largest strike of women workers in the history of the country. While almost every factory capitulated to the demands for better pay, shorter hours, improved working conditions, and union recognition, owners of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory held out. On March 25, 1911, the factory erupted in flames. With a locked stairwell and no sprinkler system, a tragedy unfolded. 146 people died. Owners were acquitted. Public outrage forced the adoption of workplace safety laws and served as a catalyzing force for the labor movement. LREI's initial enrollment mirrored this population of exploited immigrants. Elisabeth Irwin practiced in her public school the progressive ideals the workers demonstrated for in the streets.

## Tisch School of the Arts

721 Broadway

Tom Hurwitz is the son of the Martha Graham dancer Jane Dudley and pioneering social documentarian Leo Hurwitz who chaired the Graduate Institute of Film and Television at New York University.

Jane choreographed social protest pieces and founded the political New Dance Group. She grew up attending the progressive Walden School on the Upper West Side, later attended by Andrew Goodman, who was martyred in 1964 alongside James Chaney and Mickey Schwerner during Mississippi Freedom Summer.

Leo's politics were shaped by his father Solomon who served on the editorial board of the longest-running Yiddish anarchist newspaper *Fraye Arbeter Shtime*. Leo founded the first nonprofit documentary production company in the country. His film on the Spanish Civil War, *Heart of Spain*, which was released before the United States entered World War II, brought upon surveillance from the FBI who regarded him as a "premature antifascist." His film *Native Land*, narrated by Paul Robeson, examined struggles in the labor movement. During the second Red Scare, Leo lost work because of his politics.

At LREI, Tom demonstrated against nuclear weapons and picketed Woolworths in solidarity with the sit-ins across the South. Along with classmates Lisa Fein Gilford, Liz Leicester, and Karen Weingeist, he was arrested at the 1964 protest of the World's Fair organized by the Congress for Racial Equality.

Tom was arrested again in 1967 at the massive march on the Pentagon to bring an end to the Vietnam War. In 1968, as a leader of Students for a Democratic Society, he helped to organize the student takeover of Columbia University that led to the occupation of five buildings on campus in protest of the school's connection to the war and desire to build a gym in Morningside Park with a segregated entrance for Black residents of Harlem. Tom was arrested occupying Mathematics Hall that year and then the year following, along with Democracy Now! journalist Juan González. LREI parent Bill Kunstler represented them.

Following in his father's footsteps, Tom has become an accomplished documentary filmmaker.

פרייזע

ארבייטער

שטומע





## Asch Residence

29 Fifth Avenue (2 Washington Square Village after 1959)

Sholem Asch's 1907 controversial Yiddish play *Got fun nekome* made its English debut as *God of Vengeance* in 1922 at the Provincetown Playhouse at 133 MacDougal Street. A couple months later the play moved to the larger Greenwich Village Theatre at Sheridan Square. On February 19, 1923, *God of Vengeance* opened at the Apollo Theater. For featuring the first kiss between two women on Broadway, the entire cast was arrested. While they were initially found guilty of obscenity, Harry Weinberger, friend of and lawyer for anarchist Emma Goldman, overturned the decision on appeal.

As Nazis rose to power in Germany, Albert Einstein immigrated to the United States. He got involved with the antiracist struggle, befriending Paul Robeson and W.E.B. DuBois, both of whom spoke at LREI. Albert collaborated with Sholem on pressuring the government to accept Jewish refugees. It was a time, not unlike our own, when the most persecuted were not welcomed on these shores. In 1939, the *St. Louis* set sail, carrying nearly a thousand Jews fleeing Germany. The United States government turned the ship around, sending the passengers back to be massacred in the Holocaust.

Sholem and Matilda's son Moses became interested in recording. Moe discussed his aspirations with Albert, who encouraged him. The Holocaust's annihilation ignited Moe's passion for the preservation of cultures the world over. He sought to create an encyclopedia of sound. In 1948, Folkways Records was born.

Moe recorded over 2,000 records. He recorded an autobiographical interview with W.E.B. DuBois and poems by Langston Hughes. He recorded LREI regulars Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger. After a Lead Belly performance went so well at LREI, Moe decided to record a Lead Belly children's album. He released records by LREI music teachers Charity Bailey and Earl Robinson. Ben Shahn and other political artists created album covers for the label.

