

# “We Dare Entertain Thoughts not to the Liking of Present-Day Bigots”: Radical Slavs, Race, Civil Rights, and Anti-Communism in Red-Scare America

Robert M. Zecker

Volume 25, Number 2, 2014

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1032843ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1032843ar>

[See table of contents](#)

## Publisher(s)

The Canadian Historical Association / La Société historique du Canada

## ISSN

0847-4478 (print)

1712-6274 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

## Cite this article

Zecker, R. M. (2014). “We Dare Entertain Thoughts not to the Liking of Present-Day Bigots”: Radical Slavs, Race, Civil Rights, and Anti-Communism in Red-Scare America. *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de la Société historique du Canada*, 25(2), 117–157. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1032843ar>

## Article abstract

Developing a white identity was a key component in immigrants’ acculturation to America. Many immigrants learned to distance themselves from black fellow workers through cultural productions that delineated blacks as impermissible outsiders, and made a case for Slavic or Mediterranean inclusion in the Caucasian republic. Yet “red” immigrants resisted white privilege. During the 1930s-1950s, members of the International Workers Order endorsed anti-colonial movements and civil rights for blacks at home. The Slovak Workers Order and other IWO lodges joined the “American Crusade Against Lynching” and lobbied for an end to the poll tax and segregation. During World War II the IWO was active in anti-lynching and anti-poll-tax campaigns. While in the 1940s many white Americans violently resisted black attempts to integrate neighbourhoods, the radical groups sought to counter the hegemonic white narrative and build cross-racial alliances while preserving members’ discreet, ethnic identities. In no small measure because of this anti-racist activism, the Order was placed on the Attorney General’s List of Subversive Organizations. By 1954 the Order was dismantled, but for a brief moment some “red” members opted out of racial privilege in favour of black-white solidarity.

# “We Dare Entertain Thoughts not to the Liking of Present-Day Bigots”: Radical Slavs, Race, Civil Rights, and Anti-Communism in Red-Scare America

ROBERT M. ZECKER

## *Abstract*

*Developing a white identity was a key component in immigrants' acculturation to America. Many immigrants learned to distance themselves from black fellow workers through cultural productions that delineated blacks as impermissible outsiders, and made a case for Slavic or Mediterranean inclusion in the Caucasian republic. Yet “red” immigrants resisted white privilege. During the 1930s-1950s, members of the International Workers Order endorsed anti-colonial movements and civil rights for blacks at home. The Slovak Workers Order and other IWO lodges joined the “American Crusade Against Lynching” and lobbied for an end to the poll tax and segregation. During World War II the IWO was active in anti-lynching and anti-poll-tax campaigns. While in the 1940s many white Americans violently resisted black attempts to integrate neighbourhoods, the radical groups sought to counter the hegemonic white narrative and build cross-racial alliances while preserving members' discreet, ethnic identities. In no small measure because of this anti-racist activism, the Order was placed on the Attorney General's List of Subversive Organizations. By 1954 the Order was dismantled, but for a brief moment some “red” members opted out of racial privilege in favour of black-white solidarity.*

## *Résumé*

*L'acquisition d'une identité de Blanc constituait un élément clé de l'acculturation des immigrants aux États-Unis. Nombre d'immigrants ont appris à se dissocier de leurs compagnons de travail noirs au contact de productions culturelles qui dépeignaient les Noirs comme des exclus et qui préconisaient l'inclusion slave et méditerranéenne au sein de la république caucasienne. Pourtant, les immigrants « rouges » se sont opposés aux privilèges des Blancs. Dans les années 1930-1950, les membres de*

*l'International Workers Order (IWO) ont appuyé les mouvements anticolonialistes et les droits civils des Noirs au pays. Le Slovak Workers Order et d'autres sections de l'IWO se sont joints à la campagne « American Crusade Against Lynching » et ont milité pour l'abolition du cens et de la ségrégation. Durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, l'IWO est intervenu dans les campagnes contre le lynchage et le cens. Même si dans les années 1940, bien des Américains blancs ont résisté avec violence aux tentatives des Noirs de s'intégrer dans leurs quartiers, les groupes radicaux ont cherché à contrer le récit hégémonique des Blancs et à conclure des alliances interraciales tout en maintenant la discrétion sur l'identité ethnique de leurs membres. En raison en bonne partie de cet activisme antiraciste, l'IWO a été placé sur la List of Subversive Organizations du procureur général. En 1954, l'IWO a été démantelé, mais pendant un bref moment quelques membres « rouges » se sont soustraits aux privilèges de race pour se montrer plutôt partisans de la solidarité entre Blancs et Noirs.*

Developing a white identity was a key component in East European immigrants' acculturation to America. Many Slavic immigrants learned to distance themselves from black fellow workers through foreign-language newspaper reports of lynchings, race riots and savage colonized cannibals, parish minstrel shows, labour unions, and neighbourhood "improvement associations." These cultural productions delineated blacks as impermissible outsiders and made a case for white privilege and Slavic inclusion in the Caucasian republic, whereby Slavs allied with other white ethnics in violently resisting black residential incursions into all-white neighbourhoods.<sup>1</sup>

Scholars such as David Roediger, Matthew Frye Jacobson, Noel Ignatiev, Eric Arnesen, among others, have noted the fraught history of white enmity toward black fellow workers; but they nevertheless highlighted moments of interracial solidarity sporadically built by dockworkers, unionists, editors, and others who recognized interracial solidarity as a means of overcoming a common plight in industrial America. Even if, on the whole, white workers of many ethnicities hostilely castigated blacks as illegitimate competitors, the work of such scholars suggests that another, interracial world was possible.<sup>2</sup>

Both the Communist Party USA (hereafter CUPSA) and, more narrowly, the International Workers Order (hereafter IWO) offer one of these sagas of interracial solidarity. Radical Slavs, together with other “red” immigrants, resisted the siren calls of whiteness. During the Popular Front in the 1930s and the 1940s, members of the International Workers Order, a consortium of fraternal ethnic societies with ties to the Communist Party, endorsed anti-colonial movements and black civil rights in the United States. An examination of the Library of Congress’ microfilmed copies of Moscow’s CPUSA archives, and the IWO archives housed at New York University and Cornell University, reveals that the IWO carried forward the work on racial equality in which Southeastern European and black comrades had been engaged during the 1920s. The Slovak Workers Order (hereafter SWO) and other IWO lodges joined the “American Crusade Against Lynching” and lobbied for an end to the poll tax and Jim Crow segregation.<sup>3</sup> Other progressive-minded Slavs, such as Leo Krzycki of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and Socialist Party, during World War II helped found the American Slav Congress, which advocated civil rights for blacks as part of its campaign to make Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms a reality.

The opening of the Soviet archives with respect to the Communist Party USA has led to a reevaluation of the autonomy of the American left, for there is indeed strong evidence of American Communists’ cooperation, if not outright collaboration, with the Russian Party.<sup>4</sup> The archives convincingly demonstrate that the Kremlin was in frequent contact with the US Party, and endeavored to stay apprised, and aspirationally, in control of all facets of its work. In May 1926 the secretary of the Communist International wrote the US Party asking for twice monthly reports on its activities, noting “Exhaustive reports on such questions as ... work among the Negroes will be particularly valuable.”<sup>5</sup> Such letters may be the smoking gun for those inclined to see the entire American Communist movement as a tightly controlled project directed by the Comintern, and such documents certainly suggest the US Party was cooperating with the USSR to a far greater extent than left-wing activists

in the 1930s–1950s publicly allowed. Haynes and Klehr have, as Maurice Isserman has noted, done a service by affording a fuller picture of the degree to which the US Party closely and frequently looked to Moscow.<sup>6</sup>

Yet scholars of the African American freedom struggle such as Erik McDuffie, Erik Gellman, William Maxwell, and Jacqueline Castledine have countered with strong evidence that when it came to civil rights, activists within the American Party and its allies often acted out of deep commitment, and did so with a great deal of local initiative, not cynical manipulation by or subordination to Moscow.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the very letters, reports, and telegrams found in the Moscow archives, as well as the 1930s–1950s papers of the International Workers Order, contained at Cornell University’s Kheel Center, with other records deposited at New York University’s Tamiment/Wagner Labor Archives, strongly indicate that Party members often acted on their own initiative when it came to agitating for black civil rights and anti-colonialism, and were not passive or robotic recipients of the orders emanating from the Soviet Union. Fixation on questions of the degree of control by Moscow ignores, too, the content of what American Communists were working on, causes such as civil rights that, arguably, were admirable and, in the context of the 1920s–1950s, light years ahead of the actions of non-radical whites. While many Slavic Americans violently resisted black attempts to integrate neighbourhoods, the American Slav Congress and IWO countered the hegemonic white narrative and built cross-racial alliances.

Moreover, these American-grown initiatives to further racial equality were sometimes at odds with Moscow’s plans, as when the poet Claude McKay wrote to Moscow telling the comrades their candidate for editor of a paper for African Americans was a terrible one; or when Lovett Fort-Whiteman, national organizer of the American Negro Labor Congress, outlined on his own initiative plans for a trip to Russia and “insist[ed] on the establishing of an African and Negro Bureau in the Comintern;” or when H.V. Phillips demanded that more poor, dedicated black comrades be accepted and subsidized for attendance at a Moscow

university, for "the Party will eventually need real leaders among the Negroes if it intends to become an American Party."<sup>8</sup>

East Europeans in the American Party, too, resisted tight control from above, as when a Latvian comrade from the Bronx derided the close supervision of his ethnic bureau by the Central Executive Committee as "a bonapartistic centralization which requires only blind subordination," and defended his right to talk back to his Party superiors. Slovak and Croatian editors likewise disobeyed the CEC and refused to run reports from Moscow in their papers.<sup>9</sup> It is difficult to agree with the suggestion that US Communists were slavishly obedient to Moscow or the US Party leadership. The Soviet Union was admired, but not regarded as infallible and certainly not above critique, and initiatives to further racial equality were undertaken by grassroots activists in the IWO, American Slav Congress and other organizations out of a genuine sense of interracial solidarity often at odds with the racial phobias of other Slavic Americans outside the orbit of the left.

