Ryan S. Pettengill

"Fair Play in Bowling": Sport, Civil Rights, and the UAW Culture of Inclusion, 1936–1950

Abstract

For decades, bowling has been thought of as a blue-collar sport. But lost on the American public, as well as historians and other scholars of labor history, is the critical role that recreations like bowling played in building industrial unions. As early as 1937, the United Automobile Workers (UAW) had established bowling leagues as a means of bringing workers together through one of the most popular pastimes in the nation. At the same time, bowling, much like baseball, was subject to Jim Crow practices including the exclusion of nonwhite participants—even throughout UAW leagues. The union was silent on the issue of civil rights in recreation through the late 1930s and early 1940s, but by the postwar period, the UAW played a leading role in calling for "fair play" in sport. This article uses bowling as case study to examine how the UAW used bowling to build and sustain the union, promote harmonious intergroup relations among its members, and address issues such as civil rights within the general realm of American life throughout the mid-twentieth century.

In February 1955, seven men posed for a photograph at the United Auto Workers' annual International Bowling tournament. They were flanked by two union officials. There is nothing obviously extraordinary about the image. It is not apparent that the team has won anything or broken any union local record, nor do we know how the team was assembled. But ten years earlier this photograph would have been nearly unimaginable. Recreational bowling, union or otherwise, was highly segregated and constituted a serious challenge to working-class solidarity within the UAW and throughout dozens of working-class communities across the United States.[1] Yet in the photograph, the men holding bowling balls constituted an interracial team; most of them were African Americans.

As the UAW refined its organizational approaches in the mid-1930s, the union developed sports leagues of all varieties. By the end of the decade, auto workers were playing baseball, bowling, throwing darts, and even boxing, all in an environment that stressed industrial unionism and intergroup cooperation. In these years, no sport attracted as big a blue-collar following as did bowling. As

Journal of Social History vol. 51 no. 4 (2018), pp. 953–979
doi:10.1093/jsh/shw137

Image 1. UAW Annual Tournament, 1955.
Source: "Recreation, Bowling Tournament, Detroit, Michigan," February 12, 1955, Photo ID: 364, Walter P. Reuther Library, Archive of Labor and Urban Affairs, Detroit, Michigan, Detroit, Michigan.

political scientist Robert Putnam has demonstrated, bowling has long fostered intergroup cooperation, established social networks, and created a sense of community.[2] Bowling thus lent itself to organized labor's efforts at union and coalition building. Still, Jim Crow reigned supreme in the sport well into the postwar period. In this context, the UAW's "Fair Play in Bowling" campaign, and the integration of union sports leagues more broadly, represent important episodes in the struggle for civil rights. All too often, the integration of sport is relegated to discussions involving Joe Louis or Jackie Robinson. While these analyses are important, they involve professional athletes and, therefore, do not reflect the general population's experience with the desegregation of American life. Unions played a fundamental role in bringing down the color line in sporting recreation and helped drive the campaign for a more equitable America.

The UAW's bowling campaign succeeded in large part because it brought together liberal and radical unionists. Historians have long identified a liberal-left divide in the postwar period. On one side stood Walter P. Reuther, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., and Eleanor Roosevelt, liberals who emphasized expanding the economy, which they hoped would elevate the status of racial and ethnic minorities by enhancing their purchasing power. Gradually, a stronger economy that included all Americans would make Jim Crow unfeasible. Their approach relegated most decisions to the upper echelons of political bodies and corporate board rooms. On the other side stood the radicals, primarily the Communists and those who shared their vision

regarding socialism and economic justice. Unlike the liberals, the radicals emphasized the need for direct redistribution of economic resources. Communists and their allies largely rejected liberal gradualism, especially when it came to civil rights, opting instead for militant, community-based activism designed to produce rapid, meaningful social change.[3] To be sure, the primary distinction between liberalism and radicalism in instances involving the pursuit of sociopolitical equality revolved around tactics. "Tactical liberalism" shied away from direct confrontation or confrontation that was not formalized by a conference or courtroom. "Tactical radicalism" pursued social change outside of the established system though it did not always expect quick results. The history of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) is filled with communist organizers who were willing to continue slogging even in the face of rejection or temporary setbacks.[4] In the end, the UAW's "Fair Play in Bowling" campaign combined tactical liberalism with tactical radicalism. Furthermore, it represents a relatively rare case in which liberals, including Walter Reuther, threw caution to the wind and embraced direct action to implement change.

Similar to the nation as a whole, there was never a shortage of political diversity within the UAW. In 1945, it was not a foregone conclusion that the liberal agenda of carving out a piece of postwar prosperity for the membership through the accommodation of corporate capitalism would win over the rank and file. Radicals played a vital role in the unionization of General Motors, Chrysler, and Ford, and their voices were among the loudest of those calling for civil rights and racial equality.[5] At the end of the war, they continued to occupy positions of leadership and held the trust and respect of broad swaths of the rank and file.[6] The very presence of a leftist coalition within the union ensured that civil rights would remain a priority for the foreseeable future.[7] As a result, the UAW's "Fair Play" campaign combined liberal tools, such as federal civil rights reform, court injunctions, and improved working-class purchasing power, with radical tactics, such as boycotts, sit-ins, demonstrations, and other forms of direct action.[8]

The UAW's effort to integrate sporting recreation is of broad, historiographical significance. Doug Rossinow has demonstrated that a "militant form of racial liberalism" developed in the 1940s, a result of the "rising cry from the Left for racial justice."[9] Still, racial division continued to represent an important source of inequality within labor organizations. As the legal scholar Paul Frymer points out, a major problem for unions was that the Wagner Act, the 1935 law that gave workers the right to form unions, never contained the antidiscrimination measure that civil rights groups so desperately coveted.[10] Consequently, labor and civil rights legislation developed independently of one another and at different times. David M. Lewis-Colman identifies the undermining effect that white liberal "intransigence" had on black activism.[11] He also correctly notes that this dynamic contributed to a movement that abandoned African Americans' commitment to an integrated union movement. But Lewis-Colman does not sufficiently underscore the brief periods when liberalism overlapped with civil rights activism in the late 1940s, episodes that advanced the cause of civil rights reform and integration.[12] The UAW's "Fair Play in Bowling" illuminates this important moment in United States history when liberals and radicals joined together in support of racial equality.[13]

Liberals would soon abandon such alliances. Partly in response to a Soviet foreign policy seemingly bent on worldwide Communist revolution and partly

due to the momentum gained by conservatives after the war, liberals eventually embraced anticommunism wholeheartedly.[14] Incremental reformism and anticommunism were important attributes of what came to be known as the "Vital Center" and postwar liberalism.[15] But the timing of these developments is also important. The civil rights activism embedded in "Fair Play in Bowling" unfolded before the McCarthy-driven hysteria that baited both collectivism and civil rights activism in the late 1940s and early 1950s.[16] Even as late as 1948, liberalism had not yet become synonymous with anticommunism or the causes that accompanied it, at least within the UAW. To that end, there was still a sufficient presence on the left to shape postwar liberalism and intervene in matters involving segregation. Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), Adlai Stevenson, and the Democratic Party had not yet firmly established the parameters of the postwar liberal consensus. Simultaneously, the UAW included individuals like George Addes, treasurer of the UAW and head of a left-leaning coalition within the union, George Crockett, a civil rights/liberties lawyer who defended Carl Winter (and other Communists) throughout the late 1940s and served as the chair of the UAW Anti-Discrimination Department, and Elizabeth Hawes, a left-leaning official within the UAW Education Department. Each of these individuals enjoyed important positions within the union and continuously moved the leadership to embrace a proactive, progressive stance with respect to civil rights. The UAW "Fair Play in Bowling" campaign, and the activists who led it, offer a glimpse into this important realm of working-class life in the mid-twentieth century.

The Rise of UAW Bowling, 1935–1941

One of the earliest challenges for unionists in Detroit was to simply establish the UAW on firm footing. This task was easier said than done in a city like Detroit, considering that at the end of the day workers returned to ethnic enclaves throughout the city. R. J. Thomas, George Addes, and Walter Reuther, leaders within UAW officialdom, looked for leisure activities that would get workers together and promote harmonious relations across racial and ethnic lines. In that respect, workers' participation in community and union sports became a focal point for labor leaders throughout the mid-to-late 1930s.