When Moe and Frances had a child, they sent him to LREI. Michael joined the fabled class of Angela Davis, Kathy Boudin, and Faith Holsaert. Continuing in his family legacy of honoring those forced to the margin, Michael focuses on the rights of First Nations as a professor of anthropology in Canada. Upon Moe's passing, Michael negotiated with the Smithsonian to continue Folkways. He has served as chair of the Smithsonian Folkways advisory board and continues to work to ensure that his father's encyclopedia of sound remains available to all for generations to come.

## Weather Underground Townhouse

18 West 11th Street

Kathy Boudin is the daughter of poet Jean Boudin and prominent radical lawyer Leonard Boudin. Her dad represented Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee activist Julian Bond, as well as Daniel Ellsberg, the Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden of the Vietnam War who released the Pentagon Papers.

At LREI, Kathy introduced Pete Seeger at a fundraiser. She picketed local Woolworths with her high school friends in solidarity with those protesting segregated lunch counters in the South. At Bryn Mawr, she organized for better treatment of the Black maids and porters. Kathy organized a racial justice conference attended by Howard Zinn and Stokely Carmichael. In 1963, she worked to desegregate a skating rink and restaurants as part of the Cambridge Movement in Maryland. The following year, Kathy was arrested protesting segregated schools in Chester, Pennsylvania. Upon graduating college in 1965, she became an organizer for the Economic Research and Action Project in Cleveland.

Casualties of the Vietnam War began to exceed a million. Police escalated attacks on the Black Panther Party. The FBI assassinated Fred Hampton in his sleep. Kathy joined the Weather Underground. The organization, unlike the government, did not harm people. Rather, they engaged in bombings of sites that symbolically represented American racism and militarism. On March 6, 1970, one of their bombs prematurely exploded at this townhouse. Diana Oughton, Ted Gold, and Terry Robbins lost their lives. Kathy Boudin and Cathy Wilkerson escaped alive.

In 1981, Kathy assisted with the getaway vehicle for a Black Liberation Army expropriation of funds. She surrendered before any shots were fired, yet still spent over two decades at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility for Women. Her son Chesa was raised by Bernadine Dohrn and Bill Ayers, the social justice activist and scholar who was educated at Bank Street and has spoken at LREI. While incarcerated, Kathy worked at the Children's Center and designed AIDS programming. She wrote a handbook on foster care for incarcerated parents. Kathy is currently a professor at the Columbia School of Social Work, where she serves as the Director of the Criminal Justice Initiative: Supporting Children, Families, and Communities.



## Women's House of Detention

10 Greenwich Avenue (425 Sixth Avenue)



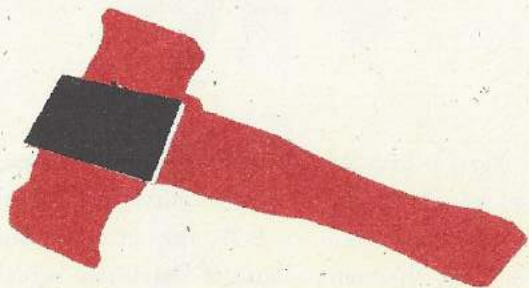
The Jefferson Market Library was formerly a courthouse. The garden was a jail. Striking workers from the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory were dragged here as a matter of intimidation. In 1929, the jail was demolished to make way for the New York Women's House of Detention, which opened in 1932. Redistricting closed the court in 1945. The community rallied together to preserve the building. Thanks to their efforts, the building opened as a library in 1967.

Prominent activists, including LREI graduate Angela Davis, Dorothy Day, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Ethel Rosenberg, Claudia Jones, and Andrea Dworkin were held at the Women's House of Detention. Several wrote about the appalling conditions inside, which led to its closure in 1974. The community that organized to turn the courthouse into a library now mobilized to demolish the prison to make way for a garden.

The basement of the library was formerly the holding area. Today it is home to the New York Collection, which includes *Radical Feminists of Heterodoxy: Greenwich Village, 1912-1940* by Judith Schwarz, a book that profiles Elisabeth Irwin. The first floor of the library, formerly a police court, now houses the children's room. We have rebellious librarians to thank, Anne Carroll Moore among them, for transforming libraries from places where children were forbidden to places where they are now welcomed with storytimes, shelves of picture books, and dedicated librarians passionate about the belief that it is never too early to ignite a love for reading.

