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# Racism in a “Raceless” Society: The Soviet Press and Representations of American Racial Violence at Stalingrad in 1930

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## *Abstract*

In late August 1930, two white American workers from the Ford Motor Company in Detroit were tried for attacking a black American laborer at one of the Soviet Union’s prized giants of socialist industry, the Stalingrad Traktorostroi. Soviet trade-union authorities and all-union editors used the near month-long campaign to bring the two assailants to “proletarian justice,” in order to cultivate the image that workers in the USSR valued American technical and industrial knowledge in the construction of the new socialist society, but vehemently rejected American racism. They reinforced this image in publications by juxtaposing visual depictions of Soviet citizens’ acceptance of black Americans as equals against those which portrayed the lynching of black workers in the United States.

In an entry to his diary labeled “Stalingrad, August 1930,” William Henry Chamberlin, then the Moscow correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor*, recorded that he and his wife traveled to “the newly built Stalingrad tractor factory in order to attend the trial of two American mechanics.” He wrote that the two defendants, “Mr. Lewis” and “Mr. Brown,” were charged with “‘racial chauvinism’ for having become involved in a brawl with the sole Negro employed at the works.”<sup>1</sup> The 1930 court proceedings to which Chamberlin alludes demonstrate that at a time when Soviet leaders admitted the country’s industrial inferiority and recruited a substantial number of American (and other foreign) workers to help build socialism, they also portrayed the Soviet Union as superior to the United States in terms of its treatment of black or “dark-skinned” peoples.<sup>2</sup> Placing American racism on trial in Stalingrad constituted one means by which officials in Moscow cultivated the image of the USSR as an enlightened, “raceless” society, that is, a society where “race” did not limit an individual’s access to rights.

Soviet trade-union authorities, however, did not want the trial to appear merely as the result of their own efforts. Rather, they depicted the campaign against the two American racists as the product of the widespread indignation of Soviet and foreign laborers. These men and women had been brought together at Soviet industrial giants like the Stalingrad Traktorostroi, Magnitogorsk, Moscow Elektroavod, and Nizhnii-Novgorod Automobile Factory, to fulfill the demands of the First Five-Year Plan (1928-1932).<sup>3</sup> Throughout the month of August 1930, the central press systematically reported that workers of these and

other enterprises were enthusiastically attending meetings to protest the assault on "our brother," electing worker representatives to serve as public prosecutors at the trial, and incessantly demanding that the assailants be expelled from the country.<sup>4</sup> As will be shown, these frequently published reports and the court proceedings themselves deliberately made foreign and Soviet laborers appear to be members of a nascent international proletariat who were committed to inaugurating a new socialist society where racial and national discrimination were absent.<sup>5</sup>

During the campaign to bring "Mr. Lewis" and "Mr. Brown" to proletarian justice, Soviet authorities pursued additional, complimentary means to promote the image of Soviet racial equality in spite of the persistence of national animosity and anti-Semitism throughout the country.<sup>6</sup> All-union editors printed photographs and pencil sketches of the victim of racial hatred in Stalingrad whom they constructed as the "ideal or heroic black worker." They also published visual images of black American Communists who were in Moscow participating in the Fifth Congress of the Profintern or Red International of Trade Unions (*Krasnyi internatsional profsoiuzov*) from August 15-30, 1930. Alongside these visual depictions of black Americans as political actors in the capital and articles about the latest developments in the Stalingrad trial, the central press reproduced photographs and cartoons of black men who had been lynched in the United States. These lynching images, counterposed against those of black Americans being accepted as "equals" in Soviet society reinforced the Stalingrad trial's juxtaposition of Soviet citizens' alleged enlightenment in regards to the artificiality of race and racial hierarchies against white Americans' ignorance.

What took place between the three American workers in Stalingrad that inspired Chamberlin and his wife to travel to the new tractor plant? What provided central trade-union leaders with an unprecedented opportunity to represent the populace as united in disgust at two Americans' attempt to import US racism into the Soviet Union? The following analysis endeavors to tell this story and, in turn, further a fledgling yet extremely important discussion among Slavacists which seeks to reconcile the place of race in the history of the Soviet Union. Francine Hirsch and Amir Weiner contend that during the interwar decades Soviet leaders were distinct from and believed themselves superior to their European and US contemporaries because they based their population policies on the sociohistorical categories of class or nationality at the explicit rejection of the biological category of race. By trying two white American men for attacking a worker simply because he was black, authorities sought to visualize and glorify as enlightened the policies of the Soviet state.<sup>7</sup> The Stalingrad trial, in other words, was part of a larger effort predating the Cold War to forge the USSR's identity in direct opposition to the exclusionary racial politics of the putatively more civilized, capitalist West epitomized by the United States.<sup>8</sup>

### *American Racism on Trial*

On Thursday, July 24, 1930, around six o'clock in the evening at the Stalingrad Tractor Factory, Robert Robinson, a black American worker, was walking away

from the cafeteria when two white American men, Lemuel Lewis and William Brown, confronted him.<sup>9</sup> All three Americans had been recruited from the Ford Motor Company in Detroit by Amtorg, the Soviet trading agency based in New York. They were in Stalingrad to help build and operate what Soviet leaders prized along with Magnitogorsk, Elektrozavod, and Nizhnii-Novgorod Automobile Factory as one of the giants of the new socialist industry, the Stalingrad Traktorostroi named for Feliks Dzerzhinskii.<sup>10</sup> Lewis and Brown had arrived together, in May, with the majority of the other American workers at the tractor factory, which numbered around three hundred and seventy. Robinson, in contrast, had arrived on the twentieth of July, just four days before the confrontation.<sup>11</sup>

When the two intoxicated white Americans saw Robinson walking in their direction, Brown teased Lewis remarking, "Look, here comes your brother!" Lewis responded by contemptuously asking Robinson, "Where did you come from?" Because Robinson answered him with sarcasm, Lewis admonished his fellow worker not to forget that he was black and needed to answer him, a white man, with deference. Brown similarly reminded Robinson to "not forget your place" and threatened that if "you do not leave here in three days we will drown you in the Volga." Lewis then called Robinson a "black dog" as well as some other names which the local authorities described as unprintable. When Robinson responded by calling Lewis a "bastard," he and Brown lunged at the black worker. In self-defense, as witnesses for both the defense and prosecution testified, Robinson picked up a stone from the ground. This initially forced Lewis to retreat, and Robinson started to walk away from them.

According to a Russian worker who was watching from the cafeteria, Lewis and Brown again pursued Robinson. Lewis, who caught up with Robinson first, punched the black worker twice in the face, knocking his glasses on the ground. When Robinson tried to grab Lewis, both men fell down. In another attempt to free himself, Robinson bit Lewis' neck. At several points during this altercation, Brown supposedly held Robinson's arms so that he could not retaliate. In a rather fortuitous turn of events for Soviet officials, it was not until some Russian workers arrived on the scene that the three men were pulled apart, and Robinson was liberated from the grip of his white American assailants. Meanwhile, a group of white American workers had been looking on the entire time and laughing.<sup>12</sup> Local police questioned and released both Lewis and Robinson that evening. They conducted no further investigations in the weeks that followed until *Trud*, the organ of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (VTsSPS), exposed news of the assault to the country on August 9, 1930.<sup>13</sup>