The International Workers Order was founded in 1930, bringing together pre-existing left-leaning self-insurance societies such as the Hungarian American Brotherhood, the Slovak Workers Order, and Communists who had left the Workmen's Circle to found the Jewish Peoples Fraternal Order. Accident and death policies were the main draws to this left-wing mutual benefit society, but the Order also offered a broad array of cultural and leisure-time activities for its members. From its onset, too, the IWO envisioned itself as a militant lobbying group preparing the proletariat for a coming workers' state. As such the Order lobbied for Social Security, enacted in 1935, and universal health care, among other programs.<sup>10</sup>

Along with this proletarian militancy went a declaration in 1932 that "The International Workers Order condemns segregation as a vicious anti-working class policy of the bourgeoisie. It follows the leadership of the Communist Party ... To make this struggle ever more effective, the I.W.O. must carry on a continuous campaign within its own ranks, combatting the principle and ideology of segregation. It must make immediate and strenuous efforts to organize Negro and white together, within

its English branches.” The Order vowed “the mobilization of our branches ... against lynching, against Jim Crowism, etc., must be the measures to transform backward workers ... into advanced workers.”<sup>11</sup>

Radical immigrant commitment to anti-racism predated the Order. During the 1920s the Slovak Workers Order had already denounced lynching in its newspaper, *Rovnost' l'udu*, as well as running exposés on “American imperialism,” “a history that has scandalized half the world.” The Marines in the Caribbean were said to be “at the beck and call of Wall Street.” Such leftist journals were some of the few places immigrants heard critiques of America’s racialized new world order. In non-radical immigrant newspapers, such as *Slovák v Amerike* and *Jednota*, articles frequently derided non-white peoples’ national aspirations, as when *Slovák v Amerike* applauded “a strict interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine” toward Haiti, Cuba, and Venezuela, and dismissed West Africans as “ceaselessly restless savages” who did not appreciate the blessings of French colonial rule. Conversely, the Communist-affiliated *Rovnost' l'udu* in 1924 sniped that “We hear a lot about German imperialism from the recently departed Woodrow Wilson, but not a peep about American imperialism in the Philippines, Haiti, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, Mexico and elsewhere ...”<sup>12</sup>

In the 1920s white ethnics and African Americans in Party affiliates, such as the All-American Anti-Imperialist League and the American Negro Labor Congress (hereafter ANLC), made the connections between the fights against Jim Crow at home and imperialism abroad. The Party’s Committee on Negro Work called for “elimination of all racial discrimination of the Negro,” with the ANLC tasked with “carry[ing] on organizational campaigns, in order to fight against discrimination against the Negro in industry.”<sup>13</sup> In Chicago, as elsewhere, biracial units of the ANLC were organized to work on these goals.<sup>14</sup> ANLC officers also worked within the Universal Negro Improvement Association (hereafter UNIA), seeking to wean left-wingers away from a solely “Back to Africa” focus and cooperate with Party members on ending racialized oppression in the US and

colonization in Africa. As scholar Steven Hahn notes, many in UNIA saw the movement as “preaching preparedness” while veterans of the movement say that Marcus Garvey “never did advocate for all Negroes to go back to Africa.” As such, many in UNIA may have agreed with the message the Party chairman sent them: “The rights of the Negro in Africa are not free for the taking. They have to be fought for, no less than the rights of the Negro in America.”<sup>15</sup> The ANLC’s national organizer likewise made the case for fighting against oppression globally. Lovett Fort-Whiteman made contact with South African unions, and urged the Comintern “to stimulate and aid the Negro Liberation Movement in South Africa” that was combating the tightening segregation and disfranchisement policies of the Hertzog government. As with so many progressive policies on race, it was grassroots American initiatives — not Kremlin directives — that pushed for forceful action, in this case looking to strangle apartheid in its cradle.<sup>16</sup>

It was not only high-ranking Party officials who reached out to progressive UNIA members. B. Borisoff of Gary, Indiana, in November 1926 wrote to General Secretary Charles Ruthenberg on the work he was doing to win over UNIA members “to the view-point of class struggle in America.” Borisoff wrote that in Gary and elsewhere the opposition group resisting Garvey’s hegemony “is closer to us in its willingness to fight for the interests of the negro in America and to view this struggle as a class struggle.” In Gary, he continued, UNIA members “form a considerable part of the steel workers.” Borisoff wrote a second time thanking Ruthenberg for contact names with black and Mexican workers, with whom he was beginning to organize. What’s striking is to find a correspondent named Borisoff reaching out to black and Mexican fellow workers, to organize, not terrorize them. Many other Slavic, Irish, and Italian steel workers in the aftermath of the failed 1919 strike scapegoated blacks as impermissible intruders on whites-only job sites and neighbourhoods, fire-bombing the homes of blacks who did not honour the colour line in Chicago, Detroit, and elsewhere. Here a “red” Slav looked to enlist black allies in the class struggle.<sup>17</sup>



Other comrades worked to organize Virgin Islanders living in New York, a Philippine independence organization in Kansas City, and “Spanish speakers” as well as “Hindu,” Japanese, and Chinese workers in San Francisco.<sup>18</sup> Jack Jampolksy informed Ruthenberg he was “in touch with Cuban workers in New York who are sympathetic to our movement,” this at a time when other white ethnics often ostracized Hispanic workers.<sup>19</sup> In 1926 the Organization Department informed the ANLC that the Hungarian American Brotherhood’s newspaper had written that “One of our very good comrades, Joseph Szabo” of East Saint Louis acting on his own was “working among Negroes in a machine shop,” “trying to propagate radicalism.” However, since Szabo was “not very fluent in English,” his success was limited, and the Department suggested the ANLC send some copies of their paper, the *Negro Champion*, to aid in his interracial organizing. Szabo’s work came just nine years after the infamous East Saint Louis white-on-black riot, in which other South and East European immigrants joined fellow whites with very different attitudes toward blacks living in their city. The fellowship exhibited by Szabo and others in the left milieu stands in contrast to the actions of other white ethnics, for, as an Industrial Workers of the World veteran commented in a 1924 letter, “The Negro and South European immigrant in the cities mix cutthroat competition.”<sup>20</sup>

Party leaders, too, stood by their racially egalitarian principles even when a little temporizing might have been to their advantage. In 1926 S.N. Ghose of the India Freedom Foundation contacted Robert Minor and then Ruthenberg. Ghose noted that prior to 1923 Indians had been allowed to immigrate and naturalize, but the Supreme Court declared that “‘free white persons’ are words of common speech to be interpreted only in accordance with the understanding of ‘the man in the street.’” Ghose allowed that “American labor is perfectly within its rights to bar any one they like to from coming to this country,” but bristled at Indian exclusion and sought Party support for a Senate bill defining people of India as “free white persons” again eligible for citizenship. Ghose bristled at the “absurdity” that barred

accomplished Indian poets and scientists "while 'any man on the street' ... can be admitted to American citizenship!" Ghose had no problems with America's racialized exclusionary immigration system; he just wanted Indians to pass through the whites-only door.<sup>21</sup>

If the Party had opportunistically exploited race issues to maximize its ulterior motives, as Harold Cruse famously charged, Ruthenberg might have leaped on Ghose's band wagon. Instead he held firm, replying that while he supported the bill, lobbying "should be broadened into a campaign for the right of every individual irrespective of race, colour or nationality, to become a citizen of the United States." Ruthenberg wrote to the secretary of the Council for the Protection of the Foreign Born insisting any agitation for this bill be coupled with lobbying to open citizenship and voting rights to all people regardless of "race, nationality or color."<sup>22</sup>

Communists took positions regarding voting and citizenship rights that almost 40 years later would finally become law. Moreover, Ruthenberg took these stands in private letters that afforded the Party little publicity benefit (and in the case of Ghose, with his sneers at the "man in the street," unlikely to win a sympathetic hearing), suggesting he was not grandstanding but expressing a sincere conviction. Much of what the Party advocated with regard to race in the 1920s–1950s is now taken at face value, at least rhetorically, as part of the American "equality" project. In this respect, the Party's Popular Front motto was quite apt, for in its advocacy of colour-blind justice Communism was indeed "Americanism updated for the twentieth century."<sup>23</sup>

Anti-colonialism and advocacy of civil rights continued after the IWO was established among various leftist Hungarians, Slavs, and other activists. The Order also included the black Douglass-Lincoln Society and the Cervantes Lodge for Puerto Ricans. As Jewish, Polish, and Ukrainian members testified, interracial socializing and political activism were frequent. Moreover, the IWO as early as 1932 worked to recruit and enroll blacks and second-generation ethnic whites into integrated English branches, and such integrated branches continued until

the Order's demise.<sup>24</sup> This at a time when other ethnic insurance societies explicitly barred non-white membership.<sup>25</sup> Conversely, the IWO's 1934 constitution and by-laws vowed the IWO "will organize agitation and cultural activities among its members with a view to creating amongst them an understanding of the needs of these struggles to break down amongst them the illusory barriers of race, creed and color, to establish among them the practices of class solidarity ... ." <sup>26</sup>

Even as the IWO faced government prosecution for its alleged control by Moscow, its progressive stance on black rights made it into the record. In a 1951 trial, cross-examination of state's witness George Powers brought out that "The IWO ... supported (a) employment of Negroes in Major League Baseball, (b) the Anti-Poll Tax Amendment, (c) anti-lynch legislation, and (d) the Civil Rights Program." Powers also noted when he was a member in 1934 he collaborated in the defense campaign for the Scottsboro Boys, the black Alabama teens sentenced to death for alleged rape of a white woman. During his cross-examination it came out that "Even before Powers received his directive [from the Party] ... the Scottsboro case was on the agenda of the IWO," suggesting the group's members were genuinely concerned about injustices to blacks, not cynically using the issue for Communist advantage. Many blacks proved receptive to the IWO and other radical groups given these groups' unequivocal commitment to racial equality. Of course, at the height of the red scare, vocal advocacy of civil rights was regarded by many conservatives as in and of itself "subversive."<sup>27</sup>

Throughout the Popular Front era, leftist Slavs advocated an end to black oppression, which they characterized as a particularly pernicious manifestation of "The dictatorship of capitalism." Many IWO members were indeed members of the Communist Party, but "red" journals such as *Robotnícký kalendár* were some of the few venues in which immigrants read defenses of black rights. The *kalendár* for 1937 ran a woodcut illustration of a lynching with the condemnatory caption, "'Democracy' in the South. Black citizens in the Southern states of the U.S.A. until now have been vulnerable to white lynchers, because they

haven't united with white workers." As in English-language Party publications, this equation gave little consideration to the racism of white workers, which stood in the way of class solidarity. The *kalendár* also ran an exposé of "The treacherous Ku Klux Klan," while in 1942, *L'udový denník*, Slovak version of the *Daily Worker*, published a cartoon of a soldier destroying a scarecrow labeled "poll tax." "The defeat of the poll tax is the triumph of democracy," ran the caption.<sup>28</sup>

During World War II leftist Slavs in the IWO and the newly-founded umbrella group, the American Slav Congress (hereafter ASC), harnessed patriotism and anti-fascist animus to a civil-rights campaign. While other Poles and Slovaks (along with other white ethnics) attacked blacks in the streets of Detroit and other urban battlegrounds, adherents of the Slav Congress denounced the rioters as Hitler's apologists. "[Fifth columnists] will attempt to weaken and defeat us by dividing us among ourselves," Leo Krzycki thundered in his keynote to the first Slav Congress. "They will try to divide us from Americans who look back to other homelands. They will try to set us against Negroes. We will not be taken in. We will answer the sly whispers of the fifth columnists with clenched fists and determined hearts."<sup>29</sup>

IWO lodges, too, called interracial solidarity necessary for victory. In 1942, the Order passed a "resolution on Negro Rights," approving Roosevelt's creation of the Fair Employment Practices Committee, but going beyond what the president was willing or able to deliver in urging federal prosecution of lynchers and an end to Army segregation.<sup>30</sup>