## Law Office of Kunstler and Kuby

13 Gay Street



Preeminent radical lawyer Bill Kunstler represented Freedom Riders and advised Dr. King. He defended the Chicago Eight, later the Chicago Seven, targeted for protesting the 1968 Democratic National Convention. Black Panther Party Chairman Bobby Seale was publically bound and gagged during the trial. Bill was asked to observe the 1971 Attica Prison Uprising and represent inmates who challenged the inhumane conditions at the prison. Bill represented leaders of the American Indian Movement who occupied Wounded Knee in 1973 to confront the history of treaty violations on the land where over 200 of their ancestors had been massacred in 1890. Bill co-founded the Center for Constitutional Rights, which was led for years by Michael Ratner who lived at 124 Washington Place.

Ron Kuby was nearly expelled from junior high for creating an underground newspaper critical of his school's administration. At the University of Kansas, police broke Ron's arm at an anti-apartheid demonstration calling on the school to divest from South Africa. Upon completing law school 1983, Ron joined Bill. They took on the appeals of Yusef Salaam, one of the Central Park Five teens of color coerced by the police to give false confessions to the 1989 rape and beating of the white Central Park Jogger. Fascist nightmare Donald Trump vocally advocated for the return of the death penalty to execute these youth. Bill and Ron continued together to defend the rights of the most controversial of clients until Bill died in 1995. In 2002, the Central Park Five were exonerated. Ron continues to practice civil rights law and criminal defense up at 119 West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. Bill, Ron, and Michael were all LREI parents.



## Stonewall Inn

53 Christopher Street

Police have routinely raided places where queer and trans people congregate. On June 28, 1969, when the police began making arrests at the Stonewall Inn, the people fought back. Trans women of color, including Miss Major, Marsha P. Johnson, and Sylvia Rivera played a pivotal role in the Stonewall Rebellion, which sparked a massive movement. Those imprisoned a block away at New York Women's House of Detention expressed solidarity with those in the street below. LREI, founded in 1921 by the politically active lesbian Elisabeth Irwin, has long served as a place of refuge for queer families, teachers, and students. It was the first school to march in the city's Pride Parade. The youngest children philosophize about family structure over playdough and try on various genders and sexualities in dramatic play. The older students formally study intersectional feminism with the legendary Ileana Jiménez.



## Irwin Anthony Residence

23 Bank Street

Elisabeth Irwin founded Little Red School House in 1921 as an experimental public school on the Lower East Side serving mostly Yiddish-speaking children of Jewish refugees who narrowly escaped the pogroms. Her educational and political philosophy were deeply steeped in the progressive fervor of the time.

Elisabeth believed that "education should not consist of acquiring information but of acquiring experience." She pushed back against the idea of drilling children and instead carved out space for them to create, "the boy who is carrying home the boat he has made does not long feel inferior to the one with a first reader under his arm."

Elisabeth and her life partner Katherine Anthony, who was a writer and activist, were part of the radical group of feminists in the neighborhood known as Heterodoxy. The group met at anarchist Polly Holladay's restaurant at 137 MacDougal Street and later 147 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Emma Goldman spoke to the group, which included her niece Stella Ballantine. Industrial Workers of the World organizer Elizabeth Gurley Flynn was also a member.

Elisabeth edited and Katherine contributed to an edition of the Women's Peace Party of New York's publication *Four Lights*. Both were friends with pacifist Jeannette Rankin, the first woman to hold a national office. Jeannette did not support World War I and was the only member of congress to oppose World War II. Elisabeth and Katherine introduced Jeannette to Frances Perkins, principal architect of the New Deal as Labor Secretary under FDR. Frances was the first woman to serve in a presidential cabinet. Eleanor Roosevelt, who lived at 29 Washington Square West, was also a close friend of the couple and supporter of the school.

Elisabeth and Katherine are buried together in Gaylordsville, Connecticut, where they shared their summers and referred to themselves as, "The gay ladies of Gaylordsville." After Elisabeth Irwin passed away, the upper division of the school was named in her honor. Each year, LREI commemorates her work through its Founders Day assembly and its ongoing commitment to social justice.