Although the union functioned as a cohesive unit, there was a considerable amount of diversity among UAW locals in Detroit throughout the 1930s. Political culture and racial/ethnic composition varied on a local-by-local basis. One of the most unique locals within the UAW was Local 600. Established in 1937, Local 600 was the conglomeration of foundry workers at Ford's River Rouge facilities. By 1941, the year Ford agreed to recognize the UAW, Local 600 was the largest local in the world, and its racial composition was unique. Because foundry work was arguably the least desirable form of employment within the company, racist hiring practices funneled hundreds of black workers into the foundry. Thus, Local 600 became the largest contingent of African Americans within the UAW. Poles and Italians were also heavily concentrated in Ford's foundry and, consequently, represented a significant faction of Local 600's membership.[17]

Aside from its social diversity, Local 600 offered a wide range of political orientations. From its inception, communist activists had made inroads into

leadership positions within the local. Paul Boatin was the son of an Italian anarchist whose affiliation with unionism in Detroit went as far back as the old Auto Workers Union of the 1920s.[18] Boatin eventually served as Local 600's president of the Motor Building. John Gallo was the secretary of the Motor Building. His affiliation with the party was complicated, but anticommunist forces noted his attendance at numerous party functions throughout the postwar period.[19] Arthur (Art) McPhaul, an African American worker, was a member/activist of Local 600. Later, in the late 1940s, he would become the executive secretary of the Michigan chapter of the Civil Rights Congress, an organization that was regularly tagged as a Communist "front" group. Like Gallo, McPhaul's official relationship with Detroit's Communists was complicated, but he regularly attended Communist Party (CP) functions well into the postwar period.[20] Local 600's recording secretary, William (Bill) McKie, was described by the Detroit Criminal Intelligence Bureau (an anticommunist outlet of the Detroit Police Department) as the "daddy of Communist Party . . . in Michigan."[21] He continued to play a meaningful role in Local 600 until he was forced to resign, a casualty of the growing fear of Communism in the Second Red Scare. Lastly, Dave Moore, another African American activist with a direct connection to the CP, was the vice president of the Axle Building.[22] Moore's association with left-wing activism reached back as far as the 1932 Ford Hunger March, a demonstration led by CP activists and other radicals that demanded Ford take a more proactive role in recovery from the Great Depression.[23] The combination of its interracial dynamic and the presence of active CP members, who had traditionally been more sensitive to issues involving race, made Local 600 a natural outlet to address racism in UAW sport.

Much like Local 600, UAW Local 155 was composed of an eclectic array of activists, some of whom had a direct connection to the CP. The business agent of Local 155 was Nat Ganley, a New York transplant who arrived in Detroit in 1934. Ganley played an important role in both the foundation of Local 155 in 1937 and the 1941 Ford organizing drive. He was also an active member of the CP. In 1948, Ganley became the editor of the Communist print organ, *The Worker*, and the following year, he became the organizational secretary for the CP of Michigan.[24] There was also a fair contingent of Communists within UAW Local 174. While 174 was certainly not Communist-dominated, it served as a militant force within the union in the great drives of the late 1930s and early 1940s. Local 174 represented the Ternstedt workers, who supplied parts for Ford. The local traced its roots back to September 1936 when Walter Reuther borrowed $350 from Dave Miller, a CP member working at the Cadillac plant in Detroit, to open a union office at the corner of 35th Street and Michigan Avenue. The office would eventually become Local 174.[25]

The eclectic array of individuals who comprised these locals is important for a number of reasons. Many of them were open members of the CP, which was the only predominantly white organization addressing the issue of civil rights throughout the interwar period. Furthermore, the CP leftists represented the more militant circles of the UAW throughout its formative years. The community-based activism they deployed in union drives not only helped establish the UAW on firm footing by 1941, but they also addressed the microlevel concerns of their constituencies through the late 1940s. It is not a coincidence

that it was these UAW locals that took the lead with respect to civil rights and the integration of UAW bowling.

The UAW was not a static agent that universally represented the thoughts, opinions, priorities, or politics of the individual men and women that comprised it. There were several moving parts to the UAW, and locals, in many instances, functioned independently of one another. Intra-union autonomy also played an important role with respect to civil rights and confronting racism. It would not be coincidental that the UAW locals that addressed racism, segregation, inequality, and union sports leagues were also the ones that took matters involving civil rights most seriously and contained significant numbers of Communists or Communist-sympathizers within their ranks.

In 1935, the UAW held its annual convention, during which delegates established an education department. Alongside the Education Department emerged the UAW Recreation Department, which sponsored a broad swath of leisure activities including sports for the UAW rank and file. In 1937, Melvin West, or Mel as he was known to most of his colleagues in the union, became the department's first director and he immediately set out to immerse the UAW in the sporting culture of the city's working class. West explained the purpose of the Recreation Department and the activities it sponsored by saying "There is more than just recreation in union athletics." Noting that employers had sponsored sports clubs throughout the 1920s, he went on to say, "A true union like the UAW–CIO tries to give its members recreation in an atmosphere of solidarity and unionism. Our union has done that through baseball and bowling, motion pictures and phonograph records, education classes and women's auxiliaries."[26]

West tried to tap into the sporting culture of Detroit's workers from an early point in his tenure as director. In 1937, he staged a UAW-sponsored boxing event that featured recognizable fighters, but the main attraction was the bout that pitted two union fighters from different UAW locals. West staged a ten-round match that was held between Chester Palutis of the "Dodge local" and Stanley Evans of the "Briggs local" at the Arena Gardens on Woodward.[27] He noted that "Their match should attract a large following from Dodge and Briggs plants," but he went on to say that the fights would help raise money for two UAW gymnasiums to be built so that "sports-minded members of the union" would be able to build a "strong recreational program that will keep the members of the union in fine physical shape throughout the years to come."[28]

To create this "strong recreation program," the Recreation Department attempted to introduce intra-union competition as a means to network workers across the city through friendly rivalry. For instance, in the spring of 1938, the Recreation Department launched an intra-union dart league. Due to "popular demand," officials proclaimed it was "the intention of the recreation department to form dart clubs in the locals, and also form a league where one local team can compete with another local team . . . and at the same time promote harmonious social relations among our brothers."[29] To demonstrate what the department had in mind, on May 6, 1938, dart teams performed at Chrysler Local 7 Hall, 1551 Hart Avenue, Detroit. It was announced that tournament play would follow.[30]

Another early and successful endeavor that the Recreation Department sponsored was UAW-CIO bowling leagues. Bowling, which had been very

popular among workers well before the establishment of the union, gave workers an opportunity to come and socialize with their cohort outside of the factory or union hall setting. By 1937, several Detroit UAW locals had established leagues. For instance, the enormous Locals 3 (Dodge Main) and 174 (Ternstedt) had intramural leagues.[31] Local 174 even went so far as to establish a women's division for their league.

By the end of the 1930s, bowling had become so popular the UAW started an intra-union league. Initially consisting of eight local teams, the league pitted various locals throughout Detroit against one another. Hoping to branch out even further the *United Automobile Worker* told its readers "Secretaries of UAW-CIO bowling leagues wishing to play other UAW-CIO teams should contact Mel West at the Recreation Department."[32] The Recreation Department's success in bowling prompted it to expand on its ideas of interunion competition. By the end of the decade, the UAW had created more than 1,200 men's teams and 140 women's teams. In the year 1942 alone, union bowlers competed in 104 tournaments throughout the Detroit area.[33]

Well into the 1940s, the UAW's efforts to achieve working-class unity through bowling were limited by its inability overcome racial division. It is not altogether clear if the union succumbed to the racist whims of some of the rank and file or if it simply lacked the knowledge, resources, or time to combat racist policies deeply embedded in various sports. For its part, the American Bowling Congress (ABC), the sport's governing body, refused to sanction any contest that involved people of color. Established in 1895, the ABC established universal playing rules, standardized equipment, and sanctioned all competitive events so that official records could be kept and statistics could be tracked. Most of these policies were established in its constitution. In addition to governing rules, the ABC maintained that bowling should be a sport reserved for white males only. People of color (and initially white women) were specifically excluded. The ABC was essentially a Jim Crow institution and would remain so well into the twentieth century. As a result, black bowlers were generally not welcome in UAW-CIO bowling contests.

The formation of bowling as an organized sport was primarily the result of the efforts of the ABC. The Congress standardized rules, regulated equipment, and, most importantly, kept official records of competitive events, including tournament play. By the dawn of the twentieth century, the ABC was widely recognized as governing institution for American bowling in much the same way that the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is viewed as the primary governing institution for intercollegiate sporting events. In short, no event within the world of American bowling would be official without the formal approval of the ABC. As far as serious bowlers were concerned, without a formal approval from the ABC, scores and statistics were meaningless. Championship results, both individual and tournament, were void. League play was virtually impossible. As the sanctioning body, the ABC was an official and neutral body that legitimized wins and losses, which was one of the most important draws as far as the UAW rank and file were concerned.[34]

The contradiction between racism and unionism was not lost on UAW locals, however. The activism of the interwar years in union sports leagues challenged what Lizabeth Cohen termed "contested loyalties." What Cohen describes as the CIO's "culture of unity" was mostly relegated to the workplace or

union hall. Outside of radio or women's auxiliaries there were few overt attempts made by CIO unions to desegregate sporting or recreational institutions during the great union drives of the late 1930s.[35] As early as 1941, workers at Ford Local 600 wrote letters of protest to the ABC demanding it lift its racist policies and allow nonwhites an opportunity to compete. The following year Local 600 cancelled its annual tournament as a gesture to its membership that the union would not be affiliated with such an antidemocratic institution.[36] Shortly thereafter, however, the campaign was interrupted by the bombing of Pearl Harbor and America's entrance into World War II.