At its 1944 convention, the Slav Congress backed Roosevelt's fourth-term bid, but also passed a resolution urging passage of "the anti-poll tax bill," and another "against racial bigotry and call for punishment of those who indulge [sic] in such practices."<sup>31</sup> In Indiana, ASC member Katherine Hyndman became involved with the Gary Civil Liberties Committee." After the war, the ASC lionized Hyndman as "an outstanding advocate of equal rights and the betterment of race relations" who "helped to settle a hate-strike of white citizens against Negro citizens ... [H]er efforts laid the groundwork for more harmonious relations between the groups."<sup>32</sup>

At its 1943 conference, the Slovak Workers Order equated segregation with Hitler's reign in Europe. "The enemies of the common people always use laws and the courts to incite the differences between the various religions, races and national groups, and thus are the common people divided and cast down into fascist slavery," its "Resolution Against Race Discrimination and Anti-Semitism" began. "We are now seeing that anti-black laws in the US, just like the Nazis' anti-Semitic laws which have enslaved millions and killed many more of the best people, ... is the best means of installing in America a similarly bloody fascist regime." The SWO consequently condemned all anti-black or anti-Semitic laws, and "call[ed] for strict punishment of all racial and ethnic unrest and slurs and riots."<sup>33</sup> The following year, the SWO convention passed a similar "Resolution on Negroes," equating American racism to Hitlerism. The convention "ended with a call for an end to discrimination against Negroes, an end to Jim Crow, and that as fast as possible, Negroes be integrated into all sections of American life." They also demanded the end of the poll tax, "so that blacks and millions of poor white Southerners can enjoy true American citizenship."<sup>34</sup>

The ASC and IWO countered the hegemonic white narrative and built cross-racial alliances. Ukrainian organizer John Mykytew wrote of his contacts with black United Auto Workers official Shelton Tappes and the Reverend Charles Hill regarding his "recruiting drive among the Negro people." Although Mykytew's enthusiasm struck some blacks as condescending, he wrote, "You have no Idie [sic] how much I am happy to work among the Negro people. ... Here in Detroit 100,000 Negro [sic] we must get them in to I.W.O. by half."<sup>35</sup> Herman Schlossberg of Los Angeles likewise noted, "In the course of my membership in the Order, I have taken in more than one hundred members, including Brothers and Sisters of all races and creeds."<sup>36</sup>

The IWO's Polonia Society likewise published a foreign-language pamphlet supporting black civil rights,<sup>37</sup> while Mario D'Inzillo of the Garibaldi Society in October 1942 wrote the Justice Department, New York's Senators Wagner and Mead, and President Roosevelt urging passage of federal anti-lynching

legislation as well as anti-poll tax bills. D'Inzillo even lobbied Mississippi Governor Paul Johnson on anti-lynching legislation.<sup>38</sup>

Although the term was not used, we might regard these efforts as early multiculturalism, in which members celebrated their Slavic, Italian, and Jewish cultures (often denigrated in 1940s America), but also took part in social affairs with black and Hispanic leftists. ASC conventions featured all the Ukrainian mandolin orchestras one's ears could stand, but the Congress also sponsored appearances by black singer-activist Paul Robeson. IWO member Robeson also performed at the Order's rallies and took part in the group's civil-rights campaigns.<sup>39</sup> Robeson also served on the Prisoners Relief Committee of the Civil Rights Congress, which, together with the IWO in 1950 sponsored a vacation at Communist-affiliated Camp Kinderland for the four children of Willie McGee, a black man on Mississippi's death row for a rape conviction. Other Relief Committee members included former state Senator Stanley Nowak, head of the Michigan IWO and Slav Congress.<sup>40</sup>

Even in the face of prosecution, many East European members highlighted the groups' commitment to interracial solidarity. In 1951, as the IWO faced liquidation after the New York Insurance Department deemed the group a "hazard" for its leftist political beliefs, dozens of members offered affidavits defending the group. Kalyna Popow of a North Philadelphia Ukrainian lodge deposed that in addition to sponsoring Slavic dance recitals and art exhibits, her branch held celebrations during Negro History Week and Brotherhood Week. While many white ethnics organized vigilante squads as blacks moved into North Philadelphia, Popow and her comrades celebrated Brotherhood Week.<sup>41</sup>

Popular Front multiculturalism became so accepted that *Národné noviny*, newspaper of the National Slovak Society, even publicized a "Calypso Song of 'The Common Man.'" "Sir Launcelot Pindar, calypso singer from Trinidad, has written a new song that he wants all the people to hear: 'Let the fascists talk about superior race,/Americans have a superior plan/We're going to make it the Century of the Common Man./That is what Vice President Wallace said/On paying tribute to our honored dead/

Who gave their lives that we might be free/To enjoy blessings of liberty/... From England, Holland, France we've come,/Austria, Hungary and Belgium,/India, China, Africa, Mexico and Korea, Australians, Russians, Lebanese, Finns, Italians, Portuguese, Daughters and sons of all nations, We are now just plain Americans.' "Another of his recent songs is 'Defenders of Stalingrad,'" the article noted.<sup>42</sup>

Less lyrically, Popular Front Slavs committed to anti-colonialism and better race relations at home, as when *Národné noviny* reprinted a *CIO News* editorial from the United Electrical Workers on "Why We Fight," explaining the importance of dealing justly with "Our Colonial Allies." United States' treatment of Puerto Rico, the editorial acknowledged, was "a black spot on America's honor" that gave the Japanese a propaganda weapon among non-white peoples.<sup>43</sup> A year later the Slovak paper was still pressing the anti-colonial issue, this time on behalf of India. "Maybe a time will come when the Atlantic Charter will also enter into force among the countries of colonial peoples," an editorialist wrote. "Surely the crowds of millions of people would disagree with the British and butt in that the Atlantic Charter must be applied all over the world — and not just to the big shots."<sup>44</sup> Just after the war, the Slav Congress' George Pirinsky echoed this call for "a forward-looking colonial policy" to aid non-whites in their "emancipat[ion] ... from any imperialist domination."<sup>45</sup>

Not every white ethnic worker embraced interracial solidarity. In recalling the Slav Congress' efforts to calm Detroit following the 1943 race riots, Pirinsky reminded readers his organization had been one of the few East European groups unequivocally to condemn the white assault on blacks. "The American Slav Congress by its very nature is averse to racial bigotry and prejudice," Pirinsky stressed. "... [I]t joined hands with the labor movement and other liberal groups in sharply condemning these disgraceful and dangerous riots. It spoke out vigorously against the Slav Negro baiters, most of them innocent dupes who swallowed the vicious propaganda of native fascists ..." The ASC sponsored a Slav Day rally in nearby Hamtramck, at which 5,000 attend-

ees heard luminaries “castigate the fomenters of racial disorders in the sharpest terms. Shelton Tappes, a black UAW official, described the riot as Hitler’s last effective weapon ... Practically the entire City Council of Hamtramck, the most Polish city in America, attended the rally ...”<sup>46</sup>

By 1943 the ASC had its hands full countering Slavs who condoned attacks on blacks. The IWO was aware there were reactionary Slavs, too. In a partially Slavic Detroit neighbourhood, whites challenged the planned opening of Sojourner Truth Homes, a public-housing project they feared was designed for blacks. A Polish priest inveighed against the invasion of “the niggers” as a riot ensued to prevent the homes. Perhaps in an effort to rally unsympathetic Slavs, *Národné noviny* published articles in which Congressman Vito Marcantonio, a member of the Garibaldi Society, faulted “the government of all race rioters,” and Congressman Samuel Dickstein blamed the “KKK riot” on far-right agitators such as House Un-American Activities Committee (hereafter HUAC) Chairman, Martin Dies of Texas. The paper published an editorial from the *CIO News* arguing that “Race Hatred is Sabotage” and another which asserted that “job discrimination, poll-tax denials of political rights, [and] unequal community treatment of racial minorities” were “some of the dark spots in American life where race hatred is bred.” Still, the editorial was sure the riots were the work of Hitler’s agents, suggesting some writers were unwilling to acknowledge Slovaks could be both anti-Hitler and violently anti-black. Another *Národné noviny* editorial characterized anti-black and anti-Mexican rioting in Los Angeles as antithetical to the spirit of Lincoln. “The treatment of blacks in America is still a form of slavery, akin to the way gypsies are treated in Europe.”<sup>47</sup>

Not every IWO member, however, took the message of equality to heart. In Detroit, Reverend Charles Hill, who was a candidate for city council, complained Garibaldi Society members bitterly opposed his call for open housing and resisted public housing in white neighbourhoods. An IWO official wrote to General Secretary Sam Milgrom that Hill was about to quit the Order over his Italian comrades’ white chauvinism. Milgrom



apologized, but also to some degree excused the Italians' resistance. "I am sorry that Reverend Hill takes the attitude that he does. First of all I hope he realizes that we are a fraternal organization and that our basic problem is to educate our membership. After all when a member joins the Order he comes in with all the baggage of his prejudices. Even while in the Order so many of our members ... are reached with our education on the Negro question only with great difficulty ... I am sending out copies of [the] pamphlet 'Complete Equality' to each member of the Garibaldi Society in Detroit."<sup>48</sup>

As a counter to some of its recalcitrant members, the IWO's Michigan leadership, under state Senator Stanley Nowak, demanded Detroit's city council reverse itself and provide blacks with public housing in formerly all-white neighbourhoods.<sup>49</sup> The IWO issued press releases backing Hill's attempt to become the city's first black councilman, but the reverend lost the election.<sup>50</sup> In these squabbles we see the beginning of white ethnic backlash once race entered the picture.

Similarly, Edward L. Nelson of the Douglass-Lincoln Society complained in a 1950 letter to a *Daily Worker* columnist, "I was unfavorably impressed by the opening of your column ... on Abdoulay Diallo. You opened by describing him as 'a slight, dark-skinned young man,' and continued as though there was something incongruous in this 'dark-skinned young man' being influential, and giving reaction the jitters. Whatever your intentions, this kind of description ... is a typical stereotype such as we encounter in commercial publications but which has no place in progressive journalism."<sup>51</sup>

The problem of "white chauvinism" was a recurring nightmare. A celebrated Party trial involved August Yokinen, who was called on the carpet for barring black comrades from the sauna and swimming pool at Harlem's Finnish Progressive Hall. As with so many other radical immigrants, his "red" tendencies were at war with his whiteness. At Philadelphia's Slovak Hall, the Slovak Workers Order was one of the shareholders, but the hall's 1921 charter stipulated the building was "available for rental by all other groups, but Negroes were excluded because it

was feared that their cleanliness standard would not measure up to that of other groups."<sup>52</sup> Even if Slovak Communists expressed racial solidarity, they raised no objection to a colour bar at their hall, and the explanation of a black lack of a "cleanliness standard" suggests some immigrants had internalized racialized phobias. *New Yorkský denník*, a Slovak daily, likewise featured a "joke" contributed by a reader in which a black man asks his son why he is prohibited from swimming with white kids. "Because, Papa, they were white before they went swimming, and they want to stay white."<sup>53</sup>

In New York, however, what is telling is that after Yokinen recanted, black comrades rallied around him. When the federal government endeavoured to deport Yokinen to Finland, the Party-affiliated League of Struggle for Negro Rights (hereafter LSNR) held massive save-Yokinen rallies in the Bronx. The League wrote Yokinen and expressed solidarity, asserting it was because he had recanted white racism and committed himself to working for black rights that the government was persecuting him. The Party's efforts failed to prevent the deportation. But even while Cyril Briggs, Harry Haywood, and others in the LSNR noted similar white chauvinism incidents elsewhere, this biracial rallying around the Finn suggests when whites rejected their racial privilege, black comrades accepted and embraced them, imperfect vessels though they were.<sup>54</sup>