## Bureau of Educational Experiments

69 Bank Street



A century ago, Lucy Sprague Mitchell founded the Bureau of Educational Experiments to study and share about young children practicing democracy in progressive schools. The Bureau soon grew to include a nursery school and Cooperative School for Student Teachers. The latter prepared educators to work at LREI and similar progressive schools, a role that it continues to play to this day.

In 1930, the Bureau of Educational Experiments moved into the yeast factory at 69 Bank Street. At the Bureau, which became known for its location, Bank Street, education was interconnected with a broader commitment to social justice. Student teachers traveled across the country on Long Trips to learn about how people lived and organized to challenge the injustices they faced. This belief in the necessity of taking action to build a better world led Lucy to be dragged before the House Un-American Activities Committee.

Bank Street became immensely influential in the field of children's literature. Lucy's *Here and Now Story Book* was among the first to build upon children's intense fascination with their immediate surroundings. The *Bank Street Readers* were the first to depict a multiracial urban environment. Notable authors, from Margaret Wise Brown to LREI's own Charissa Sgouros, honed their craft at Bank Street.

Claudia Lewis, a Bank Street educator and author, ran the nursery school at Highlander Folk School. This training ground for activists including Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King was surveilled and attacked by the FBI. Another Bank Street educator and author, Norma Simon, founded the nursery school at Village Creek, a planned integrated cooperative community established in Connecticut after World War II. When federal funds were slashed in the 1990s for people who are incarcerated, Bank Street joined a college consortium that committed to educating women at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility's Children's Center.

## Lee Gilford Residence

75 Bank Street 5G & 5F and 380 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street.

LREI was the first school to endorse the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), where several students volunteered. James Farmer, organizer of the 1961 Freedom Rides and director of CORE, commended LREI students for responding "to this blight in our democracy—racial injustice—with such clarity and purpose."

While New York City prepared to host the 1964 World's Fair, CORE organized a protest for a fair world. The national organization coordinated sit-ins on the grounds of the fair and local chapters coordinated stall-ins to interrupt transportation to the event. Their demands included integrated affordable housing, a higher minimum wage, an end to employment discrimination, integrated quality education, and civilian police review boards.

30 LREI students participated in the protest. As the rain fell down, they held up posters reading, "Freedom Now!" After a group including Bayard Rustin, queer Black organizer of the 1963 March on Washington, and James Farmer, sat in front of the entrance to the New York City Pavilion and were arrested, LREI students Lisa Fein Gilford and Liz Leicester volunteered to replace them in front of the door and take the next arrest. Later at the precinct, they saw two other classmates who had been arrested, Tom Hurwitz and Karen Weingeist.

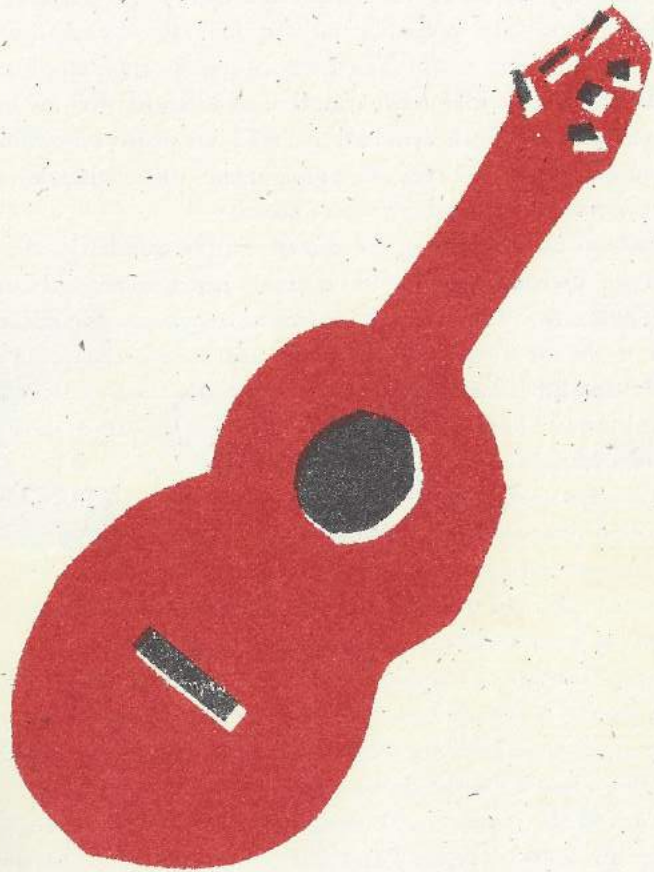
Lisa and Liz explained their action in the student newspaper, "We did it to show ourselves and everyone else that we were willing to go to jail for human rights and for human dignity. We did it because we believe in a 'fair world or not a World's Fair.' We did it to show people from out of town and from New York that prosperity for a handful is not prosperity at all."

