Zecker, Robert M. "'Ceaselessly Restless Savages': Colonialism and Empire in the Immigrant Press." *Race and America's Immigrant Press: How the Slovaks were Taught to Think Like White People*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011. 103–176. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781628928273.ch-005>>.

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Chapter 5

“Ceaselessly Restless Savages”: Colonialism and Empire in the Immigrant Press

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries lynching accounts abounded in immigrant newspapers, but they were not the only articles that reminded newcomers of the ways in which non-Europeans were treated as less than fully human. Slavic dailies and weeklies provided extensive coverage during the Progressive Era of the African and Asian subjects of various colonial empires, giving readers a discourse on less civilized peoples in need of tutelage by white, European masters. As recent captive subjects of the Kingdom of Hungary, Slovaks and Rusyns had some familiarity with empire, but the condescension visited on the peoples to whom President William McKinley referred as “our little brown brothers” was a new phenomenon that Slavic immigrants, like most Americans, learned about courtesy of the press.

As for many Americans at the turn of the century, race was also configured for Slovaks through the incipient United States empire, and in this regard they participated fully in the melding of a white identity. Several scholars have noted that Irish immigrants had, in part, secured their place in the white man’s republic by serving in the mid-nineteenth-century army subduing Mexicans and Indians.¹ While not always unequivocally embraced by immigrant newspapers, the U.S. imperial project arguably also helped Slovaks become convincingly white. In 1898, Slovak newcomers established their white credentials by waving the red, white, and blue, cheering President McKinley’s shouldering of the “white man’s burden” with full-page, flag-draped homages to the president, Admiral Dewey, and General Miles.²

Even the few articles that questioned the wisdom of America acquiring colonies overseas in the Caribbean or the Pacific often appeared in newspapers that in other issues ran copy asserting the savagery or less civilized state of Africans and Asians. Tropes of African savagery or even straight-faced accounts of the prevalence of cannibalism in non-European settings provided the cultural context which surrounded any consideration of America’s “splendid little war” against Spain, and the question of whether America had a right to colonize the Philippines and

Puerto Rico, or impose suzerainty over Cuba. The imposition of Theodore Roosevelt's "big stick" policy in the Caribbean and Central and South America received a fair amount of coverage in *Slovák v Amerike*, *Amerikanský ruský vjestník*, *Jednota*, and other papers.

Fraught coverage of the never-quite-concluded Filipino wars in Slavic papers was at times more ambivalent than in other, English-language papers. But the stories reported out of Luzon and Mindanao were accompanied by stories of Africans and Asians subject to European rule, and these articles propagated tropes of menace and savagery that situated non-European peoples as objects of the voyeuristic colonial gaze, occupying lower rungs in the era's Social Darwinist hierarchy of civilization.

Articles also frequently provided news of the Dark Continent, with worried assessments of the restlessness of unwillingly colonized people. And America's obsession with a supposed "Yellow Peril" from China or Japan, especially after her victory over Russia, led Slavic newspapers to report growing concern with Asians as rivals either in the Pacific or as immigrants sent to swamp a "white" people's wage rate. In assessing the threat black and yellow races posed for Europe and America, Slavic immigrant newspapers again reflected the culture in which their readers found themselves, one in which a racialized hierarchy of development and Darwinian race struggles were taken as givens by most Progressive Era commentators. As with domestic matters of race—lynchings, Jim Crow laws, and race riots—Slavic papers often offered rewrites from the English-language press, and thus often reflected the predilections of many Progressive Era writers to treat with condescension colonized peoples in Asia and Africa.

At the end of the nineteenth century America's self-conception as a nation apart, "a city upon a hill" immune to the European virus of empire, came into conflict with growing calls for the United States to adopt a "large foreign policy" that required overseas possessions after all. Proponents of the country's earlier Manifest Destiny began to look across oceans just as Slavic immigration to America became a mass phenomenon. Much of the earlier dispossession of native peoples by and large had ended by the time hundreds of thousands of Poles, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Rusyns, and other Slavic peoples emigrated after 1880, and little concern for native peoples made it into the Slavic newspapers that arose after 1890. After the Western Indian wars were long over, *Národné noviny* in 1916 ran a photograph of "Civilized Indian brides of the Chilkat tribe on display in San Francisco," evocative of the ethnographic carnivals of Carl Hagenbeck and other impresarios that some Slavs had already visited in Prague, Warsaw, and elsewhere.³ But in the 1890s the United States fitfully moved toward assuming an overseas empire, and, like other American residents, East Europeans pondered whether the country in which they'd recently arrived was all that different, in its expansionism at least, from the empires they'd left behind.⁴

“Innate Thieves and Fanatical Fighters:” The Philippines

The yellow press's interest in the unrest brewing in Spanish possessions was reflected in immigrant newspapers, too. Slovak papers were sometimes ambivalent on whether the U.S. ventures in Cuba, the Philippines, and elsewhere were wise, but depictions in *Slovák v Amerike* invariably used qualifiers such as “blood-thirsty” and “savage” to describe Filipinos or Cubans.⁵ Moreover, as it quickly became apparent that not all Filipinos greeted the Americans as liberators, some frustration developed toward recalcitrant islanders, especially those who were non-Christian.

As early as December 1896, *Amerikanský ruský vjestník* noted the developing “rebellion in the Philippines.” As Paul Kramer states, at this early date, few Americans paid attention to Spain's Pacific colony, reading more often of the injustices inflicted on Cuba, a colony only 90 miles from Florida. Indeed, *Amerikanský ruský vjestník* used the more familiar Jewel of the Antilles to situate readers in a trope of Spanish misrule. “The Spanish bred poverty on their island of Cuba, but that is nothing compared to their other island colony, the Philippines. There are reports coming from there that an uprising is brewing, but now a revolt has grown more and more.” The article's author observed, however, “It is unlikely that the uprising will spread to Manila.”⁶

This prediction proved wide of the mark, although Slavic papers gave little other notice to the Filipino independence movement until after Admiral George Dewey easily defeated the Spanish Pacific fleet. Once the U.S. war had ended, *Jednota* reported that Emilio Aguinaldo “filed a memorandum asking the recognition of the independence of the Philippines, or at least that it be recognized that the Filipinos are belligerents.” The paper, which was the organ of the First Catholic Slovak Union, would, in the years following the war, often be critical of U.S. policy, at least toward Catholic Filipinos. But in the immediate aftermath of victory over Spain it had little sympathy for any group not bowing to American preeminence. “The rebels sent a strong military expedition to the southern islands, there to pillage and murder,” the paper reported. *Jednota* further noted that “A confidant of General Aguinaldo confided that most Filipinos want to give in to President McKinley's request that the United States annex the Philippines, because otherwise there can be no order maintained there. Aguinaldo again said that a republic should be established under United States protectorship, under which he would be president.” Hoping to seal the deal, the paper's headline asserted, “Filipinos want to live as ours.” Suggestions that only American suzerainty would prevent Filipinos from giving vent to their predilection for “pillage and murder” already were being aired in a paper that would later reassess the wisdom of empire, at least for its own coreligionists.⁷

Similarly, *Slovák v Amerike* reported on “Aguinaldo's telegram,” in which “the natives [the Filipinos] call for independence.”⁸ Some Slavic immigrants, like

many of their American peers, were unwilling to consider such arguments when they came from non-Europeans. The same paper at the end of 1898 ignored the assertions of Hispanicized Manilans that they deserved independence because of their embrace of European culture and the Catholic faith. Instead *Slovák v Amerike* editorialized,