Nevertheless, the Party and its affiliates periodically faced charges of white chauvinism, as when the Buffalo chapter of the Friends of Soviet Russia was split by allegations they had barred a black Party speaker from addressing their meeting; when a Communist summer camp was alleged to have disinvited black attendees; and when Earl Browder was informed that the 1932 Bonus Army March on Washington had Jim Crowed destitute black veterans.<sup>55</sup>

The IWO, too, found itself uncomfortably confronting vestiges of white racism in the early 1930s. After boldly asserting the Order's commitment to racial equality, the author of a 1932 report on organizing Negro branches nevertheless allowed that the organization might have to turn a blind eye to some mem-

bers' lingering prejudices. "[T]he I.W.O. would defeat its own purpose of reaching the backward masses ... if it would insist that applicants for membership in the I.W.O. must all be free from the bourgeois poisons of racial or national prejudices. Such a policy would change the I.W.O. from a united front mass organization for mutual help into an organization of radicals only." The IWO often found itself striking a delicate balance between commitment to civil rights and indulgence of the "bourgeois" race phobias of members such as the Detroit Italians who infuriated Reverend Hill.<sup>56</sup>

Problems periodically surfaced, as when Philippa Stowe of Harlem complained of mistreatment by an IWO organizer. Stowe wrote, "I feel compelled to tell you that I cannot join at this time. ... I do wish to be fair, but I am unable to determine ... whether the objectionable conduct of Mr. Sol Winnick was his own idea or a part of the program of the International Workers Order. His conduct, although subtle, was insulting and degrading, and I do not know whether it was intended to express disrespect for my race or merely for my sex. At any rate, I am convinced that your organization would fare better without the services of Mr. Winnick ... [H]e and his kind should not have the opportunity to corrupt the Negro People and our young."<sup>57</sup>

Of course, such problems were more likely to arise in an organization committed to interracialism than in a more conservative ethnic fraternal such as the First Catholic Slovak Union. There black attendance at one's lodge was simply unthinkable, and thus no squabbles over "white chauvinism" ever arose.

On the national level, IWO and Slav Congress leadership continued to advocate for equality, a policy a Connecticut Black Muslim appreciated when he wrote the IWO applying for membership.<sup>58</sup> In its 1946 "Resolution on Lynch Terror," the Order endorsed the "newly organized American Crusade to End Lynching[s] pilgrimage to Washington, D.C." to secure a federal anti-lynching bill,<sup>59</sup> while General Secretary Max Bedacht called for an end to "Negro persecutions" and lynching, warning "If the peddlers of racist poisons are not stopped, it will be only a matter of time before we have Oswiecim's and Dachau's in America,

even though their names will be spelled differently.”<sup>60</sup> Writing in the ASC’s journal, Louis Adamic equated American-backed colonialism in Asia and Africa with segregation at home, prophetically warning blacks would no longer accept ghettoization and “crumbs falling off the white man’s table.” “Until there is a clear and steady advance toward equality, there will be strikes and race riots, here.”<sup>61</sup> In January 1949 the ASC joined the Civil Rights Congress at a D.C. rally against “the vicious Jim crow [sic] policy which threatens our democracy,” demanding “anti-lynch, anti-poll tax, and fair employment practices legislation.”<sup>62</sup>

Officials of the IWO continued to call for a permanent Fair Employment Practices Committee — which had been dismantled at the end of World War II; the end of the poll tax; school integration; and a federal anti-lynching bill. In February 1948 the Order urged “all societies” to flood Congress with telegrams demanding an anti-lynching law. The American Slav Congress’ Leo Krzycki was one of the co-chairmen of Henry Wallace’s Progressive Party run for president, a campaign that called for the end of Jim Crow, the poll tax and other forms of discrimination.<sup>63</sup>

Even in small ways, the IWO championed breaking racial barriers. When the Cleveland Indians — the first AL team to integrate — won the 1948 pennant, Sam Milgrom sent a telegram to club president Bill Veeck, “greeting the victory as a ‘victory for American democracy.” “International Workers Order, the only interracial fraternal organization, with 180,000 members throughout the country, cheers the Cleveland triumph as a victory for true fraternalism and real Americanism. Here’s hoping you win the World Series.” With the help of black Hall of Famer Larry Doby, the Indians did. And locally integrated IWO teams played games and passed petitions through the stands demanding baseball abolish the colour line.<sup>64</sup>

Individual Slavic societies carried the fight forward, too. Benjamin Davis, first black as well as first Communist on New York’s city council, wrote the Polonia Society’s president praising its work for civil rights and against lynching,<sup>65</sup> while the 1947 convention of the Serbian American Federation passed a resolution demanding a permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission.<sup>66</sup>

It was not long before red hunters took notice. “US to Probe Red Activities in Slav Groups,” the *Pittsburgh Press* crowed. The *Press* credited its exposé of Communist Slavs with spurring the House Un-American Activities Committee to move against the Slav Congress. “It was revealed in those stories that Communists were using foreign-language newspapers and radio programs to spread official propaganda of iron curtain countries, that pro-Communist ‘welfare’ organizations operated openly, that church and fraternal organizations were being infiltrated.” “The American Slav Congress was revealed in these stories as the key organization of the Red drive. ... The size of the Communist program is indicated by the goal of the American Slav Congress to represent ten million Americans of Slavic descent, most of whom work in the heavy industrial centers ...”<sup>67</sup> Attorney General Clark placed both the IWO and ASC on his List of Subversive Organizations, and ignored letters from elected officials who praised the IWO which had “fought time and again against discrimination because of race or creed or color, given generous support to those opposing narrow-minded and intolerant attitudes.”<sup>68</sup>

While the IWO and ASC advocated other unpopular positions such as atomic disarmament, continued cooperation with the wartime Soviet ally, and vigorous union rights, it was in no small measure because of anti-racist activism that both groups were placed on the Subversive List and investigated by HUAC. Both the attorney general and three successive chairs of HUAC were Southern segregationists. The ASC was the subject of an extensive 1949 hearing and a 300-page report by HUAC, in which a young Congressman Nixon faulted the organization’s labour, peace, and civil-rights policies.<sup>69</sup>

HUAC’s report tarred the Slav Congress’ support for the presidential candidacy of Henry Wallace by asserting “The leading spokesman of the movement organized by the Communists against the foreign policy of the United States is, of course, Henry A. Wallace, presidential candidate supported by the Progressive Party and the Communist Party, USA.”<sup>70</sup> The purge of dissent meant that even an Iowa Republican not on board for the Cold War had to be purged. So what chance had someone named “Krzycki”?

The final nail in Krzycki's coffin was his union background. "In 1937 Krzycki was a leading speaker at a Chicago CIO mass meeting featured by the Communist press, which resulted in rioting in which five persons were killed and more than 100 injured near the strike-bound Republic Steel Corporation's South Chicago plant. A Chicago newspaper implied that his speech incited the 2,000 strikers and sympathizers to menace police guarding the plant."<sup>71</sup>

HUAC's ironclad "proof" of Krzycki's subversion was, of course, the Memorial Day Massacre, where strikebreaking members of the Chicago police deployed machine guns against peacefully picketing workers. "Menacing" pickets were mowed down with machine guns, many shot in the back as they were fleeing. The massacre was *by* the Chicago police — to suppress lawful strikers. The same Congress that had begun the repression of left-leaning, effective unions with the passage of Taft-Hartley was now passing judgment on Krzycki, the UAW's George Addes, the Mineworkers' Tony Minerich, and other members of the Slav Congress. Effective defenders of workers' rights were often labeled "un-American" in 1949.<sup>72</sup>

While the opening of the Moscow archives in the 1990s convincingly revealed there to have been far more extensive collaboration between the Kremlin and the US Party than American leftists allowed, on the ground grassroots activists in the IWO and Slav Congress seem genuinely to have believed they were engaged in legitimate political activity, and in both their private correspondence and public statements reacted with surprise and outrage at the tactics deployed against them. In the summer of 1948 *The Slavic American* published an open letter demanding to know, "Since when have criticism and opposition to the ... policies of the administration ... been considered subversive?" Indeed, if Slav Congress members were subversives and Kremlin spies, they were inept ones. They signed public petitions and took out full-page ads on behalf of racial equality and other causes, signed their own names to letters to left-leaning journals, and otherwise operated openly in the Popular Front political milieu. The *Slavic American* wrapped itself in the Bill of Rights,

while Minneapolis Ukrainians puzzled by HUAC's persecution arranged a defense of their IWO lodge.<sup>73</sup>

Now preoccupied with defending themselves, leftists continued their civil-rights activism. IWO president Rockwell Kent signed on to the "National Emergency Civil Rights Mobilization," only to receive a letter from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's Roy Wilkins telling him the IWO "is not one of the organizations invited to participate in this Mobilization." Even though the Order had been working for civil rights for almost two decades, by 1949 its assistance was unwelcome.<sup>74</sup> Sam Milgrom and Rockwell Kent nevertheless decided to urge individual members to attend the mobilization even if their institution had been blackballed, suggesting they were genuinely interested in furthering black civil rights and not just subverting the campaign for Communist gains.<sup>75</sup> Other internal letters between IWO officials not meant for public scrutiny likewise speak of the group's dedication to furthering black civil rights, calling into question Harold Cruse's famous conclusion that Communists were only cynically interested in exploiting civil rights.<sup>76</sup>

Members of the American Slav Congress continued their activism in the face of deportation proceedings. Katherine Hyndman, who had been brought to America in 1913 at age 6, defended her effort to achieve school integration in Gary, as well as her other subversive ideas. In a letter to Eleanor Roosevelt, Hyndman asked, "Will we become a new type of displaced persons, banished from the United States because we dare entertain thoughts not to the liking of present-day bigots and witch-hunters?"<sup>77</sup>

The IWO faced a liquidation order from the New York State Insurance Department after it was deemed "subversive" by the Justice Department, a death warrant the Order unsuccessfully fought through the courts as well as the Subversive Activities Control Board. The Insurance Department offered a novel interpretation of the actuarial term "hazard" (as in a mutual society that was financially unstable) in now labeling the IWO a moral and political hazard, never mind that its finances were impeccable. Order officers pointed out auditors had consistently found

their finances to be sound for more than 20 years, a fact reiterated by a Newark accountant in the Order who deposed the organization had “restricted its investments to municipal, state and Government bonds because as a group, such securities offer greater safety.”<sup>78</sup> Such arguments, though, were mocked by the arch-conservative *New York World-Telegram and Sun*, whose headline writer scoffed, “Their Books Balanced, But Politics Were in Red.” The paper likewise dismissed arguments that the IWO elected non-Communist officers by sneering that officers such as Harlem Congressman Vito Marcantonio “could therefore serve as ‘window dressing,’ a familiar Commie trick.” Repentant ex-Communist and professional testifier Louis Budenz piled on, condemning the Garibaldi Lodge, where “the boys worked like beavers to get out the vote for that now-defeated Stalin stooge, Marcantonio.”<sup>79</sup>