Activism throughout the War Years, 1942–1945

To its credit, the UAW stepped up its efforts to have the ABC lift the whites-only clause of its constitution, especially toward the end of the 1930s. As historian Beth Bates-Tomkins points out, it was crucial for new unions like the UAW to demonstrate that they were committed to civil rights and that they would not follow in the footsteps of the archaic American Federation of Labor (AFL) unions, who historically excluded people of color. Bates-Tomkins notes the agenda launched in the late 1930s—a combined effort of the UAW with civil rights institutions like the Civil Rights Congress—was to promote labor unions as a "vehicle for expanding economic opportunities and civil rights." To that end, the struggle for civil rights within the UAW connected more broadly to the Black Freedom Movement.[37]

The struggles in Detroit's labor movement were linked to the wider push for civil rights throughout the city throughout the mid- to late-1940s. For instance, George Crockett Jr., a young African American lawyer, came to Detroit in the hopes of establishing a Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC).[38] Similarly, Coleman Young more or less launched his political career in the late 1940s mainly by addressing racism within the labor movement and throughout the community. By the late 1940s, Young was running on the Progressive Party ticket and promoting a platform that ensured civil rights in the workplace and free speech (in an era of Cold War hysteria) throughout the community.[39] Through his work in the Wayne County CIO, Young and his colleagues helped integrate the Graystone Ballroom and Barlum Towers Coffee Shop.[40] Closely tied to Young was his spiritual mentor, Reverend Charles A. Hill, who, throughout the great drive to organize Ford Motor, offered up his Hartford Avenue Baptist Church as an organizational headquarters. Throughout the war years, Hill served as the chairman of Detroit's Citizen's Committee, an interracial organization in Detroit dedicated to lifting the Jim Crow line in everything from housing to recreation. Hill would later go on to serve as the national vice chairman of the Civil Rights Congress.[41]

To be sure, an awareness of the importance of civil rights was realized throughout circles of organized labor much earlier than throughout professional or recreational sporting organizations. World War II was a watershed moment not only for UAW leaders who recognized the importance of the integration of recreational sporting leagues but also for civil rights within union settings as a whole. In 1942, the union moved to create the UAW Interracial Committee, an organization dedicated to promoting solidarity and shedding light on matters involving equal opportunity especially within the context of race. UAW

President R. J. Thomas called upon Christopher Alston, an African-American Communist and official within UAW 190, and Walter Hardin, another African American labor leader with loose ties to the CP in Michigan, to play key roles within the Committee.[42] Furthermore, Thomas also selected George Crockett Jr. to chair the UAW's division of the FEPC. Crockett was never a member of the CP although he did defend Carl Winter, the chairman of the Communist Party of Michigan, in what came to be known as the "Foley Square" trial.[43] Throughout the war years, these individuals worked diligently to focus the UAW's role in promoting racial equality, both within the union as well as throughout the community in Detroit.[44] By the end of the war, the UAW had played an important role in forcing reluctant employers to hire and promote black workers, persuading local and federal authorities to build low-cost housing for war production workers on an interracial basis, and ensuring that access to public amenities was free of racial discrimination. They also intensified their calls for the elimination of racial boundaries in organized bowling.[45]

According to Melvin West, the union continuously pressed the issue of discrimination at the annual ABC convention, but the outbreak of the war interrupted these meetings. Still, progress was being made throughout the war years. For example, the union was able to secure several "leeways . . . which were never afforded to anyone in the history of bowling." First, ABC granted the UAW that the annual union tournament "could include every member of Our organization, regardless of Color . . ." It also promised to sanction the tournament. Second, the UAW was able to convince ABC to allow interracial teams for league play—three white bowlers and two blacks to a team (ABC maintained that a "team" consisted of three bowlers. Having three white bowlers fulfilled this definition but two black bowlers could also be added although ABC did not officially recognize them as part of the team; they could still compete, however). While far from the goal of complete integration, these modest victories demonstrated the UAW's commitment to interracial bowling and civil rights in the war years.[46]

West was confident enough that the UAW could force the issue with ABC in due time. The bigger problem, however, was privately owned bowling alleys. Even alley owners who were rather neutral with respect to interracial play refused to defy the Jim Crow customs of many of Detroit's community establishments. From his "daily associations with the propitiators," West proclaimed he had "yet to find one owner who would be willing to accept our mixed leagues." Therefore, if integration in bowling was to be realized, the UAW would have to broaden the scope of its protest and activism. It would henceforth need to encompass not just the institutional apparatus, but also the community institutions within Detroit. This issue of how to force integration in recreational activities caused the UAW to split ranks.[47]

As the war wound to a close, various UAW locals began to question the discriminatory policies of organized bowling in a direct matter. Dating as far back to the 1930s, Ford Local 600's Recreation Department sponsored bowling tournaments. In 1942, John Gallo headed the department and arranged an agreement with the Detroit Recreation Center where the local would stage its annual bowling tournament. All seemed well until the local arrived with black bowlers ready to compete. Fearing a loss of its ABC affiliation, the Detroit Recreation Center informed the union that black bowlers would not be

permitted to use the facilities. According to Dave Moore, when it became clear that blacks would be excluded from the tournament

> all hell broke loose. Some of the white guys wanted to tear the joint up they were so upset. The owners called the police, and we decided against that . . . But we threw up a picket line of about 1,000 workers outside the bowling alley and then we got ahold of our lawyers.[48]

Local 600 then contacted its legal team, headed by Maurice Sugar, a capable civil rights/liberties lawyer who had represented autoworkers as far back as the 1932 Ford Hunger March. Sugar advised the local to "take them to court." Rather than see the issue decided by the courts, Detroit Recreation backed down and agreed to allow blacks to use its lanes alongside whites. Local 600 would continue to play an important role in the desegregation of bowling in the coming years. More importantly, its militant, grassroots approach to civil rights became the subject of controversy as the mainstream of the UAW became involved in the struggle for equal access to public amenities.[49]

By the 1944–45 season, Local 600 was at a crossroads with the question involving discrimination within ABC and whether to continue to participate in ABC-sanctioned events. At first, the executive board of the local made a decision to boycott Local 600's participation in ABC-sanctioned tournaments, but when it became apparent that "thousands" of the local's members were determined to bowl under the auspices of Local 600, the measure was abandoned. This sentiment was hardly unique to Local 600. Later, UAW Recreation Department staff member John D'Agostino revealed that UAW rank and filers were "very angry that we might take bowling away from them" in the name of supporting civil rights. Local 600, and the UAW generally speaking, then began to fight racial discrimination "from within the ABC."[50] This approach was not only divisive amongst Local 600 but grassroots activism became the dividing line between the liberal and radical wings of the UAW.

The popularity of UAW recreational activities put the union in a difficult position. By October 1945, civil rights institutions, like the National Negro Congress (NNC), had taken note of Jim Crow bowling. Vera Vanderburg, the secretary of the Detroit chapter of the NNC, alerted George Crockett, chair of the UAW-CIO Fair Practices and Anti-Discrimination Department, of the discrimination present in Detroit's bowling allies.[51] Crockett acknowledged the problem but went on to say that a bigger problem was the ABC itself. The discriminatory clause intimidated alley proprietors who were neutral with respect to racial policies into maintaining the Jim Crow line in bowling. In that sense, bowling had put the UAW in a precarious position: bowling was clearly a popular pastime and proved effective in bringing together and uniting workers of diverse backgrounds, but there was little the union could do to combat discrimination, at least from an administrative standpoint, because the ABC existed outside the union's jurisdictional structure. The options available were essentially to demonstrate a commitment to civil rights by canceling bowling leagues, a popular pastime with the rank and file, or to keep the leagues and abide by the ABC's institutionalized racism.[52]

In a letter to Vaunderburg, Crockett explained the position of the UAW: for the moment, the UAW would continue to offer bowling, albeit segregated,

but the union would continue to fight for integration. Crockett also proclaimed that he, personally, was opposed to this approach.[53] According to Crockett, the union leadership, especially Walter Reuther, was afraid of how the mainstream rank and file would react if the UAW abandoned ABC-sanctioned events altogether.[54] Union officials were thus ignoring the militant, community-based activism of organizations like Local 600 when it came to bowling. There was little attention given to the fact that institutions like the Paradise Bowling Alley actually welcomed mixed leagues. There was no effort to mobilize popular support of like-minded institutions in Detroit, let alone to boycott bigoted proprietors who refused to defy the ABC policy.[55]