The primitive tribal population is the same as when the Philippines were first discovered by Magellan. The majority are Malays, in the interior of the islands the natives tend to be Negrito, dark in color, like a Negro. On the coast are the Chinese and Japanese. The whites in the Philippines almost all stick together in Manila. Among the Malays there are again recognized many separate tribes.⁹

In a milieu in which American “Negroes” were being dispossessed of their civil rights and Asian migrants were barred from naturalization, the few whites who stuck together in Manila were insufficient to warrant an independent nation. By March 1899, the paper reported, “In the Philippines there is no change in the war between the Americans and the Filipinos.”¹⁰

The parallel treatment of race in its imperial and domestic contexts was often on graphic display in the Slavic press. When Aguinaldo and his supporters redirected their warfare from the Spanish to their American “liberators,” *Slovák v Amerike* reported on April 13, 1899, that General Arthur MacArthur was coming to bring “freedom” to the Filipinos. This story appeared right alongside an account of Slovak strikers battling “nigger scabs” in the coalfields of Pana, Illinois. Harsh battles against nonwhite competitors continued to grow in the Philippines, too, as the paper noted, “A proclamation by the U.S. Bureau in the Philippines had an effect on the natives, as the Americans expected.” While residents returned to the strategic hamlets (the Spanish had called them concentration camps when they employed such a strategy only a few years before in Cuba), the paper noted, “the war is continuing as before and there the people are starving, but neither are they near surrendering.” While the paper was supportive of the U.S. effort to make the Malays see reason, already some concern at the war’s endurance crept into the article, and even a hint of the unsettling implications of Filipinos’ resistance to the American gift of freedom: “The United States are facing a danger as they want a weapon to conquer the Philippines. The Philippines are again determined that they will sell their freedom only at a high cost.”¹¹

As with lynching accounts, such articles were by and large rewrites from English-language newspapers or wire service dispatches subscribed to by immigrant newspapers. Still, from whatever source these dispatches originated, they did appear in Slovak and Rusyn newspapers, and thus give some indication as to what immigrant editors believed it was important their readers learn about race in an imperial context. Such editors could have chosen to have omitted these

items, or to have denounced the imperial project (as some editorials later did, particularly in the Catholic Slovak and Rusyn newspapers). But from whatever their original provenance, immigrants, like other white Americans, were reading of the U.S. missions among McKinley's "little brown brothers."

In 1900, with war against insurgent Filipinos in full swing, *Slovák v Amerike* ran illustrations of the former sultan of Jolo's palace; while this arguably was nothing more than an appeal to the interest of immigrants in a distant, exotic place much in the news following Admiral Dewey's successes, the accompanying text established Jolo's residents as less than civilized: "The inhabitants of these islands are of the Mohammedan religion and stand at a low level of education."¹² Later that year the paper ran a helpful illustrated primer, "The savage Igorots of the Philippines and their weapons." Readers learned that

The Philippine Island inhabitants are from many tribes, but with little in the way of civilization. The most civilized tribes are the Tagalogs, who live in Manila and the vicinity; the most savage are the Igorots. The Igorots live up in the mountains of the island of Luzon. They are very bold and courageous, but, as shown in our illustration, armed only with bows, arrows, different kinds of axes, and knives. It is understood that with such a meager store of weapons they can't win against the American guns and cannon.¹³

Insets of the civilized American generals MacArthur and Otis were juxtaposed with the wild Igorots wielding Stone Age weapons. Whether the "meager store of weapons" could hold out against the Americans, a binary of savage natives and civilized Americans suggested to immigrants the folly of imagining an independent republic composed of such citizens (see Figure 5-1.) As Paul Kramer notes, Filipinos' use of guerrilla warfare tactics was pointed to by Americans as further proof the natives weren't high enough on the human hierarchy of development to warrant independence; cartoons in English-language papers similarly mocked Filipino headhunters as potential legislators terrorizing white Americans.¹⁴

At times *Slovák v Amerike* was less overt in its assumptions of Filipino backwardness, even as it embraced the U.S. self-justificatory message of tutelage and racial uplift for the islanders. An illustration of "Tagalog teachers in Manila" presented well-dressed men and women under Uncle Sam's guidance, not the grass-skirt-wearing knife wielders facing off against MacArthur. The paper sought to explain the Tagalogs' hesitance to accept the proffered American assistance, stressing, "[t]he most important thing that the Filipinos need to be taught is that not all 'white people' are Spaniards. Up until now the Filipinos have mistrusted all white people. They've only meant slavery and heart ache. Once the Filipinos are convinced that the Americans mean them well, and they want to help them in the field of culture and progress, everything will get better there." Still, the paper was not ready to jettison Progressive Era Americans' accepted hierarchies of backwardness and modernity, suggesting that the predicted new order would not

FIGURE 5-1: "The Savage Igorots of the Philippines and their Weapons." Filipinos resisting U.S. colonization were characterized as primitive but a menace. *Slovák v Amerike*, May 11, 1900, 1.

usher in all that different a brand of "white people." The article further noted, "The Filipinos are very backward in civilization, as was painfully evident to an American lady who came to the Philippines"¹⁵ (see Figure 5-2.)

Other papers were less avid in accepting the tropes of savagery, even while being noncommittal regarding the justice of Aguinaldo's cause. *Amerikansky ruský vjestník* reported the Filipinos petitioned the U.S. Senate "invok[ing] Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln on their behalf, to argue for an end to the war in the Philippines and that there be no more shedding of Filipino blood and foreign blood." Still, the report noted, "They prattle that their petition should be

FIGURE 5-2: “Tagalog Teachers and their Pupils in Manila.” The civilizing mission of Uncle Sam was emphasized in Slovak news stories from the Philippines. *Slovák v Amerike*, March 23, 1900, 2.

heard and that they can never be satisfied with such a protectorate as they have in Canada or in Australia.” The report noted that the senators refused to accept the petition, “and considered this document to be a treasonous document and an insult to our troops.” The United States had indeed pointed to international law and the Treaty of Paris by which Spain handed the islands over to Washington to justify labeling the Filipino rebellion as an outbreak of treason. Immigrants, too, evidently disregarded homages to American icons as “prattle,” even if in this instance forbearing to employ tropes of savagery.¹⁶ A week later, when the paper again commented on the Philippines, it documented “reports . . . coming back to Washington . . . that suggest there is a lot of sad news.” The news, though, was not of atrocities committed against Moros, but of the “very bad health conditions” causing U.S. troops to fall “to many different tropical diseases.” The article noted rumors of drunkenness and low morale among American troops in these remote postings. As in much of the English-language press’s reporting on the U.S. expedition to the Philippines, here the war and occupation were characterized as terrible things because of the hardships suffered by Americans, not the occupied peoples.¹⁷

Reservations regarding ill or drunk soldiers, or even veiled questions of the wisdom of America's adventures, were absent from *Slovák v Amerike*, which was more optimistic about the wisdom and ultimate success of the mission. In 1901 the paper reported "Aguinaldo captured" after his betrayal by a compatriot, and noted "end of the Filipino war is expected" (see Figure 5-3).¹⁸ A month later the paper reported, "Of Aguinaldo we haven't heard anything new, and so it seems that the Manifest Destiny of the Philippine nation will have a good result. The Philippine masses have given way."¹⁹ *Amerikanský ruský věstník*, too, condemned Aguinaldo when he refused to see the justice of American hegemony, and reported the capture of "the main rebel ringleader, the dictator of all the Filipinos who are rebelling, Emilio Aguinaldo." The rebel leader had "sacrificed many lives," and could not have been captured, the paper argued, "unless [he] had been betrayed by his own people." The paper then provided a lengthy account by General Funston of the circumstances surrounding the "dictator's" capture. A week later the paper reported on some of the difficulties surrounding the surrender of Aguinaldo, who was evidently having trouble translating "the American-drafted constitution into Tagalog," encountering many words "whose true meaning eludes him." Whether this was a dig at Tagalog ignorance or the incomplete, untranslatable nature of the democracy the United States was bestowing on the Philippines, is unclear. The paper noted, however, that while Aguinaldo "call[ed] on his compatriots to put aside their weapons and submit to the Americans," the United States still was unsure what to do with Aguinaldo, as "[t]here are sections where the insurgents are healthy and others that have sworn loyalty to the United States."²⁰