Central newspapers portrayed workers throughout the Soviet Union as quickly and simultaneously responding to the initial reports and near daily front-page coverage of the assault on Robinson. Yet, for clearly strategic purposes, the foreign and Soviet laborers of the Moscow Elektrozavod were portrayed as the most active. As Sergei Zhuravlev argues, during and after the First Five-Year Plan Soviet leaders considered Elektrozavod to be such a high priority that it came to symbolize socialism.<sup>14</sup> It follows therefore that

all-union editors presented workers from this particular giant of socialist industry as paragons of proletarian enlightenment who were at the forefront in denouncing racist conduct as impermissible in a socialist society. According to the central press, *Elektrozavod* laborers organized a mass protest meeting at which they asked James Ford, a prominent black American Communist, to speak. They also invited Robert Robinson to work at their factory, and later issued a reassurance that “we are all on his side.”<sup>15</sup> More importantly, the papers even credited the *Elektrozavod* community with suggesting that *Trud*'s editors, with the assistance of the Central Committee of the Metal Workers Union, form an international workers' brigade. Comprised of nine to ten Soviet and foreign workers from the country's major industrial centers, members of the brigade would serve as community prosecutors at the trial. *Trud*'s editors promptly approved what was scripted as the workers' proposal and contacted representatives of the Metal Workers Union in Leningrad, Khar'kov, Rostov-on-Don, and Tula. They requested that each immediately hold a meeting to appoint a laborer to represent them and, by implication, the entire international proletariat in condemning the two white American assailants of a black worker.<sup>16</sup>

The trial opened in one of the main halls of the Stalingrad Traktorostroi on Friday evening August 22, 1930, roughly a month after the assault had occurred.<sup>17</sup> The seven male and two female members of the international workers' brigade had arrived in Stalingrad four days earlier. They were introduced in the press as: Ozerov of *Trud*'s editorial board; Kirillov of the Central Committee of the Metal Workers Union; Becker, whom trade-union officials described as one of the “conscious” Americans in Stalingrad; Erast, a Latvian from the Khar'kov State electric factory; Gavrilov of the Central Committee of the International Organization for Assistance to Revolutionary Fighters (*Mezhdunarodnaia organizatsiia pomoshchi bortsam revoliutsii* or MOPR); Kondrat'ev of the Khar'kov Traktorostroi; Blaich of Sel'mashstroi in Rostov-on-don; Rodzinskaia of *Elektrozavod* in Moscow; and Ferdinand Knut, a German concrete worker of Leningrad.<sup>18</sup>

The main objective of members of the international workers' brigade was to prove that Lewis and Brown attacked Robinson only because he was black or more specifically because he was “by nationality a Negro.” Clearly, from the white American assailants' perspective “Negro” signified an inferior race, and by assaulting Robinson they were transferring their American racial norms to Soviet society. Accordingly, in their statements in the central press many workers, editors, and the defendants themselves attributed the assault on Robinson to racial hatred (*rasovaia nenavist'*) and racial enmity (*rasovaia vrazhda*). However, in the Soviet Union “Negro” signified a distinct nationality, therefore the crime for which members of the international workers brigade needed to convict Lewis and Brown was “national chauvinism” rather than “racial chauvinism.” Accordingly, in the Stalingrad courtroom the terms “national hatred” (*natsional'naia nenavist'*) or “national enmity” (*natsional'naia vrazhda*) were primarily used to describe Lewis and Brown's assault on

Robinson. Workers and all-union editors occasionally attempted to compensate for the difference between Lewis and Brown's motivations and the language of the Soviet law code by condemning both "national and racial hatred."

Lewis himself employed this tactic when immediately preceding the start of the trial, he apologized to the Soviet proletariat for failing to comprehend the pernicious consequences of "national and racial dissension." Yet during the trial, he retracted his apology and insisted that it had been a mere scuffle between two workers, that Robinson had been the aggressor, and that his drunkenness had made him unaware of what he was doing.<sup>19</sup> The community prosecutors had a vested interest in refuting Lewis's claims. From a practical perspective, the charge of national chauvinism was a counterrevolutionary offense and carried a harsher penalty than mere physical assault. Symbolically speaking, such a charge meant placing at the defendants' bench and condemning "the entire capitalist system and social-fascist trade unions" which had inculcated Lewis and Brown, and all white workers with hatred of blacks.<sup>20</sup>

Before a crowd of one thousand workers, and a larger audience listening to the trial broadcast in the dormitories and barracks, female brigadier Rodzinskaia proclaimed that it was absurd to argue that Lewis "who today calls Russian workers red scum, and tomorrow Negroes black dogs," attacked Robinson independent of any prejudice.<sup>21</sup> Knut similarly stressed that chauvinism and racial hatred were clearly "the motives of this crime." Ozerov, who was equally adamant, put it another way: Lewis attacked Robinson because in America "attacking a Negro is not considered a crime." In addressing the claim of intoxication, Rodzinskaia emphasized that the two white Americans committed their crime in a state of full consciousness. She then facetiously asked, "If Lewis and Brown were really in such a drunken state, why did they not beat each other?"<sup>22</sup>

The two defendants made the job of the community prosecutors easier by often undermining their own argument that they had become involved in a scuffle with a worker who just happened to be black. For example, when placed on the witness stand, Lewis claimed that he was unaware that participating in conversations with fellow members of the American colony "about the need to remove the Negro from the factory" was wrong and violated Soviet law. And in regard to the actual assault, he explained: "I did not think that I would be brought to trial. In America, incidents with Negroes—this is considered simply street fighting." Brown corroborated Lewis' statement, commenting that, "in America, this would be treated as a joke." Furthermore, when asked to elucidate upon the source of white animosity towards black people in the United States, Lewis attributed it to the fact that blacks were neither "clean" nor educated. Brown, whom the prosecution repeatedly stressed was a member of the American Federation of Labor, responded by shamelessly stating that "Negroes were slaves, and should remain slaves."<sup>23</sup> There can be little doubt that all-union editors were eager to print these inflammatory comments. They epitomized the blatant racism and chauvinism of "civilized" America that the new socialist society, which the trial itself signified, had supposedly obliterated and rendered impermissible.

*A Discourse of Indignation*

In 1941 George Padmore, who had been living in Moscow in 1930 when Lewis and Brown were placed on trial, recalled that “the Russian workers were so indignant at white men treating a fellow-worker in that fashion simply because of his race, that they demanded their immediate expulsion from the Soviet Union.”<sup>24</sup> Padmore’s reminiscence testifies to Soviet authorities’ success in framing the Stalingrad campaign in a discourse of workers’ indignation and incessant demands that the two American racists be expelled from the country. To be sure, indignation was the only proper, “proletarian” way for Soviet and foreign laborers to respond publicly to this manifestation of American racism in Stalingrad. In other words, “proletarianness” and the code of conduct associated with the enlightened “New Soviet Person” entailed more than just punctuality, a readiness to exceed work assignments, maintenance of a clean home, and refraining from spitting on the floor. It also required at least an ostensible disdain for and rejection of national chauvinism and racism.<sup>25</sup> Articulating indignation at the racially-motivated assault, then, whether individually or collectively, became a means for workers to assert their “proletarianness” or membership in the international proletariat that was portrayed as emerging in the central press.