In many ways, the difference of opinion between Crockett and liberal union leaders like Walter Reuther was emblematic of a deepening rift in the UAW as a whole. By 1945, Reuther had risen to vice president of the union. In the aftermath of the war, Reuther set his sights squarely on General Motors. For more than four years, workers had pledged not to strike, while corporations, GM included, earned millions in profits. Couching the struggle in an attempt to raise wages and the general standard of living for working-class Americans, Reuther demanded a 30 percent raise for GM employees. Simultaneously, he insisted that GM not be allowed to raise the price of its products.[56] When the strike was launched on November 21, 1945, Communist unionists pledged their full support, claiming that they would "be the hardest workers on the side of the strikers."[57] Additionally, the CP praised the manner in which the strike was conducted, noting the working-class solidarity on the picket lines, the neighborhood campaigns designed to assist strikers and their families, and the Women's Auxiliaries who staffed the union kitchens to feed hungry workers.[58] But Reuther's tendency to emphasize bureaucratic collective bargaining instead of grassroots militancy eventually isolated CP unionists. The once upbeat articles that appeared in the *Daily Worker* began to blame Reuther's "stay-at-home" attitude for the lack of working-class militancy. The Reuther caucus was equally critical of the CP role in the strike. The staunchly anticommunist *Wage Earner*, the print organ of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists (ACTU), editorialized that "Unity is not possible between trade unionists whose first objective is the welfare of the American people, and the Communists whose first objective is the advancement of Communist policy," thus implying that CP unionists had other motives for establishing a campaign rooted in grass root militancy.[59]

The strike ended on March 13, 1946, and came to represent the growing divide between liberals and leftists in the postwar period. Not all of Reuther's goals were met, but most rank and filers considered it a success. The Communists, however, were troubled by the outcome. First, Reuther had downplayed the role of community activism, which had played such an important role in the great union drives of the 1930s and 40s. Second, to many people it seemed that Reuther was too accommodating to the corporation. One provision of the settlement eliminated the membership maintenance clause, essentially ending the union's ability to punish workers who decided to drop their membership in the union but still enjoy the benefits the union was able to win. Therefore, by 1946, there was clearly a rift between liberals and Communists within the UAW. The storyline of the GM strike would play itself out again and again in the postwar period, but there were other instances in which the UAW found a way to reconcile liberal gradualism, which emphasized collective

bargaining, with grassroots militancy. The "Fair Play in Bowling" campaign became one such instance.[60]

Postwar Activism and the Detroit Area Committee for Fair Play in Bowling Committee

Although many rank-and-file members were ambivalent about the issue of racism in bowling, there was plenty of support among the union leadership for a campaign against the ABC. For instance, in 1944, the Executive Board of the International resolved to launch a "Bowling Congress composed of forces who are opposed to the practices of the American Bowling Congress."[61] To that end, the UAW began protesting at the annual ABC conventions, beginning in Los Angeles in 1946.[62] Given the political culture of the war years—the idea that American democracy had triumphed over German Nazism and Japanese imperialism—more and more leaders within the UAW believed that sports, whether professional or recreational, should reflect democratic principles and be void of racial discrimination.[63]

Outside of lip service, however, the union offered little satisfaction to unionists seeking civil equality for its members. At the dawn of the 1946–47 season, virtually every UAW local active in the union's bowling leagues used the ABC as its sanctioning body. Local 155 had a league that consisted of ten teams, all of which were sanctioned by the ABC.[64] Dodge Local 3 had a junior division and senior division and also used the ABC to sanction its leagues.[65] Local 7 offered ABC leagues in both the afternoon and evening[66] There were literally thousands of union bowlers competing in leagues sanctioned by the Jim Crow institution. Although, as George Crockett had noted, the union continued to use sport to help solidify unionism in Detroit, its decision to fight racism "from within" was hardly effective with respect to social equality for racial minorities within the UAW. In early 1946, the union protested the ABC's racial policies at the Congress' annual convention. Some representatives within the UAW Recreation Department began to advocate a more proactive, community-based initiative to integrate bowling. They supported measures to pressure local municipalities, including the city of Detroit, to mandate equal access to institutions serving the public, such as bowling alleys. Others, such as William H. Oliver, codirector of UAW Fair Practices Department, favored withdrawing UAW patronage from the ABC if it did not remove its racist policies from its constitution. In short, officials began to call for campaigns outside of the ABC or even the UAW to promote equality within the union. In time, events beyond the union's control would force the UAW to take on a more proactive role regarding civil rights and sport.[67]

The UAW had long known the racism of the ABC was not exclusively directed at African Americans, but in January 1947 it received further confirmation through the case of Gim Wong. Wong was a unionist and avid bowler who resided in South Beloit, Illinois. He was also of Chinese ancestry. In January, union officials informed Gim that he would no longer be allowed to bowl with his UAW-sponsored league. The source of Wong's exclusion was the ABC's "non-Caucasian" clause, which forbade anyone outside of white men from participating in an ABC-sanctioned event. The UAW took up the matter

on February 3, 1947, by joining with other progressive and community institutions, such as the Detroit Interracial Committee.[68] On October 10, 1947, the UAW held a meeting at the Wardell-Sheraton Hotel in Detroit to discuss the matter of discrimination in bowling and possibly create a "Detroit Area Committee for Fair Play in Bowling" to desegregate the sport. To that end, George Schermer, executive director of Detroit Interracial Committee, explained the need to move away from exclusionary practices:

> If there evolves from this meeting a Committee to combat discrimination in the Detroit area, such a development would have the blessings and good wishes of the Detroit Interracial Committee. I feel that a citizens group organizing to make a drive in the direction of getting away from the exclusion policy practiced by ABC is something which we think is an excellent move on the part of the community.[69]

From the spring of 1947 onward, the UAW would pursue not only a more proactive campaign to integrate union league bowling but also a community-based initiative to open up mainstream American life to all members of its constituency, thereby demonstrating its commitment to civil rights.

Anticommunism

Further complicating matters for UAW officials was the issue of anticommunism, which had become a preeminent concern for labor leaders throughout the country by 1947. Many historians agree that before World War II, Communists and their sympathizers were the nation's biggest supporters of racial equality and civil rights. In 1932, for instance, the American Communist Party (CPUSA) sent its legal resources to Scottsboro, Alabama, to defend nine African American youths accused of rape. Closer to Detroit, the Citizens' Committee and Civil Rights Federation addressed civil rights issues that ranged from police brutality (much of which was allegedly directed at the city's black community) to adequate housing for racial minorities during the war.[70] By 1947, however, many Communist unionists, in Detroit and elsewhere, had come under fire as potential subversive elements of a conspiracy to overthrow the American government. A combination of Communist Party (CP) policies and internal politics within the UAW produced an anticommunist crusade, which resulted in the expulsion of CP labor activists and their sympathizers from the ranks of CIO unions.[71] These activists, who were either open about their membership within the CPUSA or had some loose affiliation with it, were some of the staunchest supporters of civil rights—both within the union and throughout the community in Detroit—through the war years. The anticommunist crusade would complicate matters with respect to integrating UAW bowling. Anticommunists labeled civil rights activists as potential Communists and, thus, a risk to national security.

By 1947, anticommunism had become a mantra for the political right. As Richard Nixon and Joseph McCarthy would later demonstrate, targeting alleged Communists and their infiltration of important American institutions offered more than personal advancement. It allowed conservatives to drive political discussion and manipulate policy. Because the Communists had long championed

civil rights in the United States, it became commonplace to link activism, civil rights or otherwise, to subversive activity. This notion was not lost on Detroiters. In the midst of a municipal loyalty oath implemented by Republican mayor Albert Cobo, working- and middle-class residents wrote in to City Hall congratulating officials on their fortitude with respect to anticommunism. One letter went so far as to say

> Communists, Communist sympathizers, Fellow Travelers, potential traitors, and all persons believing in the overthrow of our government by force and opposing free democracy under our Constitution have no place in the service of the Detroit city government. Thank you very much for your approval of the suggestion that the city charter be amended to provide for a Loyalty Board to determine qualifications of any City civil service employee.[72]

Still, there was growing concern in union circles that not addressing issues involving civil rights could potentially offer Communists a niche within the union, as it had in the war years, and allow them to gain a powerful foothold in the union. Civil rights thus became a delicate balancing act for the UAW in the immediate postwar period.

Anticommunism within the UAW also coincided with Walter Reuther's meteoric rise in organized labor officialdom. In 1947, Reuther managed a narrow victory for the presidency of the UAW. He ousted the incumbent R. J. Thomas, who was the preferred leader of the leftist faction within the union, namely the Communists. On the surface, Reuther appeared to be the ideal liberal laborite of the postwar era. Young, energetic, and full of charisma, Reuther presented himself as a pragmatist capable of sustaining postwar economic growth. He heralded his 1946 leadership of the General Motors strike, which netted UAW members a 20 percent pay raise, and his ability to work amicably with management. Reuther quickly consolidated his power and won a sweeping reelection the following year.