As the United States settled into an open-ended colonial occupation, promise of eventual autonomy was held out to those Filipinos who could demonstrate a vaguely articulated standard of civilization, a benchmark that the natives—even the Catholic population of Manila, but certainly the Tagalogs, Igorots, and other peoples—could never quite reach in the eyes of American authorities. Colonial Governor William Howard Taft and his successors had two ready answers for why self-rule could not as yet be granted. The Muslim and animist populations were not ready to engage in democratic rights, but the United States also argued that it was Washington's duty to protect the "backward" islanders from Catholic Manilans, who, if given a chance, would surely exploit their less-developed neighbors. It was an argument it was difficult for Filipinos to win.²¹ In a series of insular cases, the Supreme Court decided that Filipinos, like other new, non-North American subjects of the United States, were ineligible for citizenship, even though Chief Justice Edward White declared they remained "definitely under the protection of this country." As late as 1914, *Slovák v Amerike* reported on the proposed Jones Bill, which sought to set a timeline for eventual Filipino independence. The paper reported that Congressman William A. Jones proposed that the Philippines should get their independence within two or three years, but the article further revealed that this might be pushed forward to 1920. The following day the paper's headline gave the verdict: "The Philippines must wait for independence."²²

FIGURE 5-3: “Aguinaldo Captured.” The leader of the rebellious Filipinos was a subject of much interest to Slovak newspaper editors. *Slovák v Amerike*, March 29, 1901, 3.

This interminable wait may be explained by the tropes of wild Moros that regularly appeared in many papers and in other cultural productions such as the St. Louis World's Fair of 1904. Kramer notes that U.S. authorities and Manila elites alike sought to present a tableau of progress at the exposition, but that such signifiers of progress as the Filipino Scouts unit of the U.S. Army had a hard time competing with long-ingrained sideshow displays of wild men from Mindanao and the like. Such carnival images, which had been on display in European "human zoos" presented by entrepreneurs such as R. A. Cunningham in the late nineteenth century, recurred at Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. Primitive Filipino villages were again some of the most popular attractions at St. Louis in spite of the complaints of Catholic Filipinos that such denizens represented their country as well as a band of Sioux might stand in for a typical American.²³

Even in immigrant papers such as *Slovák v Amerike* rhetorical assertions of Filipino savagery continued well into the era of American rule. By 1904, the paper offered illustrations of Filipinos, "who are now, for the most part, peace-loving people." The degree to which such papers were palimpsests of race-thinking is suggested by the fact that the same edition featured a horrific lynching account out of Mississippi, with no suggestion of whether the newspaper's editors regarded white Mississippians as peace-loving. In a strictly colonial context, however, for all the assertions of colonial tranquility, the paper couldn't help noting that, "Insurgents in the Philippine Islands are causing the United States a lot of difficulties."²⁴

Two years later the paper offered "Portraits of the Philippines" that framed predictably savage "inhabitants of the islands of Jolo and Sulu" with a garland of knives and machetes. In more vitriolic language that suggests the editors shared much of America's impatience with the recalcitrant natives, the caption explained that "these islanders . . . have been known since ancient times as innate thieves and fanatical fighters." Primordial, unchanging backwardness was one of the justifications colonizers used for ruling non-Europeans for their own good, although the caption hastened to add that some European powers evidently were not up to shouldering the white man's burden: "The Spaniards, who sometimes owned these islands, despite all diligence could not handle these natives." Regrettably, as often as the "Spaniards" thought they had "completely pacified" their ostensible subjects, "the natives rose up again and all their fanatical mischief [*šarapatili*] raged again [*zuris'ou*]." The illustration's caption concluded that following the Spanish-American War these possessions, "like all the Philippine Islands, passed into the hands of the United States," implying that a colonial empire was something that had simply dropped into the lap of an unwilling Uncle Sam. Unwanted or not, the paper recognized that with empire came duties and declared, "[T]he American Army must strike at these fanatics and subjugate the Moros"²⁵ (see Figure 5-4.)

While immigrant papers often reprinted wire service copy that originated elsewhere, they were quite adept at criticizing features of America's culture that they found deplorable; if *Slovák v Amerike's* editor had wished to, he could have omitted slighting references to "fanatics" and "Moros." Indeed, on the very next page,

FIGURE 5-4: "Portraits of the Philippines." The "Stone Age weapons" of Filipinos surround the "primitives." *Slovák v Amerike*, June 12, 1906, 1.

a cartoon condemned the use of the Pennsylvania State Constabulary (precursor to the State Police) in the suppression of a coal strike. "Brave state murderers under the Russian laws of Pennsylvania," the caption bristled. If American strike-breaking brutality was denounced, the editors and letter writers at *Slovák v Amerike* took the "fanaticism" of Filipinos at face value. When troops were employed overseas, and not in the coalfields of Pennsylvania, their deployment was deemed just, and in *Jednota* and other papers the discourse quickly passed from the civilizing mission of Tagalog teachers to the subjugating mission of U.S. soldiers.²⁶

While some Slovak papers expressed horror at the brutality of U.S. troops subjugating the Philippines, at other moments articles cheered McKinley's shouldering of "the white man's burden."²⁷ When Filipinos refused to see the light of rule by Washington, *Amerikanský ruský věstník* ran editorials condemning "the brutality of the dictator Aguinaldo," who was "the chief leader, the dictator, of all the misguided Filipinos in rebellion."²⁸

It was not only newspaper editors reprinting mainstream America's suppositions of Malay inferiority. Immigrant papers quickly featured letters from soldiers engaged in America's imperial adventures that replicated a narrative of savage Asian enemies. As early as 1899, with America already deep in an undeclared guerrilla war against Aguinaldo and his followers, some Slovak immigrants were relating firsthand impressions of the Tagalogs who had no desire to be coerced into an embrace with America. Tomáš Pavliak of Glen Lyon, Pennsylvania, was serving in the artillery with the U.S. Army seeking to subjugate the erstwhile Spanish colony for its own good. This Slovak soldier wrote to *Slovák v Amerike* providing his assessment of the native Filipinos. He also praised the effectiveness of "the Gatling guns, which can shoot 800 times a minute. With a twist of the butt, it can then fire 1,200 times per minute." This correspondent recounted some of his harrowing battles during an assault on Iloilo. "The last battle I truly thought that I'd never see America again," Pavliak wrote, but he summed up the philosophy of his lieutenant whenever they encountered a Filipino: "Boys, keep him gone!"²⁹

This last injunction appeared in Pavliak's otherwise Slovak letter in the original English with which his lieutenant delivered the order, an order that mirrored the frank directive of U.S. General Jacob Smith to his command in the Philippines: "Kill and burn, kill and burn, and the more you kill and burn, the more you will please me." Scholars of immigration have rightly stressed English acquisition as an important marker in immigrants' acculturation to the United States; that some of these English phrases carried racialized meanings has been less often noted.³⁰