When *Trud*’s editors broke the story, they claimed that the attack on a black worker at the Stalingrad Traktorostroi had provoked tremendous indignation (*vozmushchenie*) among the laborers there.<sup>26</sup> In the days that followed, as reported in the all-union newspapers, the workers in Moscow factories such as Dinamo and Elektroavod, as well as members of the city and oblast sections of MOPR, discussed the manifestation of racial prejudice and expressed their anger.<sup>27</sup> In their protest statements, foreign workers in Kiev, Khar’kov, and Rostov-on-Don proclaimed that Lewis’s “vile” (*gnusnoe*) behavior can only arouse “profound indignation.”<sup>28</sup> Indignation was also shown to have affected the young proletariat. Participants at an International Pioneers Conference in Moscow and the workers of the Siberian publishing house and the Siberian youth newspaper, *Molodoi rabochii*, articulated their outrage at the assault.<sup>29</sup> All-union editors frequently complimented these specific protest statements with general assertions that the Americans’ conduct had “understandably” and justifiably elicited indignation throughout the country.<sup>30</sup> They only questioned the sincerity of a particular group’s anger, and by implication, their claims to proletarian status, when the notorious American committee of the Stalingrad Traktorostroi issued a protest resolution immediately before the trial.<sup>31</sup>

As Padmore’s earlier comment indicates, this widespread outpouring of indignation was paired with what the press made to appear as the equally universal appeal that Robinson’s two assailants be deported from the Soviet Union. This demand was attributed to two hundred foreign laborers in Leningrad, workers of Krasnyi Putilovets, Ruhr miners working in the lower Moscow basin, workers of Avtomobil’noe Moskovskoe Obshchestvo (AMO),

laborers of Sel'mashstroi in Rostov-on-Don, the "conscious" American workers at the Stalingrad Traktorostroi, and American laborers of the Nizhnii-Novgorod Automobile Factory.<sup>32</sup> During the trial, the press reported that Ferdinand Knut voiced this popular appeal by declaring, "in the name of the Leningrad proletariat and in particular the foreign workers working in Leningrad, I demand the severest punishment, their expulsion from the USSR." As Gavrillov likewise averred, "we together with the Russian proletariat request that the community court rule to punish the criminals severely, to banish them from the borders of the Soviet Union, because they contaminated the territory of the socialist republic."<sup>33</sup>

Why did trade-union officials encourage workers to insist on expulsion as the most appropriate, harshest punishment for Lewis and Brown rather than imprisonment? On a practical level, deportation signaled a return to the vast unemployment and hunger of the depression-ridden United States. Symbolically, expulsion sent a message to the large number of (noncommunist) American workers who remained in the Soviet Union to help build socialism: racists belonged in a racist society. According to the all-union press, workers and authorities repeatedly reminded Lewis and Brown that they were in a country that was "building socialism," the tempo of which was made possible only by upholding "the equality of all people."<sup>34</sup> Thus, by attempting to practice racism—to "transfer to Soviet soil the fascist ways of America"—Lewis and Brown became "counterrevolutionaries" and "fascists" who had threatened to inhibit the construction of socialism.<sup>35</sup> How else, then, if the image of the Soviet Union as a society intolerant of racial and national chauvinism was to be maintained, could the Soviet working community be expected to respond to these racists, but with indignation? And what other verdict short of expulsion could the proletariat of a "raceless" society demand for them?

After six days of testimony from witnesses and various speeches of the defense and prosecution, the court issued its verdict on August 29, 1930, at ten o'clock in the evening. Lewis and Brown were found guilty, and sentenced to two years imprisonment under article fifty-nine of the Criminal Code regarding national chauvinism. Almost immediately thereafter, their sentence was commuted to ten years banishment from the Soviet Union. This decision was based on the court's premise that the two assailants had been raised under the American capitalist system which purposefully inculcated its workers with hatred of blacks.<sup>36</sup> The message here was clear. Any individual raised in the Soviet Union would be held to a higher standard, and consequently, given a harsher punishment, if they ever dared to raise a hand to a black worker.

Since the all-union press had portrayed Soviet and foreign workers as calling for the expulsion of the two Americans en masse, the formal court proceedings appear merely as a theatrical fulfillment of their demand. In one sense, this was not unusual. The outcome of Soviet show trials of the 1920s and 1930s were often determined beforehand. Thus their objective became proving the "legitimacy, correctness, or validity of the predetermined



decisions.”<sup>37</sup> Similarly, members of the international workers’ brigade did not simply reiterate the appeal of “workers” that the men be deported. Instead, they concentrated on proving its “legitimacy, correctness, and validity” by demonstrating that Lewis and Brown had attacked Robinson only because he was black. Herein is the uniqueness of the Stalingrad trial: the court proceedings proved “correct” what was depicted as the predetermined decision of foreign and Soviet laborers rather than that of officials in Moscow.

### *The Making of a Heroic Black Worker*

Who was Robert Robinson, whom William Chamberlin had described only as “the sole Negro employed at the [Stalingrad tractor] works”? Or, more significantly, how did Soviet authorities present him? Robinson was produced as heroic black worker, and to some degree, as oppressed black victim during the near month-long campaign to bring his white American attackers to justice. Personal information was necessarily omitted and replaced by constant assertions of Robinson’s blackness and innocence. While, on the one hand, this emphasis nearly eliminated Robinson the individual, on the other, it sought to overturn the historical Western, and in this case particularly, American dichotomy that paired blackness with guilt or immorality.<sup>38</sup>

When *Trud* and *Rabochaia gazeta* first identified Robert Robinson as the victim of the assault, they simultaneously reported that Stalingrad Traktorostroi workers characterized him “as a highly skilled, conscientious worker” and “great comrade.” Readers were also informed that Robinson had defied the order of a group of Americans to leave the cafeteria during dinner. As *Rabochaia gazeta* explained, Robinson specifically told his antagonists that he was in the Soviet Union, and therefore did not have to listen to them. In an editorial, Mikhail Danilov emphasized that there was something very positive if not exhilarating in all this “kulak violence”—namely, that “THE NEGRO ROBINSON REFUSED TO SUBMIT TO THE SAVAGE DEMAND OF HIS WHITE COUNTRYMEN.” Therefore, “the Negro Robinson already understands, what the American [L]ewis does not; that in the country of Soviets there is no and there can be no racial inequality.”<sup>39</sup>

On August 12, 1930 *Trud*’s editors printed a sketch of Robinson’s profile on the front page in which he was depicted wearing glasses and a shirt and tie. Robinson signed his name at the bottom of the sketch along with the message written in English, “Best wishes for your success,” which must have been addressed to the laborers of Elektrozavod who had invited him to join their worker family. In a very short interview, Robinson explicitly thanked them, but insisted that he must remain at the Stalingrad Traktorostroi because if he left, then he would only be giving the “American slaveowners” there what they wanted. Robinson explained that although some of the American workers and interpreters had begun to treat him with even greater contempt since the attack, the “Russian workers as usual have remained my friends.”

He also requested that the Elektroavod workers stay in correspondence with him.<sup>40</sup>

Printed biographical information about Robinson was limited to the brief mention that he had worked in Cuba, the West Indies, Brazil, and Detroit.<sup>41</sup> Thus, only two points about him were clear from published statements: Robinson was black and he was innocent. Variations of the phrases, “only because he is black, not white” and “only because he is a Negro,” became standard. From the very outset of their coverage, *Trud*’s editors stressed that the “Negro-worker” was attacked “ONLY BECAUSE, he is—a Negro.”<sup>42</sup> *Rabochaia gazeta* similarly reported that the white American “beat up the Negro Robinson only for this, that he is BLACK.” As deputy chairman of the Supreme Court of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR), F. Nakhimson, put it, the two “reactionary” Americans thought they were in a type of “capitalist paradise where they could raise a hand to a Negro worker, only because, he is a Negro.”<sup>43</sup> Foreign workers of the Moscow Elektroavod followed the example of editors and authorities by declaring that the fact that Robert Robinson was assaulted “only because he is a Negro, not white” was humiliating for the entire proletariat. Likewise, a group of over twenty American specialists at the First State Clock Factory in Moscow denounced Lewis and Brown for attacking Robinson “only because he is black.”<sup>44</sup>

Robinson emerged from all these articles, letters, and resolutions of protest as a heroic black worker who stood up to the American racists by asserting his rights as a black worker in the fatherland of all workers. He, in other words, unlike Lewis and Brown, did not treat as mere propaganda Soviet claims that the USSR was intolerant of racial animosity. After the assault, Robinson declared that he would remain at the Stalingrad Traktorostroi because he refused to acquiesce to the designs of the American racists. Workers wrote Robinson letters of support, coworkers attested to his skill and diligence, while Robinson himself testified to the friendliness, and by implication, enlightened thinking of the Russian laborers with whom he worked. Very simply, the Robinson whom authorities constructed was easy to support if not like.