Reuther came to epitomize the prototypical liberal attitude regarding Communism. His approach to anticommunism in the immediate postwar period, however, involved far more finesse than simply purging CP members from the ranks of the UAW. In a report to the UAW membership, Reuther proclaimed:

> As democratic trade unionists, we must continue to defend every member's right to believe in his personal political philosophy, but we must oppose with uncompromising determination the efforts of the Communist Party or any other outside group or individual to interfere in the affairs of our union.[73]

Reuther was largely addressing the UAW's willingness to comply with the newly-issued Taft-Hartley Act, which forbade Communists from serving in union leadership roles; however, his insistence that Communists not "interfere in the affairs of our union" did not forbid Communists or their sympathizers from participating in grassroots activism aimed at desegregating institutions like ABC. It would not be until the early 1950s that Reuther would implement a full-scale purge of CP members from the union. Before then, Reuther opposed any form of CP leadership within the UAW but did not universally condemn their presence in the union. This policy allowed organizations like UAW 600 or

155 to continue to address segregation in bowling as a grassroots, community endeavor.

The All-American Bowling Tournament

Reuther earnestly immersed the UAW in a campaign to integrate American bowling. He started with the appointment of Olga Mada as the Director of the UAW Recreation Department, replacing Melvin West, who had retired. Reuther explained to Madar that racial exclusion in bowling was a problem "which must be solved by forthright cooperative action on the part of all concerned. We must bring our practices in the field of recreation into harmony with the principles of equality of opportunity to which we all subscribe."[74] Therefore, Reuther clearly recognized the magnitude of racial discrimination in outlets like recreational sports leagues and dedicated UAW resources to eliminating this form of inequality.

Reuther asked Madar to research the history of the ABC, including its discriminatory policies. In so doing, she pointed out that not many people were familiar with the ABC or its discriminatory history. Madar explained that "Not long ago, I talked to a group of physical education majors at the University of Michigan and asked how many knew the set-up of ABC. Out of 75, four knew."[75] According to Madar, the ABC was founded to standardize and regulate the sport and served, more or less, as a nonprofit organization that would officially sanction competitive bowling in the United States. Yet, for the ABC to exist, it had to pay its workforce and cover its administrative costs. In 1947, for any bowling event to be officially recognized, each competitor was required to pay a $0.50 fee to the organization to cover the cost of sanctioning the event. In that respect, the ABC was financially vulnerable. Madar went on to point out that:

> ABC prides itself on a non-profit organization. There are approximately 16 to 20 million bowlers. They spend $221 million. Eighty to $100 million have been invested. Ten years ago, it wasn't ranked as tenth in American sport. Now it is first or second. More and more women are participating in this sport than any other sport. I don't think we can any longer sit back and let such a policy continue. We will not be successful unless we can get the support of the people. I don't doubt that ABC will change its rules—but when? It will be much sooner if we can get good cooperation from everyone.[76]

While it was true that the ABC existed outside of the UAW's jurisdiction, the organization's financial vulnerability presented an opportunity for civil rights activists. Madar and other leading members of the UAW soon developed a vigorous, community-based campaign designed to integrate one of America's most popular pastimes.

The result of the October 1947 meeting of the Detroit Area Committee for Fair Play in Bowling was a full-scale boycott of ABC throughout the UAW. Madar outlined plans for UAW-sponsored, unsanctioned bowing tournaments. The union pledged $12,000 to fund "city, regional, and national tournaments" with prizes comparable to those offered by ABC-sanctioned events.[77] Further, Madar noted that competitors from around the world were welcome to compete and two additional staff members had been added to the Recreation Department to help the union get the tournaments off the ground. The UAW was joined by

Image 2. UAW Local 49 Champions, Region 1 and 1A, undated (probably 1949). Source: Labor Album, Walter P. Reuther Library, Archive of Labor and Urban Affairs, Detroit, Michigan.

other progressive institutions such as the Detroit chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Youth Catholic League, and the Jewish Community Council. Simultaneously, attendants suggested a "broad educational program" for bowlers and alley proprietors and a campaign to encourage legislation that would forbid conducting sporting events in a segregated format. Emil Mazey, secretary-treasurer of the UAW, ended the meeting by characterizing the desegregation of bowling as "the number one target" for the UAW as it was the most popular sport for UAW members. He noted that, to some extent, this meant broadening the campaign to "clean up" the city of Detroit with respect to sport, recreation, and Jim Crow policies.[78] Thus, while it may not have been his original intent, Reuther's appointment of Madar had launched the UAW into full-scale community action, reminiscent of an earlier era.

The UAW-sponsored bowling tournaments were as much local events as they were important union functions. The point, of course, was to shed light on discrimination within the ABC and to demonstrate to the organization that a continuation of its racist policies would result in a loss of revenue. Ed Lee, a representative within the UAW Education Department, encouraged UAW members and Michiganders alike to write to Kim Sigler, governor of the State of Michigan, to push him to restrict the State Fair bowling tournament, which was

Image 3. Olga Madar congratulates Louise Hamilton on her first place doubles victory. Source: *UAW*, February 1948, 11.

to be held at the State Fairgrounds, due to the fact that ABC was sanctioning the event. According to Lee, these alleys were "public property and we feel it is bad policy to permit an organization with un-American rules to use public property."[79] Both William Oliver and Olga Madar urged "as many organizations as possible" to petition the ABC to end its racist exclusionary policies.[80]

In September 1947, the UAW added field agents, John D'Agostino and Jess Corona, to search the city for suitable places to stage the first-ever "All-American Bowling Tournament." The Recreation Department identified at least ten alleys that were open to the idea of unsanctioned, interracial bowling tournaments. Ultimately, it was decided that the tournament would take place on November 29, 1947, at the lanes in Detroit's Eastern Market (1439 W. Vernon Highway, Detroit).[81] The tournament consisted of a three-week event and included team play, doubles, and singles competitions for both men and women.[82] Interracial teams were a mainstay of the tournament and would remain so well into the future. According to the UAW Recreation Department, the tournament was "the first fighting step of the UAW-CIO program to smash un-American racial restrictions set up by the American Bowling Congress."[83] Union officials claimed to have more than seven hundred participants and gave

away more than $1,000 in prize money.[84] The UAW acknowledged that the "tournament was more successful than we had anticipated but had nowhere near the number of participants that should be in a tournament . . . due to the fact that it was our first non-sanctioned tournament and . . . we received little cooperation from" the broader bowling community in Detroit. Still, while many were disappointed, the UAW noted that there was "good support" amongst organizers on a national level, and the tournaments helped illuminate the ABC's racist policies. The union vowed to continue with unsanctioned bowling and even contemplated the idea of creating a rival organization tentatively named the "All American Bowling Congress."[85]

UAW-sponsored, unsanctioned tournaments continued into 1948. The "International All American Bowling Tournament" opened April 3 at Dexter Recreation (in Detroit) and featured men's and women's play and prizes at every level.[86] Walter Reuther, who had ascended to the presidency of the UAW by the spring of 1948, invited a Swedish bowling team and promised sport in a democratic format. According to Reuther:

> To millions of Americans, this discriminatory rule of ABC is more than an insult to fellow citizens, more than a breach of good sportsmanship . . . To exclude a man from competition in a contest of skill because of his race is to adopt a practice typical of Nazism and outrageous to democracy.[87]

William Oliver extended a similar invite to Hawaiian bowlers when he learned the ABC was warning sanctions against alley owners who welcomed Hawaiians in their alleys.[88] Couching the issue in the union's broader struggle for civil rights, Reuther explained that "One of the most important aspects of the committee's work (President's Committee on Civil Rights) is our fight for fair play in bowling. That fight will continue until the American Bowling Congress learns that racist rules in sport are Nazi nonsense."[89]

The unsanctioned tournaments continued throughout 1948, but it was the following year that proved to be a turning point for civil rights in UAW bowling. Together with the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee, and the NAACP, UAW representatives spoke at the annual ABC convention, which was held in Atlantic City. According to the *United Automobile Worker*, it was at that point that the ABC began to give serious consideration to more inclusive participation in bowling.[90]

In the end, the grassroots activism fostered by Communists and other leftists created a demand to end discrimination in union league bowling. This demand gave rise to a legal team that carried out civil rights reform. In October 1949, Philip Murray and the CIO took legal action by filing suit against the ABC in Cook County, Illinois. On April 22, 1950, Judge John Barbaro rendered his decision and ordered the ABC to pay a $2,500 fine for its discriminatory practices. A few days later the ABC "overwhelmingly" decided to remove racial exclusions from its constitution.[91] The union had essentially ended Jim Crow practices in bowling, at least within the UAW orbit. Still, the unsanctioned tournaments combined with the other forms of community activism staged by the UAW Recreation Department and affiliated organizations shed enough light on racism and full participation in American life to force the issue. Furthermore, as civil rights and sports continued to merge throughout the late 1940s, Major League

Baseball, collegiate sports organizations, and the National Football League continued to integrate and added more athletes of color to their respective rosters.