Pavliak's letter was echoed in coming years by other Slavic soldiers serving in the Philippines. The wisdom and justice of U.S. rule was not accepted by all indigenous peoples, and the war that President Theodore Roosevelt declared at a victorious end on the Fourth of July, 1902, sporadically continued to flare up for years. In 1906 Štefan Zaniat wrote to *Slovák v Amerike* from his barracks on

"Olongapo, Zambales, Filipíny," saying that "The land is deserted, the people here are uneducated."³¹ *Jednota* noted a wedding celebration in Youngstown, Ohio, for Jozef Molčan, "who recently served with the Seventh Regiment of the regular Army in the Philippines." Molčan and "his young little wife" would be heading back to the Philippines to await orders. The "good Slovak and musician in the Army" did not offer his opinion of the natives on this occasion.³²

But in 1914 *New Yorkský denník* reported on a "nice Sokol celebration," a festivity in Freeland, Pennsylvania, attended by gymnasts from Palmerton, Hazleton, Lansford, Minersville, Coaldale, Shamokin, and Mahanoy City. "At the ceremony Polish Sokols performed and wore costumes of the Filipino Army and the state [U.S.] forces." A masquerade of savage Moro Filipinos was on this occasion enacted by Slavic coal miners, who in other contexts raised the alarm of American nativists.³³

By the 1910s, some of the American soldiers patrolling a by-now partially pacified Philippines were members of the National Slovak Society who wrote back to the fraternal society's *Národné noviny* with their impressions of the natives. What these opinions were might be gleaned by the headlines: "Mohammedan Fanaticism" and "Savage Love Ends in Murder." Regarding "Mohammedan Fanaticism," a subhead informed readers, "If you swear to kill a Christian, for that you can hope to get to seventh heaven." Ján Dianiš (or Dianish as the second letter had it) sent a letter from Parang, which, as he described it, was an even more exotic locale than his Chicago home. Admitting he was "not much of a philosopher, perhaps," Dianish endeavored "to describe some of the customs of the inhabitants of these tropical regions."

As was the case with English-language reports from the colony, it was the non-Christian population that most alarmed Dianish. "The first thing to mention is the so-called '*Guramentado*,' which means an oath," the reluctant philosopher wrote.

The local tribe of the population, called "Moros," belongs to the Muslim faith and as such, they have maintained a strong hatred for Christians. In their fanaticism they go so far that many of them swear even these days, that it is not murder to kill a Christian, but a just sacrifice of life. These fanatics are blinded so much that they believe that the very fact that one has killed a Christian, no matter how one has spent one's life, causes one's soul to soar into seventh heaven, and there it will forever be served by lovely "houris."

Dianish asserted that many American soldiers' lives had been "extinguished by these fanatics," although in another context one might regard such enemies as lawful combatants defending *their* homeland, were it not that Washington had already labeled resistance to U.S. domination as treason or fanaticism. As a U.S. soldier, Dianish followed suit, citing three of his comrades' deaths not as the cost of warfare but examples of martyrs to alleged Muslim extremism. Still, even his

peers' deaths from rifle and knife wounds could not deter Dianish from the narrative of patriotism to his adopted homeland. "Here I have provided a brief illustration of the sacrifice and danger to which our young men are exposed by serving under the flag of the republic," he concluded, "but don't let me deter any young man, or anyone who may be considered bold and has a desire to serve in the ranks defending our dear new homeland [*vlasť*]." The elision "homeland" to cover distant Mindanao, employed by a transplant from Upper Hungary, was an irony on which neither the good soldier nor his Slovak readers remarked.³⁴

Dianish's assertion of "Mohammedan fanaticism" in the matter of Christian-hating may have been acquired from listening to the prejudices of his fellow soldiers or commanders, but similar diatribes had already appeared in papers he could have read before enlisting. *Slovák v Amerike* had already published an editorial on "the fanatical residents of the island of Jolo." "It seems therefore that the Moros are such fanatics because it is rooted in their religion," the editors explained in an item that otherwise detailed the reprisals U.S. troops levied upon Moros resisting American occupation of their island. "They are Mohammedans, and within their religious law is a kind of dictate, that whoever sacrifices his life for the faith gets to go to the seventh heaven. Whoever kills a Christian becomes worthy to come to the seventh heaven. These fanatics have been granted by their priests the right of self-sacrifice. . . ." This immigrant newspaper was not alone in accepting authorities' glib characterizations of "fanatical" Islam when seeking to understand why benevolent occupation was resisted. Echoes of invasions to come were already emanating from Jolo more than a hundred years ago.³⁵

The year after his first letters, a more optimistic letter from Dianish, stationed on Mindanao, promised "Let There Be Peace on Earth—The Unbelievers are Coming Around Through Hearing the Word of Our Father." Still, Dianish said he always prefaced the sermons he gave by waving his revolver in the air, so it's likely the peace that prevailed was of the predictable, colonized kind. In this regard, Dianish was behaving like any other American infantryman, with some of his own foreignness thus effaced. Slovaks and other suspicious racial stock at least partly became white by helping to subdue even more "wild" races. As Alexander Saxton and Matthew Frye Jacobson have noted, earlier white ethnics had been able to assert their place in the "white man's republic" through service in the armed forces. Some Irish Americans, denigrated in eastern cities as a Catholic threat to the republic, joined the cavalry and served in the Plains Wars campaigns of annihilation of Indians. Now, too, some of the soldiers pacifying Moros were Slavs who in other contexts were condemned as "not a desirable acquisition for us to make, since they appear to have so many items in common with the Chinese."³⁶ By operating a Gatling gun, a U.S. soldier convincingly demonstrated his whiteness, even if he were a Slovak or Rusyn.³⁷ And even if other immigrants couldn't get over to Luzon to help in this imperial project, they could read about the savagery of other, even less convincing white folks who didn't always grasp the wisdom of Washington's rule.

Not all Slovak papers were always as supportive of colonization, though, especially when uprisings were brutally suppressed. The ambivalence of the response can be gauged since *Slovák v Amerike* in 1906 labeled “Filipinos robbers and fanatics” and in January 1913 dismissed Moros as “savage citizens,” but later denounced General Pershing for slaughtering 2,000 Moros. This story ends with a sarcastic editorial comment, which indicates not all Slovaks always unequivocally accepted America as an enlightened nation. “That’s spreading that American civilization!” the editor sniped. “And then if necessary, they say they need more soldiers to do the job!” *Amerikanský ruský viestník*, which had previously supported the Spanish-American War, and even published soldiers’ letters on the suppression of the “savages,” in 1904 criticized “American brutality” in the Far East, including the American water torture used on Filipinos, and the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion by “the scandalous American gladiators.”³⁸ Indeed, the nation was divided on the wisdom of acquiring overseas colonial possessions, but, as Christopher Lasch has pointed out, some opponents of empire acted for less than altruistic reasons. They were motivated not out of sympathy for Filipinos or Puerto Ricans, but out of a fear that the non-European colonial subjects the United States might obtain would dilute America’s racial stock or degrade Anglo-Saxon traditions of self-rule.³⁹ Some of this ambivalence with projected empire was reflected in venues and cultural productions with which immigrants were familiar. New York’s East Side House Settlement, for example, which sought to acculturate Bohemian (Czech), Slovak, and other immigrant children to American mores, in 1900 sponsored a debate for the Settlement’s Fellow Citizenship Association on “Does the Retention of the Philippines Tend to Imperialism”? Whatever the conclusions Slavic immigrant attendees at the club reached, they learned that the colonial war was opposed by prominent Americans ranging from Mark Twain to William Jennings Bryan.⁴⁰