Lisa's parents Madeline Lee and Jack Gilford, were Broadway and television performers and producers who met each other at a political organizing event. Jack was the master of ceremonies at the Cafe Society, the first integrated club in the city, where he introduced Billie Holiday on opening night.

The FBI followed the couple and their children. Lisa, Joe, and Sam's first three words growing up were, "Mama. Papa. Fifth Amendment." The government forced Madeline and Jack to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee, where they were represented by fellow LREI parent Leonard Boudin. The night before Pete Seeger had to testify before the committee himself, he slept on the Gilford's living room couch.

Undeterred by the government hostility, which left them out of work, Madeline and Jack remained committed activists for the rest of their lives. Madeline drove Lisa down to the 1965 Selma to Montgomery March, where she helped to produce the entertainment. In 1999, Madeline was arrested protesting the police murder of Amadou Diallo. Lisa is working on a documentary about her mother.





## Holsaert Residence

48 Jane Street (176 Sullivan Street prior to Haiti)

From her earliest moments in the Fours at LREI, Faith Holsaert fell in love with music teacher Charity Bailey. Faith's mom, Eunice, told Charity that her daughter wished she would move in with them. As Charity faced discrimination accessing housing as a Black woman, she graciously accepted the offer.

Faith cherished growing up with a Jewish mother by birth and an African American mother by affection. Not all took so kindly to them. People threw eggs at their steps and wrote vicious words on their sidewalk. It was a political act for Faith to simply walk down the street with Eunice and Charity. These early encounters with racism, antisemitism, and homophobia were formative.

Eunice went to demonstrations to protest the execution of the Rosenbergs. Charity gleamed when they visited Haiti, the site of a massive slave uprising. Faith's teachers at LREI explicitly taught the importance of struggling against racism. In fifth grade, Faith studied Black history and *Brown v. Board of Education*, which had just been decided. The following year, Charity hosted the first interracial children's television show, which was written and produced by Eunice.

Faith got involved with the National Conference of Christians and Jews in high school. She entered Barnard in 1961, having been barred from Oberlin by the school's Jewish quota. Over winter break, Faith went to Maryland. She built relationships with leaders such as Gloria Richardson of the community-based Cambridge Movement and was arrested at a sit-in.

With people beaten, churches burned, and homes riddled with bullets, Faith requested leave from Barnard. At nineteen, she traveled South to join the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's Southwest Georgia Project. She lived with Carolyn Daniels, a hairdresser and indispensable organizer in Terrell County. One night, a person shattered the window by where Faith slept, reached in, and ran his hand across the bed. Those who attacked the movement were not arrested, while those on the side of Black liberation were repeatedly. Faith was arrested again at a demonstration in Albany. Police officers assaulted her and she caught hepatitis while in jail. Instead of traveling to the March on Washington as Faith had planned, she was bedridden by the sickness, and had to watch the day unfold from her mother's couch.

Faith has played a significant role in writing women into the historical records of the Black Freedom Struggle. She remains a dedicated activist in Durham, North Carolina, where she is particularly involved in the struggle for justice for Palestinians, through organizing with Jewish Voice for Peace.

## Alleged Rosenberg Spy Apartment

65 Morton Street, Apartment 61



In 1935, while working at the National New York Packing and Shipping Company, teenager Ethel Greenglass helped organize a general strike for better pay and union recognition. She and the other leaders of the strike were fired. Ethel used her beautiful singing voice to raise funds for political causes. In 1936, Ethel sang at a Seaman's Union benefit, where she met her future husband Julius Rosenberg. Julius was the child of an immigrant garment worker who dreamed of a better world. He joined the Young Communist League at City College. During World War II, Julius helped share military information unrelated to the atomic bomb with the Soviet Union, an American wartime ally, to help to defeat fascism.