Interestingly, readers were never provided with the complete description of the altercation between Robinson and his two white antagonists, as narrated at the beginning of this essay. This means that they were unaware that Robinson fought back not only verbally but also physically. The Stalingrad prosecutor repeatedly emphasized, and witnesses for the defense even confirmed, that Robinson completely acted out of self-defense. Yet editors of the all-union papers or higher-ranking authorities above them had obviously deemed this information inappropriate for the construction of the heroic black worker. Undoubtedly, information that Robinson physically retaliated against his attackers would have rendered more problematic the simultaneous effort to produce him as a victim, a victim of racial injustice (representing the racially oppressed of the world) who was viciously assaulted by two American fascists and needed Soviet workers to defend him. In a sense, then, Soviet officials perpetuated the stereotype of black males as defenseless “Sambos” desperately in need of

white protection for their survival. The caretakers of Robinson's attack, in other words, reinforced the racist ideology they ostensibly sought to destroy, thereby further illuminating their own lack of understanding of the race question.

An even more glaring omission in the creation of Robinson as heroic black worker was any mention of his occupational specialty. Although this can be guessed at from considering his place of employment, the Stalingrad Traktorostroi, it was still never clear exactly what type of work he did there (keeping in mind that the central newspapers never reported that his last employer was the Ford Motor Company). This particular omission supports the argument that what was most important about Robinson was that he was black and innocent. In addition to his work specialization, any other personal information about Robinson, such as his age, marital status, family life, or educational level would have made it more difficult for him to stand in for and symbolize all black workers.

Such an erasure of Robinson the individual also furthered all-union editors' objective to transform the confrontation between he and the two white Americans into an "event" that the working community and Soviet officials could organize meetings around, discuss, and condemn. In several articles concerning the attack, Robinson's name was not even mentioned but was replaced by phrases like "the Stalingrad incident," "the incident in Stalingrad," and "the Stalingrad affair." Therefore, despite the fact that authorities brought his white American assailants to justice, because their primary concern was representing the Soviet Union as a country intolerant of racism, they rendered Robinson the person irrelevant to their story.

### *Proletarian Law versus Lynch Law*

In the only other visual representation of Robert Robinson in the all-union press, he was featured on *Trud's* front page on August 30, 1930, surrounded by fellow foreign workers who served as community prosecutors during the trial. This photograph could be accurately read with Robinson as oppressed black victim, that is, as a paternalistic depiction of these six white men and one white woman as his defenders and protectors. Yet the editors' main intention in printing the photograph at the end of the trial was most likely to visualize its overall objective: to foster the Soviet Union's image as the only country which accepted Robinson and all black laborers as equals. This thesis is supported by the fact that photographs of other black Americans who were in Moscow attending the Fifth Profintern Congress, frequently accompanied articles concerning the campaign against the two American racists.<sup>45</sup> For example, on August 9, 1930, *Trud* printed a photograph of black American female delegate and Philadelphia needleworker, Helen McClain (Jenny Reid) on the front page. Next to her image editors printed the story which first exposed news of the assault as well as the protest resolution of the Stalingrad Traktorostroi workers in which they "remind(ed) comrades who do not understand that the USSR is the fatherland of all workers, including Negroes."<sup>46</sup>

Clearly, McClain's photograph was published for symbolic purposes: the Profintern Congress did not begin until six days later on August 15, 1930, and there were no articles concerning either it or the global conference of female workers which she also attended.<sup>47</sup>

James Ford, the first black American named to the Profintern's Executive Bureau at the end of the congress, was shown several times on *Trud's* front page often in conjunction with stories regarding the attack on Robinson. In one of the photographs, which had been taken after he addressed the aforementioned protest meeting at Elektrozavod, Ford is donning a black suit and tie and standing at the center of a group of male Russian workers. He is shown with his arms around the two men closest to him in brotherly unity. Excerpts from his speech were printed adjacent to this blatant illustration of Soviet racial equality. On another occasion, Ford, who is wearing the same formal attire, is depicted with his right fist in the air, the symbol of interracial unity. In this instance, Ford's photograph, like McClain's previously, was surrounded only by articles regarding the campaign against Lewis and Brown.<sup>48</sup>

Sketches and photographs of Isaiah Hawkins (Jack Bell), another black American delegate to the Profintern Congress and an official of the National Miners' Union in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, also frequently graced the pages of the all-union newspapers throughout August 1930. As strong evidence of the symbolic function of his visual image, Hawkins was featured on the front pages of both *Komsomol'skaia pravda* and *Trud* shaking hands with a Russian delegate in what the two papers labeled a "brotherly meeting."<sup>49</sup> In addition to their photographs, the Soviet press also printed the speeches that Ford and Hawkins each delivered during the congress regarding the struggle against racism within the revolutionary trade unions.<sup>50</sup> By printing visual images as well as the remarks of black American male communists (Profintern records contain no evidence that McClain addressed the assembly), editors presented the Soviet Union as a place where racism did not exist. That is to say, it appeared as an enlightened society which afforded young black men the opportunity to be thinkers, speakers, and leaders without any threat to their physical safety. This image of Soviet racelessness contrasted sharply not simply with the two Americans' treatment of "the Negro worker" in Stalingrad, but also with white Americans' treatment of black workers in general.

This point was made most forcefully on August 28, 1930 when two other black American men, Thomas Shipp and Abraham Smith, aged eighteen and nineteen years, respectively, appeared in a large photograph on the front pages of *Trud* and *Komsomol'skaia pravda*. Their murdered bodies were shown dangling above a crowd of well-dressed white men and women who were smiling and looking shamelessly at the camera. *Komsomol'skaia pravda's* editors only published a brief caption with the now famous photograph of the Marion, Indiana, double lynching which had occurred on August 7, 1930. It explained that "American farmers forcibly seized from prison two Negroes who were suspected in the murder of a white woman, and executed them via a trial by lynching." *Trud* provided even less indication of the men's identities,

or where, when, and why the lynching had taken place. A small caption simply read, "The trial by lynching of two Negroes." Obviously, *Trud*'s readers were expected to know intuitively that this image had been taken somewhere in the United States, the details of which were inconsequential; just another example of horrific racial violence in bourgeois America. Strategically, the article published adjacent to it related the developments in the trial of Robinson's attackers.<sup>51</sup>

Two days later, *Komsomol'skaia pravda*'s editors printed on the front page a smaller image of a black male lynch victim with minimal, inaccurate information about the murder, and a headline that announced "In the homeland of Lewis." Like *Trud*, they similarly placed it next to articles about the Stalingrad court proceedings. The headline of one of these stories proclaimed: "The USSR is eliminating racial dissension." The association of the Soviet Union with the enlightened law of the proletariat and the United States with "medieval" lynch law was unmistakable.

Prior to printing these photographs, *Komsomol'skaia pravda* had also published a lynching cartoon next to an article about the campaign against the two American racists. It featured a bare-chested black man, his mouth contorted in agony, with a noose around his neck. The top caption threatened, "We will chop off the clutches of the Hangman." The bottom caption appealed to Soviet citizens directly: "Workers! Struggle against the lynching of your Negro-proletarian brothers!" An obese, white male capitalist wearing a top hat, long coat, and gun holster, was shown tacking a sign above the victim's head, which warned all black workers, "Do Not Dare to Struggle for Your Rights," and was signed in English penmanship, "The State of Indiana." The signature was an obvious reference to the Marion double lynching and indicates, as the editors noted, that the cartoon had been taken from the *Daily Worker*.<sup>52</sup> The organ of the United States Communist Party had printed the cartoon two weeks previously. The only difference between the versions of the cartoon found in the *Daily Worker* and *Komsomol'skaia pravda* was that the bottom caption in the former emphasized to American readers, "They can't do that in the Soviet Union."<sup>53</sup> There was no reason to explicitly state this in the Soviet youth paper since it was conveyed through the daily reports regarding developments in the trial of a black worker's assailants.