Some of these reservations about colonial projects made it into Slovak and Rusyn papers, too. The Catholic newspaper *Jednota*, organ of the First Catholic Slovak Union, in 1902 went so far as to report that McKinley “wanted to embark on a war with the Spanish so that the Philippine Islands could be taken by U.S. troops.” Consequently, the paper alleged, the president had declined Andrew Carnegie’s offer of 20 million dollars with which to purchase the islands’ freedom from Spain and thus avert war. Even more heretically, the paper charged that McKinley “knew that the battleship Maine in Havana harbor wasn’t blown up by the Spaniards, but the Americans themselves were responsible for the explosion, and as a result, our shameless pretext for war with Spain was groundless. That Carnegie says as much these days in his own words is enough to terribly tarnish McKinley’s memory.”⁴¹ Indeed, years later, it was determined that a faulty boiler had scuttled the battleship, not the Spanish saboteurs conjured up by newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst and other proponents of war. Evidently nonexistent weapons of mass destruction have been with us in many war scares.⁴²

Jednota continued to criticize U.S. rule in the Philippines, but it was often a tempered and qualified brand of anticolonialism that was expressed in this paper. Slavic editors were only concerned with the effects colonialism had on certain Filipinos, and less sympathetic to the plight of others. Like several Catholic Polish papers, this Catholic Slovak journal worried fellow Catholics were being treated unfairly in the Philippines, and criticized U.S. imperialists' lack of respect for Filipinos. The same day as the report of Carnegie's ignored attempts to thwart war, the lead item in the paper's "American news" column was about a meeting of Cleveland area Catholics held to protest "the atrocities committed by the U.S. government and U.S. forces against Catholics in the Philippines." The Irish priest chairing the meeting "read letters from American soldiers, who described the deeds of Americans against Catholics and Catholic interests" in the Philippines. The article charged American troops with desecrating Catholic churches and monasteries and "committing atrocities and barbarism that make everyone's hair rise." It was related that the meeting was told of a Catholic priest who was subjected to water torture after criticizing the American military, and further reported, "Filipino Catholic priests, who Americans described as wild Filipinos, say the Americans are the biggest villains, who are injuring and defrauding the Filipino Catholics and their interests. The Filipino people are tortured and murdered as if by savages. . . ." The meeting urged all Catholics to write President Roosevelt, Senator Mark Hanna, and Congressmen Burton and Beidler, to denounce the "barbaric American-Philippine administration and the American Army in the Philippines." Binaries of civilized and savage, already employed by rival Slavic papers such as *Slovák v Amerike* to stigmatize Igorots and Tagalogs, were now turned against the soldiers of Uncle Sam.⁴³

Jednota continued to look out for the interests of some colonized peoples, reporting that Archbishop Guidi had intervened with colonial Governor William Howard Taft on behalf of Filipino Catholics.⁴⁴ And in considering the "Filipino question," the paper editorialized on behalf of Catholic, but not Moro or other, Filipinos. The editorial writer wanted to know, "Why is the Catholic property in the Philippine Islands a thorn in the side of our liberal American government? Because the liberal (pagan) world does not love the fact that the Catholic Church has its assets, because they well know that if the Church enjoys her property she also has her liberty and independence." The writer asserted that the would-be appropriators of church land wished to see priests and bishops become penniless "dependents of the atheist state." In the Philippines, the writer saw a danger that the American authorities wished to "turn the Filipinos into unbelievers or Protestants," urging Catholics to support fellow Catholics, even if they were "Negroes and Indians."⁴⁵

Three years later the paper was less sympathetic when reporting a "Protestant protest." *Jednota* faulted Protestants and "journalists of Israel" for condemning Catholic Filipinos' celebrations and public processions on the Feast of the Virgin Mary. Noting that the U.S. colony was home to "some seven million-plus

Catholics,” the paper derided the “Ikies” who “protest[ed] against such ‘recognition’ of the Catholic Church as a ‘state’ religion, as protesters characterized it.”⁴⁶

Of course, as noted, other Slovak soldiers had already written back to *Slovák v Amerike* with slighting reference to the savage and fanatical non-Christian Filipinos, a distinction in treatment and regard that was reflected in the United States’ differential behavior toward Catholics and “savages” in the colony as well.⁴⁷ Even *Jednota*, which denounced depredations of Catholic Filipinos’ rights, cheered a Slovak soldier’s stationing in the colony,⁴⁸ and accepted the standard, early twentieth-century denigrations of non-Christian Filipinos. When it came to Muslim Filipinos, the paper often embraced the necessity of militarized American rule. Five months after news of the Cleveland Catholics’ meeting, *Jednota* ran a brief item noting, “The Muslim people of the Philippines refused to be governed by the United States and argued rather that their own laws should govern. The U.S. made them succumb.” As with lynching accounts, the brevity of this item speaks loudly when contrasted with the much angrier denunciation of alleged U.S. despoliations of Catholic Filipinos. In 1904 not all Muslim Filipinos, however, had realized they were fated to succumb, and *Jednota* reported, “Our soldiers’ mission in the Philippines is not yet finished and now comes the report from Catabalo, Mindanao, of a new bloody battle between the Filipinos and U.S. troops.” Four hundred men under the command of the Dattah (ruler) Ali stood up to an American cannon attack and even inflicted a hundred American casualties. “The Dattah and his entourage are now hunted,” the item concluded.⁴⁹ While a Catholic paper certainly was more concerned with the interests of coreligionists, the cursory attention paid to any water cures, cannon shots, or other methods designed to make non-Christian natives “succumb” is striking. In the earlier articles, evidently it was not that such atrocities had occurred that bothered *Jednota*; the real outrage was that they had occurred to Catholics.

Still, as the nature of American rule in Asia became apparent, characterizations of savage Filipinos were at times tempered, even reversed, as when the editors of *Amerikanský ruský věstník* belatedly expressed the opinion that the real culprit in the Far East was “American tyranny.” “Americans are wont to show off before the world, that they are the friendliest and the tamest, also the most educated, people on earth. We’ve seen some of this friendliness on sentry patrol in the scandalous Boxer Rebellion, which has been carried out by the American gladiators. Also we’ve seen the American ‘water cure’ practiced on the enslaved Philippines. This doesn’t strike us as particularly civilized.” *Jednota* in 1904 likewise fretted over the wisdom of America embarking on “Imperialism,” with less than citizenship rights granted to the “low citizens” of the Philippines and Puerto Rico. The paper noted that it was only a few years before this that the people of Cuba had rebelled against such treatment at the hands of Spain, and observed that anti-imperialists such as William Jennings Bryan and ex-President Grover Cleveland argued that it would be best for the republic and its institutions

if as many statehood rights “as practically possible” were extended to Puerto Rico and the Philippines. The paper also questioned the wisdom of embarking on a project to civilize the Philippines, when it waged war against its own black citizens, citing the intolerable conditions in the textile mills of Gaston County, North Carolina, as evidence. This was one of the few times in the early twentieth century that the paper expressed any sympathy for blacks; it seems that the plight of black millworkers was here employed discursively to criticize U.S. foreign policy.⁵⁰

Such ambivalence on the United States’ imperial project suggests editors were not always sure the Anglo-Saxon race was so very superior, or something into which self-respecting Slavs would even *want* to assimilate. Still, *Jednota*—like many English-language newspapers—was hesitant about extending full equality to America’s new insular possessions. As noted above, in 1904 the paper questioned the wisdom of acquiring overseas possessions, and urged the extension to Filipinos, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans of as many rights “as practically possible.”⁵¹ While imperialism caused some unease to recently captive subjects of the Habsburgs, that caveat “as practically possible” speaks to the psychic differential some new immigrants felt when assessing the distinction between denizens of Chicago or New York and San Juan and Manila. These papers’ expressions of anti-imperialism, too, came a little late in the game, and were drowned out by other items more in keeping with mainstream opinion. In a story headlined “35 Hindus deported,” *New Yorkský denník* noted that a federal judge in California ruled Filipinos to be “foreign Asiatics, and declared that they be deported.” The paper similarly reported a strike in Panama by Chinese merchants and small shopkeepers after they learned that the United States was intending to deport them from its newly acquired colony.⁵² And when *Jednota* objected to U.S. policy in the Philippines, it was not because of mistreatment of Filipino human beings but only to protest U.S. confiscation of the Catholic Church’s property.⁵³

“A Ridiculous Farce for Our Civilization and Culture to Play!”