Years later, Julius and Ethel were tried in the most sensational case of the McCarthy period for allegedly sharing the secret of the atomic bomb. Leading Manhattan Project atomic scientists admitted there was no secret revealed, yet the jury, without a single Jewish member, found Julius and Ethel guilty. They were sentenced to die in the electric chair. Inside their cells, the Rosenbergs maintained dignity through song. Outside, worldwide protest demanded clemency. On June 19, 1953, LREI teachers traveled to Washington to protest. The government killed the Rosenbergs that evening.

Anne and Abel Meeropol adopted Robert and Michael, the young children of Julius and Ethel. Robert and Michael attended LREI, which became a haven for them during the tumultuous times. Abel, under the name Lewis Allan, wrote "Strange Fruit." The anti-lynching song made famous by Billie Holiday was first performed at Cafe Society, the city's first integrated club, located at 2 Sheridan Square.

Decades after the executions, family pressure led the FBI to release files that admitted Ethel was taken as a hostage to elicit a false confession from Julius. The deputy attorney general confessed the goal was not to kill the Rosenbergs, but get them to talk. Of Ethel, he said, "She called our bluff."

Manhattan Borough President declared September 28, 2015, which would have been Ethel's hundredth birthday, "Ethel Rosenberg Day of Justice." Members of City Council signed a resolution acknowledging the "government wrongfully executed Ethel Rosenberg." To this day, Robert and Michael support the children of targeted activists through their Rosenberg Fund for Children.

## Travers Residence

39 Charlton Street

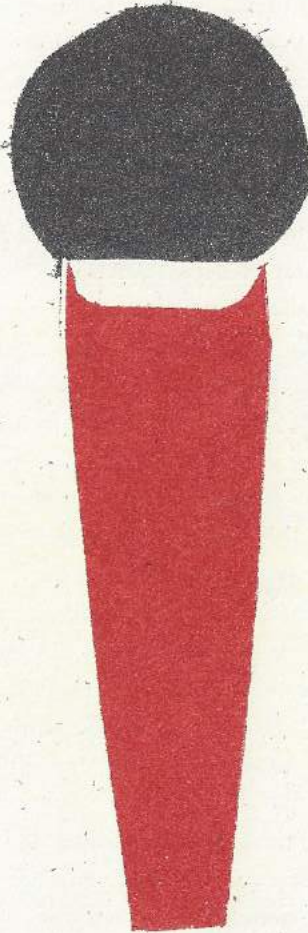
Mary Travers was born to progressive journalists Robert Travers and Virginia Coigney. Both were active organizers with the Newspaper Guild. Virginia wrote a biography of fellow Village resident Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood. When Margaret was prosecuted under the Comstock Act for her writing about birth control, she fled the country. While a fugitive, Margaret's children were cared for by Elisabeth Irwin's friends, Caroline Pratt, founder of City and Country School, and Helen Marot, prominent writer and labor organizer.