The image of a lynched black man was also featured in *Rabochaia gazeta* amidst stories regarding the manifestation of American racism in Stalingrad. The editors accurately located the crime geographically, noting in the caption that it depicted the "charred corpse" of a black man "who was burned alive in America, in Sherman, the state of Texas." Yet as in the cases previously described, the paper omitted mention of who the victim was, the specific reasons or justification as to why he was lynched, or that the murder had occurred three months earlier on May 9, 1930.<sup>54</sup> Clearly, the editors of *Rabochaia gazeta*, like their colleagues, had printed it in order to juxtapose the image of the Soviet Union that was emerging from reports regarding the effort to bring Robinson's two attackers to account for their racist conduct,

against the visual image of the routine lynching of black male laborers in the United States.

This contrast was not always limited to visual representations. A Moscow needleworker who had lived in the United States for thirty years inadvertently furthered America's association with barbarous lynch justice and the Soviet Union with civilized proletarian justice. When a *Rabochiaia gazeta* reporter asked him his opinion of the assault on Robert Robinson at a factory protest meeting, this worker, Tsiprus, allegedly commended the two Americans for their conduct in Stalingrad, remarking that, "Negroes are snakes. They all need to be lynched or subjected to lynch law." According to Isaiah Hawkins, Tsiprus's statements roused "all kinds of indignation among workers of the Soviet Union." All-union editors depicted the outraged laboring masses as demanding that trade-union officials bring Tsiprus to account for his explicitly chauvinistic comments.<sup>55</sup> On August 17, 1930, a workers' court in Moscow which bore striking similarities to the comrades-disciplinary courts and agitational-trials of the early Soviet era, promptly tried and condemned Tsiprus. It expelled him from the needleworkers union for three months or until he was able to demonstrate, through community service, his commitment to proletarian internationalism.<sup>56</sup> Tsiprus provided Soviet trade-union authorities with an additional opportunity to implement proletarian justice against another racist that "civilized" American society had produced. In other words, it allowed them to again "demonstrate to the world, that the USSR is the fatherland for all the proletariat: white, black and yellow, against whom no kind of national inequality will be allowed to exist."<sup>57</sup>

### *Conclusion*

What is the significance of Stalingrad to this narrative? Although Moscow was the primary stage from which communist leaders projected the image of the country as a brotherhood of peoples, the fact that the assault on Robinson occurred at the Stalingrad Traktorostroi was rather fortuitous for them.<sup>58</sup> Placing American racism on trial at a giant of socialist industry enabled authorities to foster the impression that these massive industrial complexes were not simply producing the technological products which would facilitate the arrival of a new socialist society. They were also producing the enlightened new Soviet people who would populate it. The central press provided further evidence of this by depicting the workers of another Soviet industrial giant, the Moscow Elektrozavod, at the forefront of the campaign to bring the two American racists to account for their chauvinistic conduct. But Stalingrad was significant for yet another reason. It could stand in for all provincial RSFSR towns to signify that racism and national inequality had been transcended throughout the entire country, not just in the capital of internationalism.

Over seventy years ago William Chamberlin witnessed more than a simple trial of two American men. He witnessed the culmination of a state-orchestrated campaign against American racism which laid the foundation for the even more

far-reaching protest that MOPR launched eight months later to liberate the young black American men condemned to death in Scottsboro, Alabama on false rape charges. In fact, the Scottsboro legal lynching confirmed the image of American race relations that Soviet editors had propagated in the all-union press throughout the campaign against Robinson's assailants.<sup>59</sup> But in addition to laying the groundwork for the Soviet Scottsboro protest, the court proceedings against Lewis and Brown provided the model and inspiration for the series of trials that the United States Communist Party subsequently organized to help eradicate white chauvinism within its ranks. The first and most popular of these was the trial of August Yokinen held in Harlem on March 1, 1931.<sup>60</sup>

During an era when biological racism was paramount in European and American social thought, officials in Moscow claimed a monopoly on modern civilization and enlightenment in what was then a unique way: they cast themselves and their citizens as staunch opponents of racism. The Stalingrad trial of two American racists thus visualized what Francine Hirsch and Amir Weiner have identified as Soviet leaders' resolute rejection of Western authorities' politics of racial exclusion. There can be little doubt that the slippage between the image of the Soviet Union as a society without racism and reality was considerable, and that the widespread participation of workers in the trial was orchestrated "from above." Yet, at the same time this essay does not discount the possibility that some Soviet and foreign workers may have been sincerely committed to inaugurating a new society where racist conduct like that which Lewis and Brown perpetrated was absent.<sup>61</sup>

Trade-union officials and all-union editors portrayed foreign laborers as particularly vocal in denouncing the assault on Robinson. They were shown as not only formulating numerous protest resolutions but also comprising the ranks of the international workers' brigade. Clearly, authorities' objective was to distance other foreign workers in the country from any stigma that Lewis and Brown's racist actions may have conferred on them as a whole. Their role as the "big brother" to Soviet workers with whom they were expected to share their technical knowledge could therefore remain intact, if they were shown to be just as outraged as the Soviet laboring masses at white American men raising a hand against a black worker.<sup>62</sup>

At a juncture in Soviet history when the privileged category of "worker" was being reconfigured to include women, students, and peasant in-migrants, the Stalingrad court proceedings symbolically extended those boundaries to embrace a black migrant laborer from Detroit, as well as all other black laborers.<sup>63</sup> This reflected the contemporary shift in Comintern policy which, starting with the declaration of black Americans as a nation at the Sixth Congress in 1928, elevated black American workers' importance in the international proletarian movement and status in the revolutionary family.<sup>64</sup> Two white Americans were at the same time stripped of the identity of "workers" and expelled from the fatherland of all workers. This was because they had assumed that their whiteness would automatically exonerate them for attacking a black laborer, while Robinson's blackness would automatically indict him.

Soviet leaders, therefore, used Lewis and Brown's gross underestimation of their commitment to maintaining the façade of Soviet racelessness in order to strengthen it.

## NOTES

1. William Henry Chamberlin, *Russia's Iron Age* (Boston, 1934), 362–4.

2. On Soviet leaders' interest in portraying the USSR as a superior, modern society amidst the rise of fascism and the Great Depression, see Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism As a Civilization* (Berkeley, 1995). For officials' pride in Soviet nationality policy as distinguishing them from Western imperialists, see Francine Hirsch, "The Soviet Union as a Work-in-Progress: Ethnographers and the Category *nationality* in the 1926, 1937, and 1939 Censuses," *Slavic Review* 56 (Summer 1997): 251–78; Terry Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, 2001); and Yuri Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review* 53 (Summer 1994): 414–52.

3. Foreign workers played a critical role in the development of Soviet industry in the early 1930s. According to Sergei Zhuravlev, during the most intensive phase of industrialization, nearly 35,000 foreign workers, specialists, and their families were living in the Soviet Union, most of whom were Germans followed by Americans. See "Malen'kie liudi" i "bol'shaia istoriia": *Inostrantsy moskovskogo Elektrovozavoda v sovetskom obshchestve 1920-kh-1930-kh gg.* (Moskva, 2000), 29–31. Besides John Scott who wrote about his experiences in Magnitogorsk in *Behind the Urals*, the most notable American to work in a socialist giant was Walter Reuther. Before he began his long tenure as president of the United Auto Workers in 1936, Reuther had worked with his brother in the Nizhnii-Novgorod State Automobile Factory (GAZ) from roughly 1933–1935. See Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit: Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor* (New York, 1995).