To be sure, any criticisms of empire occurred within a racialized framework, mixing Old World prejudices with new. An editorial in *Amerikanský ruský věstník* could think of no worse condemnation for the Americans than noting “Such barbarism doesn’t occur even in Turkey and Americans demand that they be treated as the height of civilization.” As noted in Chapter 3, “Turks” and “Mohammedans” were viewed with hostility by many Slavs, and in the discourse of empire, Muslims were frequently condemned as especially primitive.

At other moments *Jednota*’s coverage hinted at some of the racial complexities for the United States at home and abroad when managing an empire. In reporting that black army regiments were being transferred to the Philippines, the paper noted, “Although officially denied, it has nevertheless been ascertained that this regulation is a matter in connection with the dissolution of the

three black regiments at Brownsville, Texas,” where black soldiers faced court martial after they forcefully resisted Jim Crow humiliations in the city in which they were stationed. This policy was a reversal of earlier decisions to keep most black soldiers out of the colony, because, the paper explained, “the Filipinos have a great hatred of the black race, as in America, the people of the islands would have been humiliated if blacks tried to keep order in the country. . . . The government is still afraid that a second black regiment might be destroyed by the Moro population.” While this explanation parroted the government’s rationale for initially transferring black soldiers out of the archipelago, it is likely their transfers were hastened after Filipino freedom fighters started soliciting blacks’ desertions from the U.S. Army by citing the lynchings and segregation that awaited them back home in the country they were serving.⁵⁴

A 1909 editorial in the Catholic paper indicates growing frustration with the cost of occupation and military adventures; skepticism toward the government’s assertions that it was civilizing the natives, and disgust at the squalor and savagery of a population still bent on resisting U.S. rule. The editorial argued that “our mighty imperialists need to show proper respect and defend our uncivilized people,” and referred to the squalor of Manila even after 11 years of U.S. occupation; the segregation of hotels that barred native Filipinos was labeled “a ridiculous farce for our culture and civilization to play!” The editorialist also complained Filipinos “never before have seen or been shown respect.” Still, it was the financial cost (more than \$200,000,000, the article said) and mounting U.S. casualties that had “left a stain on the shield of our republic.” The writer declared, “Our government has actually become imperialist and believes that providence has selected us as the protector of these uncivilized people, even though perhaps they think we haven’t delivered all that much civilized help through our deeds and words.” The futility of the war, which still dragged on after more than a decade of U.S. occupation, was faulted, but the writer also noted that the natives were “a piratical horde,” which could easily inflict a guerilla war on U.S. troops *ad infinitum*, “but we of this country are not used to such hardships.”

As in an earlier *Amerikansky russky viestnik* article, the hardships of concern were those visited on Americans, not occupied natives. And as in the case of Ján Dianish writing of his exploits defending “our country” (even if so far from North America), this writer speaks to the ease with which Slavic immigrants embraced Americanism, albeit within a racialized context. Indeed, *Jednota’s* editorialist went on to mock the folly of attempting to educate Filipinos, whom he characterized as “lazy and indifferent.” The “savage tribes are still human oddities,” he concluded. Evidently not every Slovak embraced the U.S. imperial venture as wholeheartedly as Trooper Dianish, but the racialized assumptions of Asiatic and “Negrito” savagery persisted even for those critiquing imperialism.⁵⁵

All in all, Slovaks’ coverage of America’s colonial venture in the Philippines was ambivalent, and even when papers critiqued U.S. policy, articles often

accepted racialized stereotypes and hierarchies. Catholic newspapers, perhaps out of an awareness that many of the country's new colonial captives were coreligionists, seem to have been more ambivalent in their assessment of the imperial project, at times quite critical of the brutality, economic cost, and hypocrisy of empire, even as they accepted notions of savagery of many non-Europeans.

Slovák v Amerike and *New Yorkský denník*, secular papers, were more consistent in labeling Filipinos as innately savage, thieving, and violent. An eyewitness "report from the jungle" in *New Yorkský denník* from the still-not-pacified Philippines related in 1915 that "Insurgents in the Philippines, who are still a small gang, are half patriots and half bandits; they are deceitful and treacherous." The reporter noted that when "the whoop sounds anew" from the "half bandits," "The bravest soldier would have rushed out of that place."⁵⁶ In relating stories of battles between Moros and U.S. soldiers, *Slovák v Amerike* referred to the natives as "savage residents," and the "tribesmen in Jikira" confronting soldiers were "the most bloodthirsty gangs who caused trouble" and "bandits." As in Mexico, which was also extensively covered by the Slavic press, any opposition to the forces of order or colonial rule was denounced as the work of lawless "bandits." Only the most egregious bloodletting by U.S. forces, as when General Pershing ordered the slaughter of 2,000 Moros, elicited a condemnation from *Slovák v Amerike*.⁵⁷

Old canards of Filipinos' savage customs persisted into the 1920s in *New Yorkský denník*. "The most favorite meat of some people in the Philippine islands is dog meat," a filler item related. Kramer notes that such sideshow exoticism of Filipinos occurred in sites such as the St. Louis World's Fair, to the consternation of Manila elites. Less savage stereotypes were no less flattering. A humor-page joke has a white lady in the colony experiencing problems with her Filipino houseboy. "One day a young American lady was dressing in her bedroom and her servant started entering the room. 'Juan!' she indignantly exclaimed. 'Whenever you come in, knock first; I could have been naked [*neoblečenu*].' 'No,' retorted [*vysletoval*] the servant, 'that wouldn't happen. I always peep in the keyhole and only put on clothes and come in if I see that you're dressed.'" The naked, dog-eating Filipino trickster continued to bedevil the Slovak imagination.⁵⁸

Other ethnic groups, though, were often quite critical of U.S. imperialism. Jacobson notes Polish newspapers often objected to America's imperialism, although with some ambivalence. Many Poles saw participation in the U.S. Army in the war to liberate Cuba as military training for a national uprising in Poland. But when *Dziennik Chicagoski*, which had never been that supportive of the call to war, saw how U.S. "liberation" quickly degenerated into occupation, it ran a front-page cartoon in 1900. A Cuban is reading a newspaper, and behind him is a poster saying the U.S. will remain until law and order are established. The paper's headlines scream of several lynchings in the United States. The Cuban sighs, "When I read of these atrocities I come to the conclusion that my old, bloody friend Weyler is now the chief commander in the United States."⁵⁹