Conclusions

The "Fair Play in Bowling" campaign was, in many ways, reflective of the overall push for civil rights in the United States in the mid-twentieth century. The Montgomery Bus Boycott, for instance, began as a vigorous community endeavor but was ultimately settled through a Supreme Court decision. Yet, unlike the UAW, Martin Luther King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference expanded their presence in the "community" by the 1960s. Marches in Birmingham, Selma, and Memphis offered a space where grass-root activists could participate in the movement in a direct manner. By that time, organized labor was generally a political interest group within the Democratic Party.

The All-American Bowling Tournament was an accomplishment of American liberalism of the postwar variety. It combined a democratic spirit with a vibrant boycott of a free market enterprise to bring about equality in American life. Not only were workers from all across Detroit coming together to compete in friendly rivalry, but the UAW Recreation Department created a forum for workers to speak out in support of civil rights and participate directly in the movement. Nevertheless, the Second Red Scare would soon close the space available for such activism. By the mid-1950s, many of the individuals who were instrumental in bringing about "fair play" in bowling had been forced out of the union.

To be fair, the UAW addressed rank-and-file concerns that ranged from ending segregation in some of Detroit's neighborhoods to opposing the establishment of nuclear power plants in the greater Detroit region. Still, the Schoolcraft Gardens campaign—the UAW's attempt to push the city government to offer low-cost, interracial housing—was largely undertaken at an administrative level as was the campaign to stop the construction of the Fermi Power plant in Monroe, Michigan (just south of Detroit).[92]

When contemplating the ultimate fate of unionism in the United States, one cannot help but to wonder if things would have been different had the Popular Front managed to survive into the postwar period or at least transformed itself into a movement that was more accommodative of the circumstances of the era. There is little doubt that the communists and other radicals at the heart of the Popular Front were naïve and that many of their goals were unrealistic, but they were the loudest voices for civil rights, and they called for civil equality long before the rest of the nation took up the cause. They also provided the organizational strength to achieve the goals of the broader union community. As Elizabeth Hawes once put it:

> while some of the Communists cursed you out and sometimes called you a Red-Baiter in heated moments if you didn't follow their line 100 per cent, they still went ahead and assiduously worked for the union. Under the circumstances, if one believed in getting the union work done, one preferred the Communists to the Red-Baiters.[93]

Postwar liberals made a critical mistake in isolating potential allies in the McCarthy era. As the "Fair Play in Bowling" campaign demonstrates, liberal approaches to reform, when combined with militant organizing on a community level, delivered results.

In the end, the Fair Play in Bowling campaign demonstrated that an industrial union such as the UAW could serve as a springboard for civil rights. It also demonstrated that in the years immediately following World War II, liberals and leftists could come together to support causes that democratized American life. Liberalism had not yet succumbed to the mantra of anticommunism. The abandonment of such approaches by the UAW and other liberal institutions was nothing short of tragic. As Ellen Schrecker has pointed out, scholars are just beginning to understand the damages caused by McCarthyism and the Second Red Scare.[94]

Endnotes

I am deeply indebted to my friends and peers who helped make this article possible. Daniel Clark, Nik Ribianszky, Dan Dalrymple, Lisa Fine, Jessica Waldrop, and the anonymous reviewers at the *Journal of Social History* all provided thoughtful feedback, which proved most helpful. Participants at the North American Labor History Conference at Wayne State University, including many retired autoworkers, also were instrumental in the revision of earlier drafts. The staff at the Reuther Library in Detroit went above and beyond the call to help me locate primary materials, which comprise the heart of this article. Special thanks to Mike Smith and Mary Wallace, who took extra time to help me locate documents, photos, and correspondences. Lastly, I'd like to thank the late David Bailey, whose reassuring guidance and expertise helped me bridge sports history and labor history. Address correspondence to Ryan Pettengill, Department of Social Sciences, Mountain View College, 4849 W. Illinois Ave., Dallas, TX 75211. Email: ryan.pettengill@gmail.com.

1. See "Recreation, Bowling Tournament, Detroit, Michigan," February 12, 1955, Photo ID: 364, Walter P. Reuther Library, Archive of Labor and Urban Affairs, Detroit, Michigan. Henceforth, ALUA.

2. Robert Putnam points out that the sense of shared enthusiasm (or even shared adversity) can generate a sense of community. See Robert Putnman, *Bowling Alone* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 113–15.

3. A useful example of left-led, militant activism in Detroit is the 1942 "Sojourner Truth Housing Project Riot." The Sojourner Truth Projects were public housing units designed to address the housing needs of war workers pouring into the city to work in the defense industry. The mayor's office determined that the units would be open to African American residents, thereby prompting a reaction from the Ku Klux Klan, masquerading as the Seven Mile-Fenelon Improvement Association. The Civil Rights Federation and the Citizens' Committee, both of which had direct ties to the CP, mobilized grass root support for the integration of the housing units. Both organizations were comprised of activists like Reverend Charles A. Hill, a Baptist minister who worked closely with known Communists in the name of civil rights. Together, the Civil Rights Federation and Citizens' Committee picketed in front of the housing units, urging integrative occupancy, packed mayoral meetings, and wrote dozens of letters to City Hall insisting blacks be allowed to assume occupancy. In the end, the pressure paid off and Mayor Edward J. Jeffries, approved policies that allowed African Americans to live in the contested housing units. See Angela Dillard, *Faith in the City* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 136–39.

4. For an example of a Communist effort to bring about social equality with the backdrop of unionism as the context, see Gerald Horne, *Fighting in Paradise, Labor Unions, Racism, and Communists in the Making of Modern Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011).

5. Both Mark Soloman and Elizabeth Gilmore note the involvement of Communist Party activists within the push for civil rights from the 1940s through the 1950s. See Elizabeth Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919–1950* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2008), 9. See also Mark Soloman, *The Cry Was Unity: Communists and African Americans, 1917–1936* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1998), xxiii, 89.

6. The role, scope, and overall impact of Communists and other leftists has become the concern of many historians within the field(s) of labor, civil rights, and/or mid-twentieth century political history as of late. In particular, Eric Arnesen criticizes the idea championed by Jacqueline Dowd Hall, which has come to be known as the "long civil rights movement"—civil rights activism that came before the *Brown* decision in 1954, of which the CP and those within its orbit played a crucial role. For more on the "long civil rights movement, see Jacqueline Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *The Journal of American History* 91 (2005): 1233–63. Arnesen posits that Jacqueline Dowd Hall, Elizabeth Gilmore, and other proponents of this scholarship "have been too quick to assign most of the credit to the party, and it is to insist on placing communists in a larger context to which non- and anticommunists contributed their share as well." See "Reconsidering the 'Long Civil Rights Movement,'" Eric Arnesen, *Historically Speaking* 10, no. 2 (2009): 31–34. The purpose of this paper is not to dispute the role that Communists or anticommunists played in civil rights activism. Rather, it is to demonstrate that the periodization of the liberal-labor-left split was not instantaneous nor was it necessarily inevitable. If anything, the "Fair Play in Bowling" campaign demonstrates Arnesen's point that noncommunists played as important a role in the pre-1954 activism as anyone in the CP.

7. Paul Frymer and Ira Katznelson have underscored the importance of the immediate postwar period and the ability of organized labor to expand civil rights. See Paul Frymer, *Black and Blue: African Americans, the Labor Movement, and the Decline of the Democratic Party* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 53. Katznelson argues that the "opportunity to achieve the social democratic potential of the New Deal was not compromised in the 1960s but in the 1940s" by emphasizing issues involving economic growth and "interest group politics." See Ira Katznelson, "Was the Great Society a Lost Opportunity?" in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order*, eds. Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 185–211. For the quote, see 186.

8. For a discussion on the connections between postwar liberalism and civil rights, see William H. Chafe, "Race in America: The Ultimate Test of Liberalism," in *The Achievement of American Liberalism*, ed. William H. Chafe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 161–79. For quote, see Chafe, "Race in America," 162. While Chafe, Frymer, and Katznelson rightly note that the 1940s are a critical time period with respect to the overlapping of a bureaucratic and grassroots approach to civil rights, there is still a lack of specific examples of such opportunities to broaden and expand civil rights. The "Fair Play in Bowling" campaign, thus, addresses this general gap in the literature. To be fair, however, each author goes on to explain that it was the hyperbolic anticommunism that followed the war, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, that constricted political space for the Left, forced them out of organizations like the industrial unions, and relegated most matters involving civil rights to the courts for the foreseeable future.

9. Doug Rossinow believes that there was always a liberal belief in racial equality when it came to inclusionary policies with respect to economic growth. See Doug Rossinow, "Partners for Progress? Liberals and Radicals in the Long Twentieth Century," *Making*

Sense of American Liberalism, eds. Jonathan Bell and Timothy Stanley (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 17–37.

10. Paul Frymer, *Black and* Blue, 24.

11. While liberals, within the UAW and nationally, were generally in favor of civil rights, their tactical approach differed greatly with the radical approach. David Lewis-Colman notes this difference in the context of Communism and civil rights. See David Lewis-Colman, *Race Against Liberalism: Black Workers and the UAW in Detroit* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), Ch. 3.