4. Only two scholars have briefly discussed the trial. See Allison Blakely, *Russia and the Negro: Blacks in Russian History and Thought* (Washington, DC, 1986), 101; and Woodford McClellan, "Africans and Black Americans in the Comintern Schools, 1925–1934," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 26 (1993): 371–90. The contemporary press claimed that the trial had the country's "unabated interest," see "Rabochii sud nad amerikantsami izbiivshimi negra," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, August 24, 1930, 4; "Attack on Negro Red still stirs Moscow," *New York Times*, August 11, 1930, 4; "Moscow stirred by attack on Negro," *Daily Worker*, August 13, 1930, 2; "Russia acts to halt racial prejudice," *Afro-American*, August 23, 1930, 1; and "Moscow stirred by attack on Negro," *Pittsburgh Courier*, August 23, 1930, 1.

5. On the Soviet press, see Matthew Lenoe, *Closer to the Masses: Stalinist Culture, Social Revolution and Soviet Newspapers* (Cambridge, 2004).

6. On the persistence of ethnic animosity and anti-Semitism, see, for example, Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia: Terror, Propaganda and Dissent, 1934–1941* (Cambridge, 1997), 82–90, 135–7; David Hoffmann, *Peasant Metropolis: Social Identities in Moscow, 1929–1941* (Ithaca, 1994), 124–5; Hiroaki Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbass: A Ukrainian-Russian Borderland, 1870s–1990s* (Cambridge, 1992), 147–8, 160, 198, 246; Terry Martin, "The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing," *Journal of Modern History* 70 (1998): 813–61; and Lewis H. Siegelbaum and Andrei Sokolov, *Stalinism as a Way of Life: A Narrative in Documents* (New Haven, 2000), 42–43, 71–72, 259–67, 364, 369–70.

7. In his study on the Soviet League of the Militant Godless, Daniel Peris argues that the objective of most propaganda campaigns during this era was to glorify the enlightened nature of the Soviet state. See *Storming the Heavens: The Soviet League of the Militant Godless* (Ithaca, NY, 1998).

8. For this important discussion, see Eric Weitz, "Racial Politics without the Concept of Race: Reevaluating Soviet Ethnic and National Purges," Francine Hirsch, "Race without the Practice of Racial Politics," and Amir Weiner, "Nothing But Certainty," in *Slavic Review* 61 (Spring 2002): 1–29, 30–43, 44–53. See also note 2.

9. Robinson was a naturalized United States citizen born in Jamaica. See note 41. On the identities of Lewis and Brown, see "Obvinitel'noe zakliuchenie po delu izbieniia rabocheho negra na Stalingradskom traktornom zavode," *Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii*



(GARF), fond 5469, opis' 14, delo 382, listy 18–19; and *Polk's City Directory, 1929–1930: People's Wayne Country Bank serving Detroit, Highland Park, Hamtramck, Dearborn, River Rouge, Ecorse*, (Detroit, n.d.), 1316; “To deport Americans for attack on Negro,” *New York Times*, August 31, 1930, 10; “American worker who attacked Negro now regrets his act,” *Daily Worker*, August 25, 1930, 2; “Detroit and Toledo race-haters must return to America,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, September 6, 1930, 1; and “Prejudiced Americans in Russia to be deported,” *Amsterdam News*, September 3, 1930, 3.

10. On the propagandistic significance of the Traktorostroi, see Kurt Schultz, “The American Factor in Soviet Industrialization: Fordism and the First Five-Year Plan, 1928–1932,” (Ph.D. Diss., Ohio State University, 1992), 136–48.

11. For arrivals, see GARF, f. 5469, op. 14, d. 382, ll. 15–16; and “Opyt massovogo primeneniia truda amerikanskikh rabochikh i tekhnikov na Stalingradskom traktornom zavode,” *Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'noi i politicheskoi istorii* (RGASPI), f. 495, op. 30, d. 648, ll. 120–126. For the population total, see “Zasedanie Sekretariata TsK VSRM ot 17 avgusta 1930 g.,” GARF, f. 5469, op. 14, d. 382, l. 4; and *Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of the Soviet Union, 1930–1939*, 861.5017—Living Conditions (Reel 37).

12. GARF, f. 5469, op. 14, d. 382, ll. 1, 15–18. Robinson had become disillusioned with the Soviet project by the time he recorded his autobiography but still claimed that Russian workers in Stalingrad had respected him and had intervened during the assault. See *Black on Red: My 44 Years Inside the Soviet Union* (Washington, DC, 1988), 65–73.

13. Local authorities were held just as culpable for the assault on Robinson as Lewis and Brown. See, for example, “Obzor raboty soiuznykh organizatsii metallistov,” GARF, f. 5469, op. 14, d. 383, ll. 3–38. *Pravda* provided the description of the altercation that corresponded most closely to that found in the trial transcript; “19 avgusta—sud nad amerikanskimi rabochimi, izbiivshimi negra,” *Pravda*, August 17, 1930, 5. US papers and the *Times* of London continued to erroneously report that Lewis had expelled Robinson from the cafeteria. See Walter Duranty, “Americans essay color bar in Soviet,” *New York Times*, August 10, 1930, 9; “More Americans face accusations in Soviet,” *ibid.*, August 30, 1930, 5; “Russ workers won't stand US prejudice,” *Afro-American*, August 16, 1930, 4; “Americans to be tried in Russia; evicted worker,” *Amsterdam News*, August 20, 1930, 1; “Russians to deport prejudiced American,” *Chicago Defender*, August 23, 1930, 3; and “Soviet and colour prejudice,” *Times*, August 13, 1930, 9.

14. See Zhuravlev, “Malen'kie liudi,” 47, 143–5.

15. “Pozornyi fakt na traktornom vskryl slabost' internatsional'noi raboty profsoiuзов Stalingrada,” *Trud*, August 10, 1930, 1; “‘Ia ostaius' na traktornom,’” *ibid.*, August 12, 1930, 1; and “My vsetselo na storone tov. Robinsona,” *ibid.*, August 14, 1930, 1.

16. “Pis'mo rabochikh Elektrozavoda gazete ‘Trud,’” *Trud*, August 14, 1930, 1; “‘Trud’ prinial predlozhenie Elektrozavoda,” *ibid.*, August 14, 1930, 1.

17. The trial had been scheduled to begin as early as August 19, 1930; “Stalingrad, Moskva,” GARF, f. 5469, op. 14, d. 382, l. 11.

18. By “conscious,” trade union officials meant Americans who were sympathetic to Communism; GARF, f. 5469, op. 14, d. 382, ll. 3–4. For brigade members, see “‘Trud’ prinial predlozhenie Elektrozavoda,” 1; “Inostrannye rabochie Leningrada posylaiut obshchestvennogo obvinitelia na stalingradskii protsess,” *Trud*, August 17, 1930, 2; “Kak byl izbit tovarishch Robinson,” *ibid.*, August 18, 1930, 4; “Zavkom traktornogo budet dosrochno pereizbran,” *Rabochaia gazeta*, August 18, 1930, 6; “Internatsional'naia rabochaia brigada ‘Truda’ vchera vyekhala na stalingradskii protsess,” *Trud*, August 19, 1930, 1; “Inostrannye rabochie Khar'kova i Rostova poslali obshchestvennykh obvinitelei na stalingradskii protsess,” *ibid.*, August 20, 1930, 1; and “Luis i Braun pytalys' perenesti na sovetskuiu pochvu fashistskie nrvy,” *ibid.*, August 28, 1930, 1.