Many Polish papers likewise denounced the brutality in the Philippines far more consistently than Slovak papers. Jacobson points out that Poles' own captive status in Europe caused immigrant journalists to look with sympathy on natives' national aspirations. The editor of *Kurier Polski* sighed, "For us Poles, this war is not necessarily pleasant. Traditionally we always stand on the side of the oppressed; since we have repeatedly taken up arms in defense of our independence, we naturally sympathize with all other peoples struggling for independence—even if they be half-savage Malays."⁶⁰

Sympathy for Filipino aspirations was repeated in *Zgoda*, and it seems many Polish papers, to a greater extent than Slovak ones, had reservations (if not outright opposition) to imperialism. But Jacobson notes even here an ambivalent, conflicted attitude toward Asians was expressed. "Half-savages" were sympathized with only up to a point. "[A]s white Europeans in a context where white supremacy and European centrality were the founding assumptions of so much public discussion, many immigrants could distance themselves from the Filipinos and adopt American 'responsibilities' in the Pacific as their own."⁶¹

Still, strong condemnations of McKinley as a shameful heir to Lincoln and cartoons and editorials criticizing Teddy Roosevelt's racism in pursuing colonial ventures against non-Europeans appeared in Polish papers such as *Zgoda*, *Straz*, and *Dziennik Chicagoski*. *Straz* pointed out the hypocrisy of a nation that allowed Kentucky lynch law seeking to "civilize" the "savage" Tagalogs. Such Polish denunciations appeared far more frequently than in Slovak papers. These publications rightly demonstrate that not every immigrant automatically and unequivocally embraced America's imperial ventures.⁶²

Yet Jacobson notes much of the Polish press's coverage—even that which expressed outrage at McKinley's war—was a fraught mixture of emotions. *Zgoda*, for example, seems often to have ambivalently expressed nationalistic support of the United States, opposition to imperialism, but ultimately pride in the "manly" success of U.S. soldiers. *Kurier Polski* was more sympathetic to the Filipinos than many Slovak journals, but thought the Malays were not quite ready for independence, and wondered if, unlike for European Poles, partition or occupation might be a blessing for such "half-savages." Sympathy for Cubans or Filipinos, Jacobson argues, "did not preclude Eurocentric, racist conceptions of 'civilization' and 'savagery,' which comfortably cast the Filipinos as 'other.' Through the prism of race, an unthinkable sympathy with the conquering nation became thinkable for many."⁶³

"An Interesting Case of Illness": Cuba

This ambivalence is seen in the pages of Slovak papers, which in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War seemed unsure what to think as America's erstwhile allies continued to pursue liberty beyond the parameters of what American

authorities were willing to grant. *Slovák v Amerike*, as early as 1899, ran an illustration of the Cuban rebel leader, General Máximo Gómez (see Figure 5-5). "In Cuba, there is now a spreading unrest," the caption informed readers. "Cubans want to be a free people and can't see why they shouldn't get rid of the

FIGURE 5-5: "In Cuba, There Is Now a Spreading Unrest." "General Máximo Gómez and a Map of Cuba." Cuba was another misbehaving little brother of the United States. *Slovák v Amerike*, October 13, 1899, 1.

occupying United States." Still, readers were given lurid details of the violent criminality "rampant in Cuba," with common lynchings and riots "giving rise to general discontent." Unlike in accounts of disciplined white citizenry restoring order in Mississippi, this account suggests that Cubans' dream of becoming "a free people" was a chimera due to the lawless nature of the populace.⁶⁴

As with the Philippines, sometimes it was Catholic papers that were more sympathetic to the Cubans, although not without some condescension. Perhaps because of his own captivity in the Kingdom of Hungary, a Greek Catholic Rusyn writing in *Amerikansky russky viestnik*, on June 6, 1901, added a few comments of his own to a report that "A Cuban constitutional convention has approved the Platt Amendment by a majority vote." After the convention accepted this American-drafted addition to the likewise American-crafted Cuban constitution, a rebellion erupted. The article noted that under the Platt Amendment, "the United States will have the right to decide upon all commercial treaties that Cuba has concluded with foreign countries. The United States can intervene in Cuban affairs in times of need, when the U.S. decides it is in the protection of their interests." Consequently the article noted that "the country has split apart into Cuban patriots and traitors and such," although the writer didn't indicate whether supporters of Platt were patriots or traitors, and to whom. Still, he sardonically added, "The United States has the right to a healthy supervision of Cuban laws and to me that is an interesting case of illness, considering the epidemic that the United States introduced there." He concluded however, "The amendment is in many respects liberal, but all the combatives in Cuba want freedom."⁶⁵

Other papers were more laudatory toward the United States and the gift of freedom the country had ostensibly bestowed on Cuba. *Jednota* ran a story headlined "Glorious Cuba," but the article had little praise for the passive recipients of American benevolence, instead hailing President Theodore Roosevelt for handing independence to a grateful island nation. Indeed, while Cuba's new president, Estrada Palma, was said to have received into his hands the new government from American General Leonard Wood, the article left little doubt as to the real father of Cuban independence:

If President Roosevelt had not been at the helm of the United States on this glorious day, the Cuban people today would barely have a life; therefore we can boldly say that the president, who himself personally fought for the freedom of the island of Cuba, really made them free. Indeed, if President Roosevelt had never done anything else special in his life, he would through these actions alone have made himself immortal in the history of the world. He has fulfilled all the dreams and hopes of all Cubans and of all the noble people of the world.

Forgotten were the Cuban patriots or traitors cited by *Amerikansky russky viestnik* who the year before had condemned the Platt Amendment.⁶⁶

Evidently not everyone had as healthy an opinion of Roosevelt's achievements, for in three months *Jednota* reported that "The Cuban government has made it clear to the Americans that their regaining of their freedom in the Republic of Cuba is near."⁶⁷ While this brief item made no mention of it, the Cuban impatience may have been at the continued presence of U.S. troops and at Washington's decision to maintain a protectorate over Havana—a situation that would not be ameliorated until 1939. Most Americans dismissed Cubans' reservations at this arrangement, as did *Jednota*, which in October 1902 belittled Cuban President Estrada Palma for balking at signing "a reciprocal commercial treaty," and dismissed as fanciful the Cuban leader's request that the United States "just suddenly pull those troops from Cuban territory." The American "big stick policy" toward her Latin American neighbors seems to have been internalized by some Slovak newspaper writers as well.⁶⁸

The ambivalence toward Cuba, especially when race was factored into the equation, is demonstrated through the pages of *Jednota* and *Slovák v Amerike*. In 1909 *Slovák v Amerike* editorialized, "The U.S. must retreat so that Cuba can be free."⁶⁹ Yet the "prism of race" that Jacobson says prevented even sympathetic Poles from always affording equal rights to Cubans or Filipinos operated for Slovaks, too. As noted, Catholic Slovaks denounced depredations against coreligionists in Manila, but accepted at face value a narrative foregrounding savage banditry among Moros and Igorots. And when black Cubans organized to oppose segregation or assert political rights in a country in which they were a majority, the Slovak press expressed alarm. The prospect of a black republic in which whites would take orders from those of a different race was simply too great an offense for Slovaks to imagine; after all, editors at *Jednota* and *Slovák v Amerike* were now reporting from the United States, a country in which many states had only recently disfranchised their own minority voters. By January 1907 *Jednota* was viewing with alarm the actions of black activists in the Caribbean. When a Liberal victory was predicted in elections on the island, the paper noted that "[t]he Liberals are 73 percent black and only 27 percent white . . . blacks are well represented in the leadership. Above all blacks want to get the presidential chair." Such a prospect was labeled "a public menace threatening the island," especially if U.S. troops were withdrawn. The writer informed Slovak readers that those troops "are there to stop an outbreak of a revolution, for they will never tolerate an impermissible rule of blacks over whites."

