



A Radical Line: From the Labor Movement to the Weather Underground, One Family's Century of Conscience

Thai Jones

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In this elegant family history, journalist Thai Jones traces the past century of American radical politics through the extraordinary exploits of his own family. Born in the late 1970s to fugitive leaders of the Weather Underground and grandson of Communists, spiritual pacifists, and civil rights agitators, Jones grew up an heir to an American tradition of resistance. Yet rather than partake of it, he took it upon himself to document it. The result is a book of extraordinary reporting and narrative.


The dramatic saga of *A Radical Line* begins in 1913, when Jones's maternal grandmother was born, and ends in 1981, when a score of heavily armed government agents from the Joint Anti-Terrorism Task Force stormed into four-year-old Thai's home and took his parents away in handcuffs. In between, Jones takes us on a journey from the turn-of-the-century western frontier to the tenements of melting-pot Brooklyn, through the Great Depression, the era of McCarthyism, and the Age of Aquarius.

Jones's paternal grandfather, Albert Jones, committed himself to pacifism during the 1930s and refused to fight in World War II. The author's maternal grandfather, Arthur Stein, was a member of the Communist Party during the 1950s and refused to collaborate with the House Un-American Activities Committee. His maternal grandmother, Annie Stein, worked closely with civil rights legends Mary Church Terrell and Ella Baker to desegregate institutions in Washington, D.C., and New York City.

His father, Jeff Jones, joined the violent Weathermen and led hundreds of screaming hippies through the streets of Chicago to clash with police during the Days of Rage in 1969. Then Jeff Jones disappeared and spent the next eleven years eluding the FBI's massive manhunt. Thai Jones spent the first years of his life on the run with his parents.

Beyond the politics, this is the story of a family whose lives were filled with love honored and betrayed, tragic deaths, painful blunders, narrow escapes, and hope-filled births. There is the drama of a pacifist father who must reconcile with a bomb-throwing son and a Communist mother whose daughter refuses to accept the lessons she has learned in a life as an organizer. There are parents and children who can never meet or, when they do, must use the ruses and subterfuge of criminals to steal a hug and a hello.

Beautifully written and sweeping in its scope, *A Radical Line* is nothing less than a history of the twentieth century and of one American family who lived to shake it up.

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