12. Lewis-Colman spends considerable time discussing the growing divide between African American activism and liberal attitudes toward it. He also provides a nice overview of the connections between communism and issues affecting African Americans in Detroit. He even references the "Fair Play in Bowling" campaign. Yet, in the opinion of this author, Lewis-Colman dismisses the contributions of the UAW campaign as an example of white liberals' inflexibility with respect to grassroots activism throughout the postwar period. To be entirely fair to Lewis-Colman, the point of his book was to illuminate the movement away from liberalism amongst industrial workers throughout the postwar period. For another perspective on the role the UAW played in integrating bowling in Detroit see Lewis-Colman, *Race Against Liberalism*, 20–21, 33.

13. Lizabeth Cohen and Nelson Lichtenstein both reference the fluidity of midcentury liberalism. Cohen defines the "liberal vision of the post-WWII era as aiming to improve the social, economic, and political quality of life for as many Americans as possible by leveling the playing field to facilitate individuals' access to social goods such as housing, education, medical care, and jobs, and to the rights of citizens in a democracy." See Lizabeth Cohen, "Liberalism in the Postwar City: Public and Private Power in Urban Renewal," *Making Sense of Liberalism*, 135–55. The quote appears on page 136. Lichtenstein points out that organized labor, especially in cities like Detroit, played an important role in the black freedom movement. Again, the "Fair Play in Bowling" campaign is an example in which liberal unionists recognized the importance of equal opportunity in postwar life and the need to include racial minorities within it. See Nelson Lichtenstein, "From Corporatism to Collective Bargaining: Organized Labor and the Eclipse of Social Democracy in the Postwar Era," in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order*, eds. Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 122–52. The quote appears on page 135.

14. For a discussion on the evolution of postwar American liberalism see Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 265–71; Alonzo L. Hamby, *Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and American Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), 189–90, 214; Alonzo Hamby, "High Tide: Roosevelt, Truman, and the Democratic Party," *The Achievement of American Liberalism*, 47–49; Alonzo Hamby, *Liberalism and Its Challengers: FDR to Reagan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 66–67; H.W. Brands, *The Strange Death of American Liberalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), x, 79–80, 173; Jefferson Cowie, *The Great Exception: the New Deal and the Limits of American Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016) More specific to labor history, Nelson Lichtenstein and Kevin Boyle have concluded that labor-liberalism, although it was committed to an inclusive social agenda, was never a "static doctrine." In the mid-decades of the twentieth century, "Reutherite social unionism" was reflective of economic growth and expanding welfare state security. See Lichtenstein, "From Corporatism to Collective Bargaining," 112; Kevin Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of America Liberalism, 1945–1968* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

15. Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. developed the idea of the politics of the "Vital Center." Arthur Schlesinger Jr., *The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1962).

16. Many historians point to 1948 as the precise year in which the liberal-left divide became unmistakable in American political life. See Steven M. Gillon, *Politics and Vision: The ADA and American Liberalism*, 1947–85 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 12; 52–53; Doug Rossinow, *Visions of Progress: The Left-Liberal Tradition in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 146–53; 162–65; Doug Rossinow, "Partners for Progress," *Making Sense of Liberalism*, 28–30; Richard M. Fried, "Voting Against the Hammer and Sickle: Communism as an Issue in American Politics," *The Achievement of American Liberalism*, 99–128; 119.

17. For a thorough overview of the history, activism, and role played by UAW Local 600, see Judith Stepan-Norris, *Talking Union* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996).

18. Interview of Paul and Ann Boatin, Sept. 1982, "Talking Union," oral histories, pp. 2–18, ALUA.

19. Red Squad Memo, Mar. 3, 1949, Carl and Helen Winter Family Papers, box 6, folder 42; "Names of Detroit Red Leaders Given at Quiz," *Detroit News*, Mar. 1, 1952.

20. Red Squad Memo, Mar. 3, 1949; Red Squad Memo, Aug. 3, 1950; Red Squad Memo, July 20, 1951, Carl and Helen Winter Family Papers, box 6, folder 42; Red Squad Memo, July 31, 1951, box 7, folder 2; Red Squad Memo, Feb. 25, 1952; Red Squad Memo, May 20, 1952, box 7, folder 3; Red Squad Memo, Aug. 11, 1953, box 7, folder 4, Carl and Helen Winter Family Papers, Tamiment Library, NYU.

21. "Names of Detroit Red Leaders Given at Quiz," *Detroit News*, Mar. 1, 1952.

22. Ibid., *Detroit News*, Mar. 1, 1952.

23. Interview of Dan Moore: see *Detroit Free Press*, March 12, 2002, 1B. For an oral history of the role the CP played in UAW Local 600, see Judith Stepan-Norris, *Talking Union* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 150–67.

24. Red Squad Memo, Aug. 9, 1948, State Convention, Michigan Communist Party, Carl and Helen Winter Family Papers, box 7, folder 2, Tamiment Library, NYU. See also Red Squad Memo, Sept. 20, 1949, box 7, folder 6; Red Squad Memo, Mar. 3, 1950, box 6, folder 42, Carl and Helen Winter Family Papers, Tamiment Library, NYU; "Names of Detroit Red Leaders Given at Quiz," *Detroit News*, Mar. 1, 1952; "Bare Record of Detroit Reds," *Detroit Times*, Sept. 17, 1952.

25. *West Side Conveyor*, November 10, 1937; see also Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit* (Urbana: New York: Basic Books, 1995), 60.

26. *UAW*, "Play Ball!—With the UAW," May 20, 1939, pp. 4.

27. Ibid., "Fighters, Fans Ready for UAW Ring Show," Aug. 14, 1937, pp. 3. It would, no doubt, be helpful to know the racial and/or ethnic background of the fighters involved in this bout. Unfortunately, the *UAW* article, the lone reference to the event, is silent on the matter the ethnicity of the boxers.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., "Chrysler Boys Figure the Score," April 30, 1938, pp. 6.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., "Bowling," Feb. 7, 1940, 7.

32. *UAW*, "Bowling," Feb. 7, 1940, 7; ibid., "Bowling," Feb. 21, 1940, 7

33. "Back When A-B-C Meant Abolish the Bowling Colorline," *UAW Solidarity*, January/February 1994, pp. 17–18, 18.

34. See John C. Walter, "More than Sports: How Hubert H. Humphrey and the United Auto Workers Union Helped to Achieve the Desegregation of Bowling in America, 1946–1950," *American Studies Today*, Issue 18, (2009). See also http://www.americansc.org.uk/Online/More%20than%20sports.htm.

35. Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 333–55.

36. "Back When A-B-C Meant Abolish," *UAW Solidarity*, 18.

37. See Beth Bates-Tomkins, *The Making of Black Detroit in the Age of Henry Ford* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 222. For perspective on the Black Freedom Movement, see Clarence Lang, "Freedom Train Derailed: The National Negro Labor Council and the Nadir of Black Radicalism," in *Anticommunism and the African American Freedom Movement*, eds., Robbie Lieberman and Clarence Lang (New York: Palgrave-McMillian, 2009).

38. Newspaper clipping, Communist Biographies Collection, Box 2, folder 9, Tamiment Library, NYU.

39. See Red Squad Memo, Jan. 14, 1949; Red Squad Memo, July 31, 1951, box 7, folder 2, Carl and Helen Winter Family Papers, Tamiment Library.

40. Coleman Young and Lonnie Wheeler, *Hard Stuff: The Autobiography of Mayor Coleman Young* (New York: Viking, 1994), 99.

41. Memo, February 21, 1942, pp. 58, Book I, Red Squad Files, Charles A. Hill Family Papers, Bentley Historical Library (henceforth, BHL), Ann Arbor, Michigan; see also National Defense Report, Detroit Police Department, pp. 60, Book I, Red Squad Files, Charles A. Hill Family Papers, BHL.

42. See Packard Negro Committee to UAW Interracial Committee, November 13, 1941, UAW War Policy Division Collection, Box 6, Negro and Defense Industry, 1941–42 folder, ALUA.

43. For Crockett, membership in the CPUSA was more a matter of civil liberties than anything else. When he defended Carl Winter (and later CP-affiliated defendants), he was sure to contextualize the issues in the backdrop of freedom of speech and political association. For a synopsis of Crockett's opinions regarding the matter of Communism, see newspaper clipping, Communist Biographies Collection, Box 2, folder 9, Tamiment Library, NYU.

44. Walter Hardin to Victor Reuther, January 12, 1943, UAW War Policy Division Collection, Box 5, Interracial Committee folder, WPRL; Minutes of Labor and Civic Conference, October 18, 1942, UAW War Policy Division Collection, Box 6, Negro and Defense Industry, 1941–42 folder, ALUA.