In the midst of this campaign the IWO remained defiant. Treasurer Peter Shipka in 1951 asserted “the right to defend is an inalienable right. We helped to defend Negro people who faced lynch justice, to see that justice shall not be denied them.” Rubin Saltzman of the Jewish Peoples Fraternal Order similarly pointed out in the *Morgen Freiheit* the government’s hypocrisy in prosecuting some fraternalists, but not others, for being at odds with US foreign policy. The Knights of Columbus escaped scrutiny even though it had supported “cannibalistic Franco” during the Spanish Civil War. Of course, by 1951 Franco’s fascist near-past was being air brushed in the name of Cold War anti-communism, and it was the black and white Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade who were in the government’s cross hairs.<sup>80</sup>

Ordinary members facing deportation expressed defiance bordering on the poetic. “[O]ne thing they don’t understand — our stubbornness. We are fearless people,” a Carpatho-Rusyn member wrote his society’s president. “Even if they deport me to the North Pole, among the Eskimoes, I shall show, by gesticulation, if needs be, to these Eskimoes the wrong we are being done by Capitalism. There too I shall prepare for the day of the overthrow of the oppressors of the working people. They will not get rid of us, no matter where they deport us! ...” Such defiant letters suggest



the commitment radical immigrants had to the causes in which they believed.<sup>81</sup>

More systematically, as part of its appeal of the liquidation order, in 1951 the IWO solicited affidavits from members, and while the Order may have suggested matters members should stress, in many of these affidavits members' commitment to the Order's interracialism clearly stands out. Hyman Weinberg of Cleveland expressed pride in the IWO, "wherein all people irrespective of race, color or creed are regarded with complete equality." Miklos Petri, member of a Hungarian lodge in the Bronx, stated "The most important thing about the IWO is that it does not discriminate against any people because of nationality, color, or religion, and we want to have peace with everybody. I am very proud of the fact that we have two Negroes in my Lodge. There is no other organization in America like the I.W.O., which provides social, fraternal, and economic benefits to all people of all races and colors."<sup>82</sup>

Black IWO members confirmed this story. Pecola Moore of Los Angeles appreciated the insurance she would not have been able to purchase in the segregated private market. "Being an American Negro (so called), I have been helped beyond words to tell. The fellowship of help through the fraternity and sick benefits is a blessing to the poor and distressed persons. I would not have been able to pay a doctor; nor buy the medicines, to say nothing of paying for a home call from a physician, had it not been for the help of this organization."

But Moore added that "[I]t was not the medical service features of the Order that primarily made me wish to join." "What I liked best about the Order was the fact that it really practices brotherhood and democracy. The Brothers and Sisters in my Lodge hold ... many kinds of educational activities, and all persons of all creeds and races are together in perfect unity. My lodge has on many occasions fought for issues important to the Negro people. ... Each year we celebrate Negro History Week with wonderful programs. I would like to ask the court to please let us have the one organization which is helping all people regardless of race, creed, or color to live and grow through mutual assistance

which is Universal Brotherhood.”<sup>83</sup> In defending their Order, officers and regular members pointed out private insurance corporations that stood to benefit from the liquidation had millions of dollars invested in segregated housing developments, even as they discriminated against blacks by charging exorbitant rates. Treasurer Shipka charged the liquidation effort was motivated at least partially by private insurance corporations who “are preparing the greatest insurance grab in the history of our country ... \$100,000,000 of insurance and \$7,000,000 of your money could very well be used by any insurance company to invest in Jim crow [sic] housing or other enterprises ...” The Douglass-Lincoln Society president echoed this charge in an article published in *The Defender*, official newspaper of the black lodge.<sup>84</sup> From the testimony of black members such as Moore, strong evidence emerges that for many people Communist affiliation was irrelevant if the organization made good on its commitment to civil rights.

Jumal Ahmad of Cleveland, “a local teacher in the Ahmadiyya Mission of the Moslem faith,” recounted “I had trouble with my life insurance company, and I was recommended by a friend to join the ... Order where I, as a Negro, did receive equal treatment.” Ahmad added “It has been practice, in my experience in the International Workers Order, not to discriminate anyone for religious or political reasons ... I have found true fraternalism and racial equality in the organization, which I am proud to support and belong to.” Surely the IWO was one of the few organizations in 1951 with Jewish, Slavic Catholic, and Black Muslim members.<sup>85</sup>

Such appeals fell on deaf ears and radicals such as George Pirinsky, Zlatko Balokovič, and Peter Harisiades of the IWO Greek Society were deported as “undesirable aliens,” if not to the North Pole then to their native European homelands.<sup>86</sup> The president of the American Russian Fraternal Association wrote to the group’s New Haven lodge, urging members to attend Pirinsky’s hearing and demonstrate solidarity with him. “You know that the Secretary of the American Slav Congress has been held, for 69 days, on Ellis Island, or, as it is commonly called,

the Island of Tears,” he reminded his brothers and sisters. There the ASC secretary shared a cell “behind double barbed wire” with the National Maritime Union’s Ferdinand Smith, soon to be deported to Jamaica for his militant advocacy on behalf of his multiracial membership. In spite of — or perhaps because of — the Russians’ support, Pirinsky’s appeal was denied and he was shipped back to Bulgaria.<sup>87</sup>

Conversely, the government refused to allow other defiant leftists to travel abroad to argue for civil rights, nuclear disarmament, and other subversive concepts. American-born members of the IWO such as singer Paul Robeson and painter Rockwell Kent had their passports yanked, stifling their calls for civil rights.<sup>88</sup> Less prominent members resigned out of well-founded fears of prosecution or loss of employment. A member of the Slovak Workers Order quit out of fear his son would be expelled from medical school, while a member of the Jewish Peoples Fraternal Order who worked for the post office quit as he was now required to take a Loyalty Oath in order to continue selling stamps. “I was wondering if you could discontinue sending me *‘The Jewish Fraternalist’* through the mails,” he wrote. “The Post Office ... and the FBI in Hammond[, Indiana,] have taken every name that receives the *‘Fraternal Outlook’* and every Russian sounding name that receives literature or is in the directory. I don’t want you to think that I have given up on my convictions or beliefs. I have not, I have to take care as to my job ... ”<sup>89</sup>

Even as late as October 1954 IWO members were protesting against their Order’s liquidation. Joseph Petercsak expressed “deep regret [at] the decision of the Supreme Court in connection with our Order. ... Our membership always regarded our Order as the head of a big family. We were together in good and bad times.” Earlier, the secretary of the Hungarian lodge of Hammond had protested, “Our money is there and we feel that we have our rights.”<sup>90</sup>

By the end of 1954, however, the IWO was dismantled, with the Slav Congress shutting the following year. By that point affiliated fraternal societies had been stripped of their insurance licenses by judicial decree. The Croatian Fraternal Union (hereafter CFU),

HUAC gleefully noted, was in November 1947 slapped with “an injunction that forbids the present left-wing officers . . . from using the funds of the organization and taking charge of the fraternal insurance company it controls.”<sup>91</sup> HUAC asserted the CFU got what it deserved, for “This entire organization was taken over by the Communists . . .” HUAC admitted that at the 1947 CFU convention only 50 delegates were estimated to have been Communists. “(H)owever, . . . by clever jockeying this Communist kernel succeeded in wresting control from the hands of the non-Communists, electing five Communists to its ‘supreme court’ in control of the immense resources of this powerful organization.”<sup>92</sup>

Communist success in winning elections was characterized as “wresting control” — “clever jockeying.” As Croatian American Steve Nelson noted, when he was organizing coal miners no one asked him if he was a Communist, they merely wanted to know if he was an effective union spokesman who would be reliable in improving miners’ lives. Perhaps CFU delegates similarly felt Communism was immaterial so long as fraternal officers were dependable people who were effectively advocating for the kinds of improvements in domestic and foreign policies lodge members desired. HUAC of course did not see it this way.<sup>93</sup>

With regard to the IWO, the American Supreme Court refused to review a New York state appellate court’s decision ordering its liquidation and forbidding officers and members from associating with each other in any newly created organization. Although under a previous Supreme Court decision an organization on the List of Subversive Organizations was entitled to a hearing before a Subversive Activities Control Board, in a Kafkaesque turn, the New York Insurance Department, now running the Order’s day to day business and scrupulously overseeing all expenditures, denied a request for funds to pay lawyers to represent them at the SACB “hearing.” Lawyerless, the Order’s officers boycotted the hearing, and the board declared failure to attend an admission of guilt. The Insurance Department then dispersed the Order’s assets to for-profit insurance corporations. In a final ironic twist, the high court in 1955 ruled the IWO had erroneously been placed on the subversive list after all. The

ghost of the Order was exonerated, cold comfort to members such as Petercsak who were already deprived of their big family, or shareholders in Arow Farm, a summer camp of the American Russian Fraternal Society, who in August 1955 were still under investigation by the New York Legislature for their suspect IWO affiliation and alleged Communist recruiting.<sup>94</sup>

Immigration historians have lamented the decline of ethnic social clubs as the immigrant generation died and assimilated Americans lost their hyphens. But this was not just a question of the passing of the immigrant generation — it was a direct result, in many cases, of red-baiting. Who would join the Croatian Fraternal Union if the FBI was keeping watch? And watching it was. The HUAC report on the Slav Congress meticulously listed attendance by “undesirables” at meetings covered by the *Daily Worker* where Communists spoke. Merely being at a meeting with a Communist polluted any person or group to which that person belonged.<sup>95</sup>

To be sure, assimilation and the waning of the immigrant generation played a large role in the decline of associational life.<sup>96</sup> But Robert Putnam’s lament that America is “bowling alone” ignores the coercive role that red-baiting played in this decline, especially for the politically engaged.<sup>97</sup> In no small measure because of their anti-racist activism, the IWO and Slav Congress were red-baited into oblivion. But for a brief moment some white ethnics opted out of white privilege in favour of cross-racial solidarity.

\*\*\*

**ROBERT M. ZECKER** is associate professor of history at Saint Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia. There he teaches US history with specializations in immigration, race, and ethnicity; urban history; and labour. He is the author of three books, most recently *Race and America’s Immigrant Press: How the Slovaks Were Taught to Think Like White People*. His current project focuses on the left-leaning fraternal societies of immigrants and their civil-rights activism.

**ROBERT M. ZECKER** est professeur agrégé d'histoire à l'Université St. Francis Xavier, en Nouvelle-Écosse. Il y enseigne l'histoire américaine et se spécialise dans les questions d'immigration, de race et d'ethnicité, l'histoire urbaine et le travail. Il est l'auteur de trois livres, dont le dernier s'intitule *Race and America's Immigrant Press: How the Slovaks Were Taught to Think Like White People*. Il travaille actuellement à un projet sur les sociétés de secours mutuel de gauche des immigrants et leur activisme en faveur des droits civils.