19. GARF, f. 5469, op. 14, d. 382, l. 17; “Prigovor eshche ne vnesen,” *Trud*, August 30, 1930, 1. For Lewis's original apology, see “Protsess ob izbiienii negra tov. Robinsona otlozhen do 22 avgusta,” *Pravda*, August 21, 1930, 5; “‘Nikogda bol'she ne budu storonnikom natsional'noi rozni,’” *Izvestiia*, August 22, 1930, 2; “‘Nikogda bol'she ne budu storonnikom rozni ras i natsii,’” *Rabochaia gazeta*, August 22, 1930, 6; and “Apologizes to Russians,” *New York Times*, August 22, 1930, 4.

20. “V SSSR net mesta rasovoi vrazhdebnosti,” *Rabochaia gazeta*, August 11, 1930, 4; Ferdinand Knut, “Rasovaia nenavist',” *Trud*, August 19, 1930, 1; “Segodnia v Stalingrade nachinaetsia protsess ob izbiienii negra tov. Robinsona,” *Trud*, August 20, 1930, 1.

21. "Delo ob izbienii tov. Robinsona," *Pravda*, August 24, 1930, 3; "Nachalsia sud nad L'uisom i Braunom," *Rabochaia gazeta*, August 24, 1930, 4; Chamberlin, *Russia's Iron Age*, 362–3.

22. "Vyslat' amerikanskikh fashistov iz predelov SSSR," *Rabochaia gazeta*, August 27, 1930, 6; "Luis i Braun pytalis' perenesti na sovetksuii pochvu fashistskie nrvy," 1; Ferdinand Knut, "Pered sudom vsia sistema kapitalizma," *Trud*, August 29, 1930, 1; "V Ameriku, k organizatoram sudov lincha!," *ibid.*, August 30, 1930, 1.

23. "Nachalsia sud," 4; "Sud nad L'uisom i Braunom, amerikantsam na traktornom 'ne nraviatsia negry,'" *Rabochaia gazeta*, August 25, 1930, 6.

24. George Padmore, "The Socialist Attitude to the Invasion of the USSR," *Left* 60, (September 1941): 193–9 (quotation, 196).

25. On "proletarianness" and the "New Soviet Person," see especially, Peris, *Storming the Heavens*, 78–83; Karen Petrone, *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: celebrations in the time of Stalin* (Bloomington, IN, 2000), 1–5, 11–13, 66–69, 125; David L. Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917–1941* (Ithaca, NY, 2003), 45–56; and Lewis H. Siegelbaum, "The Shaping of Soviet Workers' Leisure: Workers' Clubs and Palaces of Culture in the 1930s," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 56 (Fall 1999): 78–92.

26. "My ne dopustim v SSSR nrvov burzhuaiznoi Ameriki," *Trud*, August 9, 1930, 1.

27. "My obrashchaemsia k amerikanskim rabochim," *ibid.*, August 10, 1930, 1; "Okruzhim negra Robinsona samym družhestvennym vnimaniem," *Rabochaia gazeta*, August 15, 1930, 6; "Pozor khuliganam s traktorostroia, izbvishim negra Robinsona, MOPR zaiavlvaet reshitel'nyi protest," *ibid.*, August 14, 1930, 6.

28. "Protestuem protiv zverinogo natsionalizma," *Trud*, August 11, 1930, 1; "Amerikanske rabochie osuzhdaiut izdevatel'stvo nad rabochim-negrom na traktorostroe," *Izvestiia*, August 18, 1930, 3; "Rabochie amerikantsy osuzhdaiut nedevatel'stvo nad rabochim-negrom," *Trud*, August 18, 1930, 4; "Stalingsradskaia prokuratura zamalchivaet delo amerikantsa Luisa," *Rabochaia gazeta*, August 17, 1930, 6; "Inostrannye rabochie Khar'kova i Rostova," 1.

29. "Nuzhen vsesoiuznyi smotr internatsional'nogo vospitaniia," *Trud*, August 28, 1930, 1; "Pionery Ameriki, Anglii, Bel'gii, Ukrainy o stalingsradskom dele," *ibid.*, August 20, 1930, 1.

30. "Delo ob izbienii rabochego-negra," *Izvestiia*, August 18, 1930, 2; "Usilit' internatsional'nuii rabotu," *Put' MOPR'a* 23–24 (August 1930): 1; "Obshchestvennyi sud nad grazhdaninom Tsiprusom," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, August 18, 1930, 4.

31. "Amerikanske rabochie dolzhny osudit' postupok Nuisa," *Trud*, August 20, 1930, 2. On the "fascist-minded" American committee, see GARE, f.5469, op. 14, d. 382, l. 4; Ferdinand Knut, "Prigovor proletariata," *Trud*, August 31, 1930, 1; and Bill Dunne, "Detroit racketeers on the Volga," *New Masses* (September 1931): 10–12.

32. "Takie ne mogut nazvat'sia rabochimi," *Rabochaia gazeta*, August 11, 1930, 4; "O chem govorit sluchai na traktornom zavode," *Trud*, August 12, 1930, 1; "Amovtsy trebuiut vysylki vinovnikov iz predelov SSSR," *ibid.*, August 13, 1930, 1; "Na traktornom pobezhdaet solidarnost' proletariata," *ibid.*, August 14, 1930, 1; "Postavit' izbvishikh negra pod ugrozy boikota," *Rabochaia gazeta*, August 15, 1930, 6; "Stalingsradskaia prokuratura," 6; Knut, "Rasovaia nenavist'," 1; "Protest amerikanskikh rabochikh avtozavoda," *Trud*, August 19, 1930, 1; "Inostrannye rabochie Khar'kova i Rostova," 1; "Voina shovinizmu," *Rabochaia gazeta*, August 20, 1930, 4.

33. "Vyslat' amerikanskikh fashistov iz predelov SSSR," 6; "Prikhvostniam fashizma ne mesto v sovetksoi strane! Luis i Braun—agenty amerikanskogo fashizma," *Trud*, August 29, 1930, 1; Knut, "Pered sudom vsia sistema kapitalizma," 1; "Prigovor proletariata," 1.

34. "Rabochie fabriki 'Moskvoshvei' no. 5 reshitel'no osuzhdaiut amerikanskikh khuliganov," *Rabochaia gazeta*, August 11, 1930, 4; "Moskva, 31 avgusta," *Trud*, August 31, 1930, 1.

35. "Izbienie negra Robinsona – kontr-revoliutsionnyi vypad," *Rabochaia gazeta*, August 15, 1930, 6; "Amerikanets Nuis ne tol'ko khuligan, no i fashist," *Trud*, August 25, 1930, 1; "Vylazka kontrevoliutsionerov," *ibid.*, August 29, 1930, 1; "Luis i Braun pytalis' perenesti na sovetksuii pochvu fashistskie nrvy," 1; "V Ameriku, k organizatoram sudov lincha!," 1.

36. "Fashist Luis vysylaetsia iz SSSR," *Trud*, August 31, 1930, 1; "Posledovateli lincha v Stalingsrade Liuis i Braun dolzhny byt' osuzhdeny," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, August 30, 1930, 1; "Prigovor po delu ob izbienii negra Robinsona," *Rabochaia gazeta*, August 31, 1930, 2; and "Liuis i Braun vysylaiutsia iz SSSR," *Pravda*, August 31, 1930, 7. Several weeks after he

was deported, Lewis charged in the *Chicago Tribune* (September 21, 1930, A7) that the Stalingrad Americans were ill and starving. A member of the Stalingrad American colony refuted his accusations in the *Moscow News*, November 16, 1930, 7.

37. Robert Argenbright, "Marking NEP's Slippery Path: The Krasnoshchekov Show Trial," *Russian Review* 61 (April 2002): 249–75; J. Arch Getty, "Samokritika Rituals in the Stalinist Central Committee, 1933–38," *ibid.* 58 (January 1999): 49–70.

38. For the equation of blackness with the absence of purity, see, for example, David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca, NY, 1966), 447–9, 452–64; Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York, 1993), 5–7; 56–60; and Erol Lawrence, "Just Plain Common Sense: the 'Roots' of Racism," in *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in '70s Britain* (London, 1982), 31.