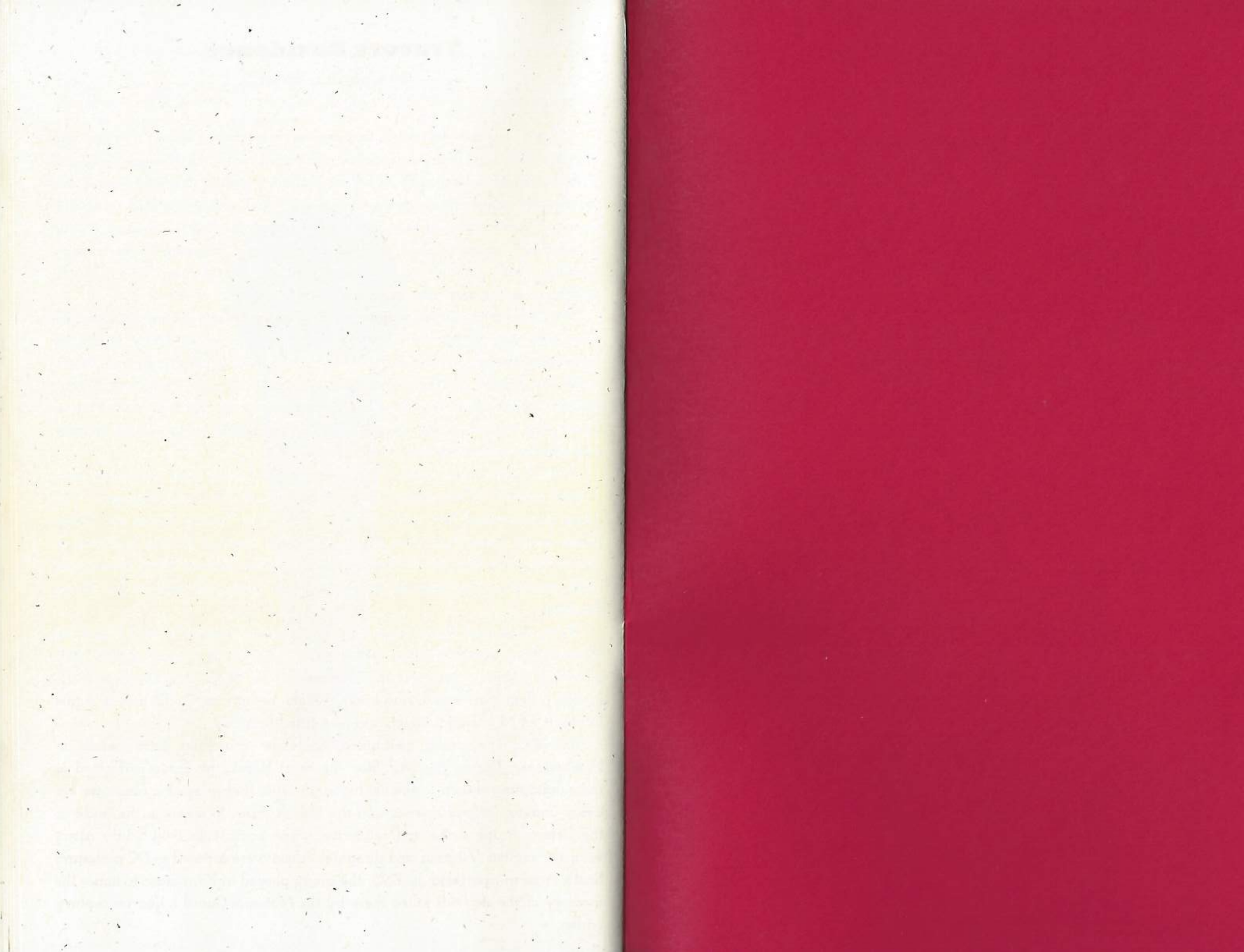
At LREI, Mary studied music with Charity Bailey during her younger years and sang in Bob De Cormier's chorus in high school. Music was alive throughout the neighborhood. Pete Seeger, who lived at 129 MacDougal Street, regularly stopped by the school to play, where his wife Toshi had been a student. Woody Guthrie, whose first apartment in the city was at 74 Charles Street, sent his kids to the school. Woody's "This Land is Your Land" became and remains to this day the *de facto* school song.

Soon Mary, along with three other LREI friends and musicians who played around Washington Square Park, joined the Song Swappers. The group accompanied Pete on four albums, including *Talking Union and Other Union-Songs*. Peter, Paul, and Mary performed together for the first time in 1961 at the Bitter End at 147 Bleecker Street. Bob De Cormier, Mary's teacher at LREI, served as the musical director for the group, as well as for Harry Belafonte.

Peter, Paul, and Mary were ardently political. During the 1963 March on Washington, where Dr. King delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech, they played "If I Had a Hammer" and "Blowin' In The Wind" from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Bob Dylan, who would become an LREI parent while living at 94 MacDougal Street, also performed that day.

In 1965, the group performed for those marching from Selma to Montgomery. During the 1967 Stop the Draft Week, the group performed at the culminating march to the Pentagon. In 1968, they played a fundraiser for Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, and the United Farm Workers in the midst of the Delano grape strike and solidarity grape boycott. In 1984, Mary along with her mother Virginia and daughter Alicia were arrested in DC protesting South African apartheid. In 1995, the group played at Kent State to honor the memory of the students killed there by the National Guard a quarter century earlier.





History does not refer merely, or even principally, to the past. On the contrary, the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do.

- **James Baldwin**

I could not move, because history had me glued to the seat. It felt like Sojourner Truth's hands were pushing me down on one shoulder and Harriet Tubman's hands were pushing me down on another shoulder, and I could not move.

- **Claudette Colvin**

on refusing to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus nine months prior to the rebellious Rosa Parks