### Endnotes:

- 1 Robert M. Zecker, *Race and America's Immigrant Press: How the Slovaks Were Taught to Think Like White People* (New York: Continuum, 2011); Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940–1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Thomas Philpott, *The Slum and the Ghetto: Neighborhood Deterioration and Middle-Class Reform, Chicago, 1880–1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Andrew J. Diamond, *Mean Streets: Chicago Youth and the Everyday Struggle for Empowerment in the Multicultural City, 1908–1969* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).
- 2 David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991); David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White; The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books, 2005); David R. Roediger and Elizabeth D. Esch, *The Production of Difference: Race and the Management of Labor in U.S. History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); James R. Barrett and David R. Roediger, "Whiteness and the Inbetween Peoples of Europe," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 16, no. 3 (Summer 1997): 3–44; James R. Barrett, "Unity and Fragmentation: Class, Race, and Ethnicity on Chicago's South Side, 1900–1922," *Journal of Social History* 18, no. 1 (Autumn 1984): 37–55; Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876–1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000); Jacobson, *Special Sorrows: The Diasporic Imagination of Irish, Polish and Jewish Immigrants in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Eric Arnesen, *Waterfront*

- Workers of New Orleans: Race, Class, and Politics, 1863–1923* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Jennifer Guglielmo and Salvatore Salerno, eds., *Are Italians White? How Race is Made in America* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Thomas Guglielmo, *White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color and Power in Chicago, 1890–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998); Hasia Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915–1935* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977); Catherine Eagan, “I did Imagine ... we had Ceased to be Whitewashed Negroes”: *The Racial Formation of Irish Identity in Nineteenth-Century Ireland and America* (Ph.D. diss., Boston College, 2000); Glenda Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919–1950* (New York: Norton, 2008); Robert Orsi, “The Religious Boundaries of an Inbetween People: Street *feste* and the Problem of the Dark-Skinned Other in Italian Harlem, 1920–1990,” *American Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (September 1992): 313–47; Daniel Letwin, *The Challenge of Interracial Unionism: Alabama Coal Miners, 1878–1921* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Rebecca N. Hill, *Men, Mobs and Law: Anti-Lynching and Labor Defense in U.S. Radical History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008); Zecker, *Race and America's Immigrant Press*.
- 3 The poll tax was a measure enacted by many states whereby a voter had to pay a hefty tax or taxes before she or he could vote. This measure, and others, severely limited poor black and white voting in many Southern states. Jim Crow was the name given to the statutory segregation of public facilities.
  - 4 Allen Weinstein, *The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America — The Stalin Era* (New York: Random House, 1999); John E. Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999); Haynes and Klehr, *The Soviet World of American Communism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998); Haynes, *In Denial: Historians, Communism and Espionage* (New York: Encounter Books, 2005); Haynes, *Red Scare or Red Menace? American Communism and Anticommunism in the Cold War Era* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996). For the anti-Communist activism of the American Federation of Labor, see Jennifer Luff, *Commonsense Anti-Communism: Labor and Civil Liberties Between the Wars* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).
  - 5 Library of Congress, Records of the Communist Party USA, Microfilm 21, 966, Reel 40, Delo 588, Secretary, Communist International, to Central Committee of the Workers Party of America, letter, 7 May 1926.
  - 6 Maurice Isserman, “Open Archives and Open Minds: ‘Traditionalists’ Versus ‘Revisionists’ After Venona,” *American Communist History* 4, no. 2

- (2005): 215–23; John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, “The Historiography of American Communism: An Unsettled Field,” *Labour History Review* 68, no. 1 (April 2003): 61–78.
- 7 Jacqueline Castledine, *Cold War Progressives: Women's Interracial Organizing for Peace and Freedom* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012); Erik S. Gellman, *Death Blow to Jim Crow: The National Negro Congress and the Rise of Militant Civil Rights* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012); Daniel Katz, *All Together Different: Yiddish Socialists, Garment Workers, and the Labor Roots of Multiculturalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2011); William J. Maxwell, *New Negro, Old Left: African-American Writing and Communism Between the Wars* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Erik S. McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism, and the Making of Black Left Feminism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Hakim Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism: The Communist International, Africa and the Diaspora, 1919–1939* (London: Africa World Press, 2013); Minkah Makalani, *In the Cause of Freedom: Radical Black Internationalism from Harlem to London, 1917–1939* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).
  - 8 Library of Congress, Reel 5, Delo 93, letter, Claude McKay to “Comrade Kolaroff,” 23 December 1922; Reel 50, Delo 720, letter, Lovett Fort-Whiteman to Charles E. Ruthenberg, 3 June 1926; Reel 50, Delo 720, letter, H.V. Phillips to Ruthenberg, 15 July 1926. In writing to the Comintern, McKay said, “It would do the Negro movement no good in America, just infinite harm, if you made a mistake and backed the wrong horse at this juncture.” Ruthenberg replied to Fort-Whiteman, telling him not to go to Moscow. Two years previously, however, Fort-Whiteman had made a tour of Turkestan and other parts of Soviet Central Asia. Reel 50, Delo 720, letter, Ruthenberg to Fort-Whiteman, 17 June 1926; Reel 20, Delo 313, letter from James Jackson (AKA Fort-Whiteman), to Robert Minor, 28 September 1924.
  - 9 Library of Congress, Reel 50, Delo 699, letter, Ed Tabban of the Bronx to Charles E. Ruthenberg and CEC, 12 April 1926; Reel 50, Delo 699, letter, Tabban to Ruthenberg, 17 May 1926; Reel 50, Delo 699, letter of instruction from Ruthenberg to the Lettish Agitprop Bureau to be sent to all Lettish Fractions of the Party, 18 May 1926; Reel 34, Delo 501, letter, John Dendur, secretary of the Slovak Bureau, to the CEC, 16 September 1925; Reel 50, Delo 709, letter, Ruthenberg to S. Zinich, secretary of the South Slavic Section, 13 January 1926; Reel 50, Delo 709, letter, Zinich of Chicago to the CEC, 16 March 1926. In May, Tabban wrote to the American Party general secretary, “What is built by such ‘conspirators’ in such displayed disorganizing capability in our opinion cannot be a sound Communist Party.” Tabban nevertheless had



- signed his April letter, “Yours for communistic centralization and unrestricted discipline of Communist International.”
- 10 Library of Congress, Reel 234, Delo 3037, IWO Flyer, “Why Not Social Insurance?” (1932); Reel 234, Delo 3037, “The Activities of the I.W.O.” (1932); Reel 287, Delo 3709, “Report of District Plenum of IWO, Sunday, April 29, 1934” (Philadelphia); Reel 287, Delo 3709, letter, 26 July 1934, Max Bedacht to Comrade Earl Browder, including suggested copy for an IWO election leaflet on Social Insurance. The IWO lobbied for, among other matters, universal health care, a federal Fair Employment Practices Committee, anti-lynching legislation, and strong union rights for workers. The Order also provided its members with a broad array of cultural and leisure activities, such as bands, choruses, dramatic troupes, dance groups, and baseball, basketball and bowling leagues.
  - 11 Library of Congress, Reel 234, Delo 3037, IWO Report on organizing Negro branches (1932).
  - 12 *Rovnost' ludu* (8 March 1922), 5, (8 February 1924), 2. For coverage supportive of American gunboat diplomacy, see, for example, *Slovák v Amerike* (11 May 1900), 1, (July 1, 1902), 6, (28 February 1905), 2, (8 July 1909), 2, (11 April 1911), 3, (30 May 1912), 1, (6 June 1912), 1, (30 January 1913), 1, (5 August 1913), 1; *New Yorkský denník* (12 February 1915), 3; *Jednota* (9 December 1908), 4; *Národní noviny* (30 September 1915), 1, 3. See also, *Rovnost' ludu* (8 March 1922), 5. For anti-lynching coverage, see *Rovnost' ludu* (20 February 1925), 3, (31 July 1925), 8, (26 June 1925), 1, (5 May 1926), 1. For further anti-colonial coverage, see *Rovnost' ludu* (13 September 1922), 6, (6 October 1925), 8, (12 December 1924), 1, (1 May 1925), 1. For the general tenor of Slavic newspapers' coverage of colonialism and colonized peoples, see Zecker, *Race and America's Immigrant Press*, 103–176; for coverage in the Polish American press that was sometimes more sympathetic toward colonized peoples, see Jacobson, *Special Sorrows*.
  - 13 Library of Congress, Reel 13, Delo 207, “Report of the Committee on Negro Work” (1923).
  - 14 Library of Congress, Reel 23, Delo 359, letter, National Chairman, Workers Party to UNIA, 14 August 1924. Jay Lovestone, however, argued that in “Negro” branches of the All-American Anti-Imperialist League, white members should be allowed to join if they wished. The Party's Anti-Imperialist Sub-Committee accepted this proposal. Reel 36, Delo 534, Minutes of Meeting of Anti-Imperialist Sub-Committee, 18 November 1925.
  - 15 Steven Hahn, *The Political Worlds of Slavery and Freedom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 115–162; quotation is on 132. Library of Congress, Reel 23, Delo 359, letter, National Chairman,

- Workers Party to UNIA, 14 August 1924. See, too, Reel 27, Delo 429, report in German to the Communist International on the American Negro Labor Congress held 26 October to 2 November 1925; Reel 45, Delo 645, letter, Charles E. Ruthenberg to Benjamin Gitlow, 16 August 1926, and 1926 report by William Weinstone on the UNIA faction in opposition to Garvey; Reel 50, Delo 72, letter, Lovett-Fort Whiteman to Ruthenberg, 31 August 1926, on progressive members of UNIA planning on attending the Brussels Anti-Colonialism Conference; Reel 52, Delo 730, letter, W.C. Francis to Ruthenberg, 3 September 1926, on an ANLC member from Pittsburgh who also belonged to UNIA; Reel 59, Delo 819, Report on Negro Work in Detroit by Edgar Daring, 14 April 1926; Reel 59, Delo 819, "Negro Work – Memorandum," 2 August 1926, report to Ruthenberg on the New York faction of UNIA inviting Fort-Whiteman to their convention; Reel 59, Delo 819, "Negro Committee Minutes," 20 September 1926.
- 16 Library of Congress, Reel 40, Delo 591, letter, Lovett Fort-Whiteman of Chicago to the Executive Committee of the Communist International, 21 April 1926; Reel 34, Delo 504, letter, Fort-Whiteman to Ruthenberg, 7 August 1925, likewise notes Fort-Whiteman's attempt to help organize South Africans as well as African seamen in Liverpool. In the 1926 letter, he lectured the Comintern, "The strong Community of sentiment which subsist [sic] between the Black Peoples of the New World and those of Africa inspires the keenest interest on the part of the American Negro People towards any fundamental disturbances arising on the African Continent."
- 17 Library of Congress, Reel 51, Delo 728, letter, B. Borisoff to Charles E. Ruthenberg, 9 November 1926; Reel 51, Delo 728, letter, 18 November 1926, Borisoff to Ruthenberg. William Schneiderman of Los Angeles wrote on the difficulty comrades seeking to organize blacks had in countering stories that "Negroes were imported as scabs." Reel 33, Delo 497, letter, Schneiderman to Ruthenberg, 14 May 1925. On white-on-black violence in 1910s–1920s cities, see Philpott, *The Slum and the Ghetto*; Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*; Kevin Boyle, *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights and Murder in the Jazz Age* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2004); Charles L. Lumpkins, *American Pogrom: The East St. Louis Race Riot and Black Politics* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008); William Tuttle, *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996; originally published in 1970); Jan Voogd, *Race, Riots and Resistance: The Red Summer of 1919* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008); Zecker, *Race and America's Immigrant Press*, 204–47; James S. Hirsch, *Riot and Remembrance: The Tulsa Race Riot and its Legacy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002); Scott Ellsworth, *Death in a Promised Land: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana

- State University Press, 1982); Alfred L. Brophy, *Reconstructing the Dreamland: The Tulsa Riot of 1921; Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Edward T. Linenthal, "Remembrance, Contestation, Excavation: The Work of Memory in Oklahoma City, the Washita Battlefield, and the Tulsa Race Riot," in *Public Culture: Diversity, Democracy, and Community in the United States*, ed. Marguerite S. Shaffer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Vincent P. Franklin, "The Philadelphia Race Riot of 1918," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 99, no. 3 (July 1975): 336–50. On the failed 1919 steel strike, see William Z. Foster, *The Great Steel Strike and Its Lessons* (New York: B.W. Huebsch Inc., 1920).
- 18 Library of Congress, Reel 34, Delo 503, letter, Joseph Stone of the International Marine Workers' Amalgamation Committee to Earl Browder, 31 March 1925; Reel 36, Delo 534, Minutes of Meeting of Sub-Committee on Imperialism, 21 May 1925; Reel 33, Delo 497, letter, James Dolsen to Charles E. Ruthenberg, 8 January 1925. Stone assured Browder that the Virgin Islanders "if properly worked will give us a key to the colored world which is so hard for us to organize." The Sub-Committee on Imperialism arranged to have Filipino, Latin American, and "Negro" speakers at anti-imperialism meetings it was planning for 4<sup>th</sup> of July. On West Indian immigrants' activism, see Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Verso, 1998); on multicultural radicalism in California, see Scott Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).
- 19 Library of Congress, Reel 26, Delo 406, letter, Jack Jampolsky to Charles E. Ruthenberg, 3 May 1924.
- 20 Library of Congress, Reel 56, Delo 784, letter, Organization Department to American Negro Labor Congress, 3 April 1926; Reel 13, Delo 207, letter, Bennett of Seattle, to "Dear Bill" (likely January 1924). On the East Saint Louis race riots, see Malcolm McLaughlin, "Ghetto Formation and Armed Resistance in East Saint Louis, Illinois," *Journal of American Studies* 41, no. 2 (2007): 435–67; Lumpkins, *American Pogrom*.
- 21 Library of Congress, Reel 50, Delo 720, letter, Sailendra N. Ghose of the India Freedom Foundation to Robert Minor, 27 August 1926; Reel 52, Delo 730, letter, Ghose to Charles E. Ruthenberg, 6 September 1926, "Labor Day." Syrian Americans, too, sought redefinition as whites by foregrounding their Christian, biblical roots, and worked not to overturn, merely redraw, America's racialized immigration policy. See Sarah Gualtieri, "Becoming 'White': Race, Religion and the Foundations of Syrian/Lebanese Ethnicity in the United States," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 20, no. 4 (Summer 2001): 29–58.

- 22 Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (New York: Morrow, 1967); Library of Congress, Reel 51, Delo 724, letter, Charles E. Ruthenberg to S.N. Ghose, 24 September 1926; Reel 50, Delo 720, letter, Ruthenberg to Nina Samarodin, secretary, the Council for the Protection of Foreign Born, 24 September 1926.
- 23 Maurice Isserman, *Which Side Were You On?: The American Communist Party During the Second World War* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1982).
- 24 Library of Congress, Reel 287, Delo 3709, "Report of District Plenum of IWO, Sunday, April 29, 1934" (Philadelphia).
- 25 "Constitution and By-Laws of the Slovak Calvinistic Presbyterian Union, Revised and Adopted at the XVI. Convention Held from June 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>, 1948, at St. Clair, Pa." SC188, Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, Philadelphia.
- 26 Kheel Center, Cornell University, Mss. 5940 (IWO supplemental collection), Box 3, 1934–1935 "Constitution and By-Laws and Declaration of Principles;" Declaration of Principles, "as amended at the fourth convention held in Pittsburgh, April 23–30, 1938;" January 1, 1942, "Declaration of Principles."
- 27 Kheel Center, Mss. 5940, Box 4, "Digest of Testimony of Witnesses for the State in the I.W.O. Matter. January 29, 1951, to March 7, 1951." For the Scottsboro defense and black Communists in Alabama generally, see Robin D.G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990).
- 28 *Robotnícky kalendár na rok 1921*, 86; *Robotnícky kalendár na rok 1937*, 40, 45, 94; *Robotnícky kalendár na rok 1939*, 109–13; *Ludový denník*, 21 September 1942, 4.
- 29 *Národné noviny* (29 April 1942), 2.
- 30 Kheel Center, Mss. 5276 (IWO collection), Box 1, Folder 9, IWO General Executive Board meeting, 8 February 1942, "Resolution on Negro Rights."
- 31 *Národné noviny* (7 June 1944), 5. See also, *Národné noviny* (2 February 1944), 5, for the Slav Congress' demand for the repeal of the Smith-Connelly anti-labour Act. In 1946, the Congress' secretary, George Pirinsky, called for the expansion of Social Security to include universal medical insurance. Pirinsky, *Slavic Americans in the Fight for Victory and Peace* (New York: American Slav Congress, 1946), 29–30, 38, 44.
- 32 *The American Slav* (Winter 1949), 8. "The Case of Katherine Hyndman – What is True Americanism?" See also, Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 6, Folder 12, Telegram: "Chicago, Ill. Sep. 24" (late 1940s?) to Sam Milgrom, IWO General Director of Organization, regarding the white hate strike in Gary and the IWO's involvement in a campaign to integrate the Gary schools.

- 33 Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 14, Folder 6, Resolution against race discrimination and anti-Semitism passed at the Slovak-American section (Slovak Workers Order-IWO) conference, 5 September 1943.
- 34 Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 14, Folder 5, "Resolution on Negroes," passed at the sixth national convention of the Slovak Workers Order-IWO, 4-6 July 1944.
- 35 Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 7, Folder 1, letter from John Mykytew, 15 June 1944.
- 36 Kheel Center, Mss. 5940, Box 3, affidavit offered by Herman Schlossberg of Los Angeles, 24 April 1951.
- 37 Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 7, Folder 2, letter, 18 December 1944, Sam Milgrom to Henry Podolsky.
- 38 Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 10, Folder 8, letters from Mario D'Inzillo, 26 and 31 October 1942; letter, 6 November 1942, Oscar Cox, assistant solicitor general, Department of Justice, to D'Inzillo.
- 39 *The Slavic American* (Winter 1947), 30, "Program and Activities of the American Slav Congress," report by George Pirinsky, executive secretary of the ASC; Kheel Center, Cornell University, International Ladies Garment Union, Charles Zimmerman Collection, Mss. 5780/014, Box 5, Folder 2, letter from Paul Robeson, 4 May 1946. "Big 3 Unity for Colonial Freedom" — Madison Square Garden Rally on 6 June 1946. See, too, Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 49, for a flyer, "Paul Robeson Sings for IWO Day," 12 October 1941, at the Civilian and National Defense Exposition in New York.
- 40 Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 43, Folder 2, letter, 26 June 1950, from Lottie Gordon, Director of the Prisoners Relief Committee, the Civil Rights Congress, to S. Davidovitch of Camp Kinderland.
- 41 Kheel Center, Mss. 5940, Box 3, affidavit by Herman Schlossberg of Los Angeles, 24 April 1951; affidavit by Kalyna Popow of Philadelphia, 24 April 1951. Frances Slowiczeck of a Polonia Society lodge in Hamtramck, Michigan, said "many of our activities were conducted in conjunction with other youth groups of other nationalities, such as Jewish, Ukrainian, Russian and Negro." Box 3, Frances Slowiczeck affidavit, 24 April 1951.
- 42 *Národné noviny* (18 August 1943), 5.
- 43 *Ibid.*, (13 October 1943), 5, 6.
- 44 *Ibid.*, (17 May 1944), 6.
- 45 Pirinsky, *Slavic Americans in the Fight for Victory and Peace*, 44.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 15-17.
- 47 Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*; John McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter With Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 72-78. *Národné noviny* (7 July 1943), 5, (28 July 1943), 5. *Národné noviny* (30 June 1943), 4,

- editorial, "Práca Piatej Kolony" ("The work of fifth columnists"), on the Los Angeles riots.
- 48 Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 7, Folder 4, letter, Sam Milgrom to Eleanor Broady of Detroit, 2 April 1945.
- 49 Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 7, Folder 3, news release on International Workers Order, Inc., Michigan State Committee letterhead. Reprint of *Detroit Free Press* editorial from Thursday, 22 March 1945.
- 50 Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 7, Folder 5, IWO news release, "Rev. Charles A. Hill, IWO leader, Candidate for Detroit Council," 17 October 1945.
- 51 Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 10, Folder 3, letter, Edward L. Nelson to Joseph Clark of the *Daily Worker*, 21 February 1950.
- 52 Library of Congress, Reel 195, Delo 2585-2586, "A Statement of Several Negro Comrades Concerning Negro Work, Particularly by the League of Struggle for Negro Rights" (1931); Christine Zduleczna, "The Czechoslovaks of Philadelphia," in *The Foreign-Born of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1927).
- 53 *New Yorkský denník* (7 April 1923), 6.
- 54 Library of Congress, Communist Party USA, Reel 195, Delo 2585-2586, flyer, Mass Meeting, Ambassador Hall, Third Avenue and 174<sup>th</sup> Street, the Bronx, Negro and White Workers to "Prevent the Deportation of August Yokinen, Sunday, March 22" (1931); letter, 3 March 1931, League of Struggle for Negro Rights to August Yokinen, Ellis Island; "A Statement of Several Negro Comrades Concerning Negro Work, Particularly by the LSNR" (1931); "Stop the Persecution of Foreign Born Workers!" (Stop Deportation of Yokinen), Manhattan Lyceum, 66 East Fourth Street, New York, N.Y., 22 March 1931; "The Fight for Yokinen is for Every Negro and White Worker;" "Statement of the National Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born" (1931).
- 55 For charges of "white chauvinism" in the Buffalo chapter of the Friends of Soviet Russia, see Library of Congress, Communist Party USA, Reel 234, Delo 3025, letter, 28 October 1932, on Buffalo Friends of the Soviet Union letterhead. For charges of white chauvinism at a Communist Party summer camp, see Reel 234, Delo 3032, letter, 20 September 1932, Andrian Anddrozzo, New York, to the Secretariat, CPUSA; and in the Bonus Army March, see Reel 234, Delo 3032, letter from Sol Harper to Earl Browder (1932).
- 56 Library of Congress, Reel 234, Delo 3037, Report on Organizing Negro Branches (1932); Reel 234, Delo 3037, "The Activities of the I.W.O." (1932); Reel 195, Delo 2585-2586, "A Statement of Several Negro Comrades Concerning Negro Work, Particularly by the LSNR" (1931).
- 57 Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 4, Folder 4, Letter, from Miss Philippa F. Stowe to headquarters, 12 April 1949.