39. Mikhail Danilov, "Nuis i Robinson," *Rabochaia gazeta*, August 11, 1930, 4. For a similar sentiment, see "V Stalingrade gruppoi amerikanskikh rabochikh izbit negra," *Put' MOPR'a* 23–24 (August 1930): 13.

40. "O chem govorit sluchai na traktornom zavode," 1; "‘‘Ta ostaius’ na traktornom’’," 1; "Pozornyi fakt na traktornom," 1.

41. Editors could have bolstered Robinson's image as the ideal international black laborer by elaborating on his work experience in Cuba, Jamaica, and Brazil, hotbeds of Marxist labor activity during this era. See, for example, Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean radicalism in early twentieth-century America* (London, 1998). Robinson who was never a member of the Communist Party was elected to the Moscow city soviet in December 1934. See "Mandat deputata Robinsona," *Vecherniaia Moskva*, December 14, 1934, 2; and Robinson, *Black on Red*, 95–111.

42. "My ne dopustim v SSSR," 1; "Amerikantsy ne byvali na rabochikh sobraniiaxh," *Trud*, August 13, 1930, 1. See also, "Obshchestvennyi sud nad grazhdaninom Tspirusom," *ibid.*, August 18, 1930, 4; "O chem govorit sluchai," 1; "My vsetseto na storone tov. Robinsona," 1; and "Pionery Ameriki, Anglii, Bel'gii, Ukrainy," 1.

43. Danilov, "Nuis i Robinson," 4; "V SSSR net mesta rasovoi vrazhdebnosti," 4.

44. "V redaktsiiu zhurnala 'Metallist'," *GARF*, f. 5469, op. 14, d. 381, ll. 84–85; "My vsetseto na storone tov. Robinsona," 1.

45. The Fifth Profintern Congress was intended to demonstrate that the organization had made good on its pledge to make the mobilization of black workers a priority. See "V RILU Congress, 17.8.30," *RGASPI*, f. 534, op. 1, d. 137, ll. 171–176; and "O rabote sredi negrov rabochikh," *RGASPI*, f. 534, op. 1, d. 154, ll. 78–79.

46. "My ne dopustim v SSSR," 1.

47. "Jenny Reid" is verified as Helen McClain in the list of United States delegates to the Congress in *RGASPI*, f. 534, op. 1, d. 170, l. 41; and in Harry Haywood's *Black Bolshevik: Autobiography of an Afro-American Communist* (Chicago, 1978), 328–9. McClain's image also appeared in *Trud*, August 15, 1930, 2; *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, August 21, 1930, 1; and *Pravda*, August 27, 1930, 2.

48. See *Trud*, August 10, 1930, 1, and *ibid.*, August 13, 1930, 1. The first photograph was published in the *Negro Worker* 2 (February 1931): 17. For other images of Ford in the press, see *Trud*, August 15, 1930, 2; *ibid.*, August 24, 1930, 2; and *Izvestiia*, August 19, 1930, 2.

49. *Trud*, August 23, 1930, 1; *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, August 23, 1930, 1. For other images of Hawkins, see *Pravda*, August 16, 1930, 2; and *Izvestiia*, August 22, 1930, 2. For verification of Hawkins' identity, see *RGASPI*, f. 534, op. 1, d.170, l. 42.

50. For Ford's and Hawkins's speeches, see "Negritianskie rabochie i Profintern," *Trud*, August 16, 1930, 2; "Negritianskii proletariat vystupaet na revoliutsionnoi arenu," *ibid.*, August 20, 1930, 3; "Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie sredi negrov," *Izvestiia*, August 19, 1930, 2; "Piatyi kongress Profinterna," *Pravda*, August 22, 1930, 2; and "Opyt millionov - na organizatsiiu revoliutsionnykh boev," *Rabochaia gazeta*, August 21, 1930, 1.

51. A portion of this photograph appeared in *Ogonek* on June 20, 1931 (no. 7): 13, with articles about the Scottsboro legal lynching. This was one of the few images or articles printed in *Ogonek* from 1930–1936 which exposed Americans' "enlightened" treatment of black Americans. On the Marion lynching, see James H. Madison, *A Lynching in the Heartland: Race and Memory in America* (New York, 2001).

52. "Posledovateli lincha na traktornom zavode," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, August 26, 1930, 4.

53. See *Daily Worker*, August 12, 1930, 2; “Headlines About Negroes,” *ibid.*, August 11, 1930, 1.

54. For the Sherman, Texas lynching, see Philip Dray, *At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America* (New York, 2002), 328–30.

55. “Grazhdanin Tsiprus iskliuchen iz soiuza,” *Trud*, August 18, 1930, 1.

56. On the comrades-disciplinary courts and agit-trials, see, for example, Lewis H. Siegelbaum, “Defining and Ignoring Labor Discipline in the Early Soviet Period: The Comrades-Disciplinary Courts, 1918–1922,” *Slavic Review* 51, (Winter 1992): 705–30; and Lynn Mally, “The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Youth Theater TRAM,” *Slavic Review* 51 (Autumn 1992): 411–30. “Rabochie fabriki Moskvoshvei no. 5 vozmushcheny vystupleniem gr. Tsiprusa,” *Rabochaia gazeta*, August 13, 1930, 6; “V otvet na antiproletarskuiu vykhodku Tsiprusa dopolnitel’no podpisemisia na zaem,” *ibid.*, August 17, 1930, 6; and “Prigovor rabochikh mass,” *ibid.*, August 18, 1930, 6.

57. Quoted in “SSSR-otechestvo dlia chernykh, zhelytykh i belykh ras,” *Trud*, August 11, 1930, 1.

58. On the “display” of non-Russian nationalities in Moscow, see, for example, Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin! Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, 2000); Slezkine, “USSR as a Communal Apartment,” 430–52; and Zhuravlev, “*Malen’kie liudi*,” 255–8.

59. For the Scottsboro protest, see James A. Miller, Susan D. Pennybacker, and Eve Rosenhaft, “Mother Ada Wright and the International Campaign to Free the Scottsboro Boys, 1931–1934,” *American Historical Review* 106 (April 2001): 387–430; and Meredith L. Roman, “Another Kind of ‘Freedom’: The Soviet Experiment with Antiracism and Its Image as a ‘Raceless’ Society, 1928–1936,” (Ph.D. Diss., Michigan State University, 2005), 169–230.

60. On the connection between the Stalingrad and Yokinen trials, see “V Congress - 19th Session, 25.8.30,” RGASPI, f. 534, op. 1, d. 145, ll. 115–116; *Race Hatred on Trial* (New York, 1931); I. Amter, “Significance of the Yokinen Trial,” *Daily Worker*, March 9, 1930, 4; and Roman, “Another Kind of ‘Freedom,’” 113–121.

61. On Soviet citizens’ enthusiasm in building a new socialist society, see, for example, Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times* (Oxford, 1999), 67–75, 132–8; and Jochen Hellbeck, “Speaking Out: Languages of Affirmation and Dissent in Stalinist Russia,” *Kritika* 1 (Winter 2000): 71–96.

62. On foreign workers’ role as “big brother,” see Schultz, “The American Factor in Soviet Industrialization,” 146–8; and Zhuravlev, “*Malen’kie liudi*,” 236–40, 272–4.

63. See especially, Kenneth M. Straus, *Factory and Community in Stalin’s Russia: The Making of An Industrial Working Class* (Pittsburgh, 1997).

64. For interpretations of the Comintern’s declaration, see Mark Solomon, *The Cry Was Unity: Communists and African Americans, 1917–1936* (Jackson, MS, 1998), 68–89; and Mark Naison, *Communists in Harlem During the Depression* (New York, 1983), 17–20.