45. For more on the UAW's role in civil rights during the war years, see Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 61–63; Angela Dillard, *Faith in the City* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 155–57; John Hartigan, *Racial Situations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 24; Dominic Capeci, *Race Relations in Wartime Detroit* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984), 111.

46. Melvin West to George Crockett, December 6, 1945, UAW Fair Practices and Anti-Discrimination Department Collection, Box 1, folder 45, ALUA.

47. Ibid.

48. "Back When A-B-C Meant Abolish," *UAW Solidarity*, 19.

49. Ibid., 19.

50. James McNamara to George Addes, November 21, 1945, UAW Fair Practices and Anti-Discrimination Department Collection, Box 1, folder 45. D'Agostino and Jess Corona had been added by the UAW Recreation Department to survey the area for suitable locations to accommodate interracial bowling tournament (outside the sanctioning of ABC) as well as assist the union at the grassroots level. Part of their job was to poll the rank and file with respect to their feeling on civil rights and bowling. D'Agostino recalled being sent into locals that had histories of resisting efforts to integrate bowling. See "Back When A-B-C Meant Abolish," *UAW Solidarity*, 18.

51. Crockett's association with members of the CP should be noted. While not officially in the party, Crockett went on to defend several open Communists in what would become known as the Smith Act trials. Such individuals included Carl Winter, the chair of the Communist Party of Michigan throughout much of the immediate postwar period. Winter's wife, Helen Alison Winter who was active in many CP "clubs" and causes. He also represented William "Billy" Allan, the Michigan correspondent to the *Daily Worker*. Additionally, he represented non-Communists that had reputations of being warm to CP policy and/or causes. Such was the case for Reverend Charles Hill of Hartford Avenue Baptist Church, who opened his congregation to the UAW drives of the 1930s and was no stranger to the Winters and other leading Communists in Michigan.

52. George Crockett to Vera Vanderburg, October 12, 1945, UAW Fair Practices and Anti-Discrimination Department Collection, Box 1, folder 45, ALUA.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

55. Lewis-Cole, *Race Against Liberalism*, 22.

56. For a detailed analysis of the GM strike, see Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), chapter five; Nelson Lichtenstein, "Politicized Unions and the New Deal Model: Labor, Business, and Taft-Hartley," *The New Deal and the Triumph of Liberalism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 149–51; Roger Keeran, *The Communist Party and the Auto Workers' Union*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 236–49, Ch. 11; Zieger, *The CIO, 1935–1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 221–23.

57. "Support Auto Strike, Foster Urges," *Daily Worker*, November 22, 1945, 3.

58. Ibid., November 22, 1945, 3; Ibid., "What YOU Can Do to Help Them," November 24, 1945, 1; Ibid., "GM Pickets Mass Today, UAW Women Groups Rally," November 26, 1945, 1.

59. "Unity with Commies Not Possible," *Wage Earner*, April 13, 1945.

60. "Company Wins Some Clauses in GM Contract," *Daily Worker*, March 16, 1946, 5.

61. ABC Discriminatory Action—Resolution, UAW Fair Practices and Anti-Discrimination Department Collection, Box 1, folder 45, ALUA.

62. Report of Conference to Promote Democratic Participation in Bowling, Apr. 1, 1947, Maryland Hotel, Chicago (Sponsored by UAW-CIO), UAW Fair Practices and Anti-Discrimination Department Collection, Box 5, folder 2, ALUA.

63. For the UAW's official stance on racism, especially in the institution of sport, see *UAW*, "President's Quarterly Report," 5–8, March 1948.

64. "UAW-CIO Local 155 Bowling Leagues, 1946–47 Season," UAW Recreation Department Collection, Box 1, "Fair Play in Bowling—By-Laws and Funds" folder, ALUA.

65. "Dodge Local 3 Bowling League Senior Division, 1946–47 Season," UAW Recreation Department Collection, Box 1, "Fair Play in Bowling—By-Laws and Funds" folder, ALUA; see also "Dodge Local 3 Bowling League Junior Division, 1946–47 Season," UAW Recreation Department Collection, Box 1, "Fair Play in Bowling—By-Laws and Funds" folder, ALUA.

66. "UAW Local 7 Afternoon League, 1946–47 Season," UAW Recreation Department Collection, Box 1, "Fair Play in Bowling—By-Laws and Funds" folder, ALUA.

67. Report of Conference to Promote Democratic Participation in Bowling, Apr. 1, 1947, Maryland Hotel, Chicago (Sponsored by UAW-CIO), UAW Fair Practices and Anti-Discrimination Department Collection, Box 1, folder 45, ALUA.

68. "Minutes of Detroit Area Committee for Fair Play in Bowling," 1–2, UAW Recreation Department, Box 1, "Fair Play in Bowling—Detroit" folder, ALUA.

69. Ibid., 2.

70. "Sojourner Truth Citizens Committee State RE: Jeffries Statement," Mayor's Papers, 1942, Box 9, Sojourner Truth Housing Project (2) folder, Burton Historical Collection (BHC), Detroit Public Library, Detroit, Michigan; "Citizens Committee to Hold Monthly Mass Meetings," *Michigan Chronicle*, May 9, 1942; "Riot Blame Debated at Convention," *Detroit Free Press*, June 23, 1943; Private John D. King to Mayor Edward Jeffries, January 26, 1943, Mayor's Papers, 1943, Box 8, Race Riot Correspondence (1) folder, BHC. See also Ryan Pettengill, "Communists and Community: The Rise and Fall of Community Activism in Detroit, 1932–1968" (doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University, 2009), Ch. 5.

71. Specifically, the reestablishment of the CPUSA and the formation of the Cominform touched off a national frenzy of anticommunism. The Cominform was designed to export Communism to every corner of the world. For more, see Thomas W. Devine, *Henry Wallace's 1948 Presidential Campaign and the Future of Postwar Liberalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 26.

72. Postcard, undated, Mayor's Papers Collection, 1949, Box 2, "Communism" folder, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit Michigan.

73. "Report to the Membership," by Walter P. Reuther, *UAW*, September 1947, 5–9.

74. Ibid., 4.

75. Olga Madar, quoted in "Minutes of Detroit Area Committee for Fair Play in Bowling," Box 1, "Fair Play in Bowling" folder, ALUA.

76. Minutes of Detroit Area Committee for Fair Play in Bowling," Box 1, "Fair Play in Bowling" folder, ALUA.

77. *UAW*, "UAW-CIO Bowling Association Presses Fight Against Jim Crow," Oct. 1947, 6.

78. "Minutes of Detroit Area Committee for Fair Play in Bowling," 4.

79. Radio Broadcast, "Gim Wong Comes Home," Oct. 26, 1947, WJBK-Detroit, UAW Recreation Department, Box 1, "Fair Play in Bowling—Detroit" folder, ALUA.

80. William Oliver, Olga Madar, to UAW Membership, undated, UAW Recreation Department, Box 1, "Fair Play in Bowling—Detroit" folder, ALUA.

81. Ibid; "Olga Madar to Union Membership, September 11, 1947," UAW Recreation Department, Box 1, "Fair Play in Bowling—Detroit" folder, WPRL; *UAW*, "UAW-CIO Bowling Association Presses Fight Against Jim Crow," Oct. 1947, 6. See also "Back When A-B-C Meant Abolish," *UAW Solidarity*, 18.

82. *UAW*, "UAW-CIO Bowling Tournament Opens on November 29," November 1947.

83. Ibid.

84. "Bowling Program Report of International Recreation Department," 2, UAW Recreation Department, Box 1, "Fair Play in Bowling—Detroit" folder, ALUA. For perspective on an average number of participants in a nationally recognized bowling tournament, Detroit hosted the 1948 national championship tournament. There were 7,348 participants involved in this tournament.

85. Ibid., 7–8; see also *UAW*, "UAW Bowling Meet Opens in Detroit," December 1947, 8.

86. *UAW*, "Bowling Tournament Set for April 3rd in Detroit," February 1948, 11.

87. Ibid., "Visiting Keglers Invited to Bowl in UAW Tourney," March 1948, 7.

88. Ibid. ABC listed Hawaiians as "ineligibles" according to one of their publications because they were "non-Caucasians." ABC-sanctioned alley-owners were "advised to close their doors to the Hawaiians."

89. Ibid., "President's Quarterly Report," 5–8.

90. Ibid., "UAW Wins 5-Year Fight for Fair Play in Bowling," June 1950, 12.

91. Ibid.

92. Much of the information involving Fermi is drawn from a paper given by Lisa Fine at the 2013 North American Labor History Conference in Detroit. Lisa Fine, "Power and Place: The Fermi Atomic Power Plant and the Workers of Downriver Detroit," 2013 NALHC, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. Fine is currently working on a book that addresses the UAW and its opposition to nuclear power in the postwar period.

93. Elizabeth Hawes, *Hurry Up Please, It's Time* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1946), 44–5. Hawes was using the expression "Red-Baiters" to refer to anticommunists.

94. Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes* (Boston: Little, Brown, Inc.), 1998, xv–xvi.