- 58 Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 8, Folder 2, letter, Harold Peters, New Haven, Connecticut, to *IWO headquarters*, 12 February 1945.
- 59 NYU Tamiment/Wagner Labor Archives, IWO collection, Box 1, Folder 14, Minutes of General Council Meeting, 7–8 September 1946.
- 60 NYU, Box 1, Folder 2, Draft report of the General Secretary of the IWO (Max Bedacht), 29 August 1946. See also, NYU, Box 1, Folder 13, Report on Negro Rights delivered at the 16–17 March 1946, IWO General Council meeting; NYU, Box 1, Folder 16, “Report by Sam Milgrom on Development of the Drive to Build the Order in the Negro Community. General Council IWO, 16 September 1945. Hotel Capitol, New York.”
- 61 Louis Adamic, “Conspiracy Against Peace,” *The Slavic American* (Winter 1947), 5–6, 52.
- 62 *The Slavic American* (Winter 1949), 30.
- 63 NYU, Box 1, Folder 17, Sam Milgrom, “Report to the General Council IWO, 1 March 1947;” Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 5, Folder 2, Dave Greene letter to “All Societies,” on IWO letterhead, 4 February 1948. Suggested telegram campaign on anti-lynching bill to congressmen on the Judiciary Committee. “To save innocent lives, achieve equal justice and hold respect of all nations, we demand effective anti-lynching law,” *The Slavic American* (Summer 1948), 5, 23.
- 64 NYU, Box 1, Folder 31, news release, 4 October 1948: “IWO Hails Cleveland Pennant Victory.” Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 4, Folder 10, “Lodge Program Sessions 9 & 10 Civic and Community Events,” “Daily Schedule National Training School, 3–11 September 1949.”
- 65 Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 4, Folder 2, letter, Councilman Benjamin Davis (New York) to Boleslaw Gebert, 29 May 1947.
- 66 Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 13, Folder 11, convention, Serbian American Federation of the IWO, hand-written notes of Milan G. Draskovich, 15 June 1947.
- 67 *The Pittsburgh Press* (17 December) 1947, 1.
- 68 NYU, Box 1, Folder 31, letter, Stanley M. Isaacs, New York City Council president, to U.S. Attorney General Tom Clark, 6 January 1948.
- 69 House Un-American Activities Committee 1949 report, “American Slav Congress.”
- 70 HUAC report, 46.
- 71 HUAC report, 35.
- 72 HUAC report, 12, 14; University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Leo Krzycki Papers, Mss. 27, Box 1, Folder 3, Pamphlet of Senate Report No. 46, Part 2, “Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor, Report of the Committee on Education and Labor Pursuant to S. Res. 266 – A Resolution to Investigate Violations of the Right of Free Speech and Assembly and Interference With the Rights of Labor to Organize and Bargain Collectively – The Chicago Memorial Day Incident,” 22 July 1937.

- 73 Haynes and Klehr, *Venona*; Weinstein, *The Haunted Wood; The Slavic American* (Summer 1948), 13, 39; NYU, Folder 44, Ukrainian-American Fraternal Union, IWO letter from Vol. Riback to "Brother Trache" of Minneapolis, 13 May 1949.
- 74 Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, all Box 3, Folder 9. Letter, Sam Milgrom to Rockwell Kent, 7 December 1949; letter, Rockwell Kent to Sam Milgrom, 10 December 1949; letter, Rockwell Kent to the NAACP, 10 December 1949; letter, Rockwell Kent to Roy Wilkins, 14 December 1949; letter, Roy Wilkins to Rockwell Kent on "National Emergency Civil Rights Mobilization" letterhead, 21 December 1949.
- 75 Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, both Box 3, Folder 9. Letter, Sam Milgrom to Rockwell Kent, 11 January 1950; letter, Rockwell Kent to Sam Milgrom, 17 January 1950.
- 76 Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 3, Folder 9, letter, Sam Milgrom to Rockwell Kent, 7 December 1949; Library of Congress, Communist Party USA, Reel 287, Delo 3697, letter, from Lenn Davis, Pittsburgh organizer, to (William) Weiner, expressing anger that a talented Negro artist doing a portrait of Lenin was ignored at a Friends of the Soviet Union meeting, 29 January 1934. Library of Congress, Communist Party USA, Reel 287, Delo 3697, letter, on *Soviet Russia Today* letterhead, Liston Oak, editor, to John Peters on a play on lynching and Jim Crowism by Michael Blankfort (1934). Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*. Cruse's thesis has recently ably been countered by works that demonstrate black and white Communists' genuine commitment to black civil rights. Castledine, *Cold War Progressives*; Gellman, *Death Blow to Jim Crow*; Katz, *All Together Different*; Maxwell, *New Negro, Old Left*; McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom*.
- 77 "The Case of Katherine Hyndman – What is True Americanism?," *The American Slav* (Winter 1949), 27.
- 78 Kheel Center, Mss. 5940, Box 3, affidavits from IWO members, 24 April 1951, Jacob H. Zeitlin, CPA, Newark, New Jersey.
- 79 Kheel Center, Mss. 5940, Box 2, *New York World-Telegram and Sun*, 23 January 1951, "Their Books Balanced, But Politics Were in Red." The writer called IWO officer Max Bedacht "a procurer for the Soviet government's espionage network in this country." Box 2, "Among Reddest Red Nests," *New York World-Telegram and Sun* (20 January 1951). The paper urged Smith Act prosecution of "the Moscow-admired Marcantonio." Box 3, reprint from *American Legion Magazine*, March 1951, "IWO – Red Bulwark: The Inside Story of an Outfit That Works Hand in Glove with the Communist Party and Which Now Faces a Crackdown That is Long Overdue" by Louis Budenz.
- 80 NYU, Box 1, Folder 18, "Report of the Officers, Presented to the General Council, I.W.O. 3–4 February 1951. Delivered by Peter Shipka,



- General Secretary-Treasurer, 15; Kheel Center, Mss. 5940, Box 2, Rubin Saltzman, "Did the Order Violate its Own Constitution?," *Morgen Freiheit* (27 September 1951), 5.
- 81 Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 25, Folder 2, letter from a Carpatho-Rusyn member to "Michael" (Michael Logoyda), name and locale of letter writer are not given, 9 February 1947.
- 82 Kheel Center, Mss. 5940, Box 3, affidavits from IWO members, 23 April 1951.
- 83 Kheel Center, Mss. 5940, Box 3, affidavits from IWO members, 24 April 1951.
- 84 NYU, Folder 18, "Report of the Officers Presented to the General Council, IWO, 3-4 February 1951;" Kheel Center, Mss. 5940, Box 2, Edward L. Nelson, "What the Attack on the Order Means to the Negro People," *The Defender* (April 1951), 1-2. The Order's Training School taught members, too, of the successful campaign to end segregation at New York City's Stuyvesant Town development, which was financed by private insurance companies. Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 4, Folder 10, "Daily Schedule National Training School, September 3-11, 1949." An "Answer to Superintendent of Insurance Bohlinger, Adopted at Membership Meeting of the International Workers Order - Saint Nicholas Arena, March 7, 1951," pointed out that New York State had failed to enforce anti-discrimination laws against for-profit insurance companies. Box 23, Folder 4. An Emergency Conference of IWO members pointed out that "It was charged on the floor of the N.Y. State Senate in February 1950 that 'Negroes in Harlem are paying 208% more on their insurance policies and 372% more on cash surrender values than white persons,'" and that for-profit insurance companies had invested policyholder funds and public funds in the segregated Stuyvesant Town housing development. Box 24, "Resolutions, adopted by Emergency Conference Against the Liquidation of a People's Organization - Saturday, February 10, 1951, 13 Astor Place, New York City." Box 46, Max Taber, "Stuyvesant Town for Whites Only," *The Jewish Fraternalist* (February-March 1950), 6-7.
- 85 Kheel Center, Mss. 5940, Box 3, affidavit from IWO members, April 1951. See, too, Mss. 5940, Box 2, *The Compass*, January 20, 1952, 10, "What Will We Do If ...?" for publicity for a rally scheduled to take place on New York's Eighth Avenue and 50<sup>th</sup> Street, on 26 January 1952, to support the IWO.
- 86 Kheel Center, Mss. 5940, Box 2, "Greek, Here Since 1916, Finally Deported as Red," *New York Herald Tribune* (13 November 1952).
- 87 Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 25, Folder 1, Letter, S. Nikolauk to the Executive Committee of American Russian Fraternal Society Lodge #3171, New Haven, Connecticut, 13 September 1949. *Chicago Daily Tribune* (24 September 1948); Gerald Horne, *Red Seas: Ferdinand Smith*

- and Radical Black Sailors in the United States and Jamaica* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 203. The *Tribune* article said that "In Washington, the justice department said the action against Pirinsky was based upon alleged membership in the Communist party, not upon his affiliation with the American Slav Congress." Special thanks to Rachel Buff for showing me this article.
- 88 Paul Robeson, *Here I Stand* (New York: Othello, 1958); Martin Duberman, *Paul Robeson* (New York: Knopf, 1988); Jordan Goodman, *A Watched Man* (New York: Verso, 2013). For the IWO's defense of Robeson, see Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 4, Folder 5, Outline for Dave Greene JPFO speech, Brooklyn, 19 June 1950. For Robeson's defense of the IWO, see NYU, Folder 31, news release, 8 July 1947, addresses by Robeson and Idaho Senator Glen H. Taylor defending the Order.
- 89 NYU, Folder 42, Slovak Workers Order, letter to Joseph Schiffel from a Columbus, Ohio, S.W.O. member, 30 October 1950, who resigned out of fear that his son would be expelled from medical school, and Schiffel's reply of 1 November 1950. For the Hammond, Indiana, Jewish Peoples Fraternal Order member, see NYU, Folder 29, letter from Hammond, Indiana, 11 January 1950.
- 90 Kheel Center, Mss. 5940, Box 3, letter, Joseph Petercsak, secretary, Lodge 1007, 23 October 1954; letter, Vera Gyurko, secretary, Lodge 1075, Hammond, Indiana, 4 November 1953.
- 91 HUAC report, 88. See, too, NYU, Folder 18, speech to the General Council Meeting of the IWO by Treasurer Peter Shipka, 3 February 1951, regarding the state of New York Insurance Department liquidation proceedings.
- 92 HUAC report, 84–85.
- 93 Steve Nelson, James R. Barrett and Rob Ruck, *Steve Nelson, American Radical* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1981). For the acceptance of leftists in the United Electrical Workers, see Rosemary Feurer, *Radical Unionism in the Midwest, 1900–1950* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006).
- 94 Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 53, Michael Singer, "Camp Witchhunt Tries Intimidating Guests," *Daily Worker* (25 August 1955), 3.
- 95 HUAC report, 12, 14.
- 96 Library of Congress, Reel 287, Delo 3709, "Report of District Plenum of IWO, Sunday, April 29, 1934" (Philadelphia); NYU, Box 1, Folder 2, Draft report of the General Secretary of the IWO (Max Bedacht), 29 August 1946, on the difficulty of attracting the English-speaking second generation to the IWO; Kheel Center, Mss. 5276, Box 5, Folder 9, Report by Herbert Benjamin, Executive Secretary, IWO, 23 February 1941: "Work Among the National Groups."
- 97 Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).