The article also alerted readers that the Liberals were violating property rights (although the article didn't say so, these were likely American business interests' generous "rights" to operate free of Havana's regulation or oversight, as granted under the Platt Amendment) and that personal safety was threatened by the prospect of a majority-black Liberal government. In an era when whites organized mass vigilante violence against blacks who sought to retain some civil rights in places such as Mississippi, Atlanta, or Wilmington, North Carolina, a black-majority political party may have been perceived as self-evidently indicative of coming

anarchy. The island “revolution” that the article warned was imminent and the “complete anarchy” that “many argued” would occur within six months of a black-led victory in Cuba, seems to have been nothing more than a white phobia of black political organization. Certainly any vestige of black self-defense or organized political activity that had survived into 1907 in the United States was often so stigmatized. Roosevelt reiterated his faith in the “maturity” of the Cuban people, but warned that U.S. troops would remain stationed on the island during “the present turmoil” and reminded audiences foreign and domestic that “Cuba was built under the protectorate of the United States. . . .” The self-congratulatory tone at Roosevelt’s achievements that *Jednota* had published five years earlier was absent in this report. While the article is typical of the English-language metropolitan press’s despair at Cuban (especially black Cuban) anarchy, tellingly the Slovak paper’s editors added no critique of the report’s ominous tone warning of a black-led anarchist reign. These assumptions seem to have gone unquestioned.⁷⁰ This article appeared on the same page as the report of black U.S. soldiers being reassigned to duty in the Philippines. Empire—or quasi-empire in the case of Roosevelt’s firm role in Havana—could not easily be disentangled from domestic matters of race.

In 1912 black Cubans again organized in an attempt to remove some of the racial inequities that had persisted under the American protectorate; now, facing the prospect of organized black resistance, *Slovák v Amerike* forgot its earlier opinion that “The U.S. must retreat so that Cuba can be free.” Headlines warned of a “Rebellion of the blacks,” surely words to alarm readers in the Jim Crow era. As the “rebellion” grew, the paper ran news that the United States was sending a battleship from Key West, Florida, to assist the government’s army that was “deployed against the rebellious blacks.” Illustrations of the opposing race-based armies accompanied the article. Amid news that “the government is failing to obey the blacks’ demand that they withdraw the Morne law, which is regarded as unjust to blacks,” the paper reported “a prediction that Cuba will rather break apart into two parts, one consisting of the white population and the other of black people. . . .” A week later, the paper alarmingly opined, “Most of the rebels are anti-American plantation workers, great enemies of order.”⁷¹ Neither article noted that the movement of black Cubans had begun as a political party, and that even this was violently suppressed by the island’s establishment. Instead, images of blacks manning machine guns signified to Slovak readers, as to other newspaper readers, that a race war was brewing, one that could be attributed to the black “great enemies of order.”

Even if race was sometimes not as explicitly spelled out as here, Slovak papers often used words such as “savage,” “cannibal,” “bloodthirsty,” and “barbaric” in supposedly objective foreign news coverage of Cubans, Filipinos, and other colonized peoples. While these signifiers were staples of yellow journalism, it’s difficult to dismiss them as having no effect on at least some readers’ perceptions of other races and continents. Perri Giovannucci has astutely argued in our own

age that reportage and literature that speaks of “backward” or “timelessly primitive” peoples serves an ideological function. Likewise when Slovaks read newspaper accounts of wild Filipinos or Cubans resisting Uncle Sam, more than objective battle accounts was conveyed.⁷²

This is not to say every Slovak was anaesthetized to the brutality of empire, for, as noted, a particularly fierce slaughter could elicit from *Slovák v Amerike* (otherwise supportive of the colonial project) a denunciation of Pershing’s harsh imposition of “culture and civilization.”⁷³ A letter in *New Yorkský denník* recommended the article “On that Hawaiian Slavery” in the radical paper *Rovnost ľudu*.⁷⁴ After three white Texas farmers were lynched, the editor of *Slovák v Amerike* commented, “McKinley needs to look into this. He needs to introduce some culture here, and not in the Philippines.”⁷⁵ Perhaps, though, it was the whiteness of the victims that spurred this editorializing. Regarding America’s imperial adventures the Slovak press was less condemnatory than Polish papers. It may have been memory of the homeland’s own partition by Russia, Prussia, and Austria that made Polish journalists acutely sensitive to the injustice of colonization, but, for whatever reason, Slovak papers less frequently questioned American colonial ventures, and never as virulently as in the Polish press.

“Endless Big Headaches for Uncle Sam”: The Big Stick in the Caribbean

In other parts of the Caribbean where Uncle Sam wielded the “big stick,” immigrant newspapers often regarded native peoples with condescension. Haiti, for example, was periodically characterized as a lawless realm full of bandits that was a troublesome thorn in Washington’s side. C. L. R. James ably documented the degree to which a republic of “black Jacobins” was regarded by Europe and the United States as a threat to the racial status quo since Haiti’s beginning. At the turn of the twentieth century Slavic immigrant newspapers embraced the trope of black Caribbean lawlessness, even if it was not a phobia of their creation.⁷⁶ *Jednota* reported in 1902, “On the island of Haiti it is still not quiet and the revolution is raging on. These days more Negroes are battling among themselves there,”⁷⁷ but when the revolution didn’t subside, the paper reported three years later that the United States had been forced to intervene. “The United States has assumed a protectorate over the republic of Negroes,” Slovak readers read. In noting that “Santo Domingo” and Haiti “have been falling into one revolution after another, thus causing American and European businessmen there no end of damages and many vices,” the writer said that President Roosevelt had arranged to take over the ports of the violent black republics. “The United States will have control over customs and will prevent further unrest,” the article concluded.⁷⁸ No more accepting explanation of the necessity of President Roosevelt’s “big stick” interventions in the Caribbean could have been found in the English-language press.

Eight months later the paper reported on “the American colony of Santo Domingo,” in which businessmen hoped to establish plantations with docile, inexpensive native laborers now that Roosevelt and his army had prevented further unrest.⁷⁹ For all its criticism of the alleged depredations against Europeanized fellow Catholics in the Philippines, *Jednota* accepted the logic and justice of gunboat diplomacy directed against a “republic of Negroes,” even if, as in Haiti, they were fellow Catholics. Race evidently negated religion in the hierarchy of civilization and sympathies.

Similarly, on the very day that *Amerikanský ruský věstník* editorialized that the “Americans are tyrants” for their mistreatment of “the poor Filipinos,” the paper reported on “the looting of property” and threats to lives by rebellious people in “the two black republics of Haiti and Santo Domingo” that necessitated the shelling of the island by U.S. warships and the landing of 400 troops. While arguably the editorial included in its critique this action in the Caribbean, too, there was no explicit condemnation of the rumors that the United States “intends to occupy the whole black republic of San Domingo.” Slavic immigrants were not always entirely comfortable with America’s growing imperial role in the world. Like more prominent Americans, they worried about the potential damage insular possessions would cause to republican institutions, and sometimes deplored the cost in treasure and human lives. But of the folly of a “republic of negroes” Slavic newspaper editors seem to have had little doubt.⁸⁰

Especially when Latin American republics stood up to U.S. business interests, as appears to have been the proximate cause of Roosevelt’s ordering warships to San Domingo, the Slavic press joined with many other American journals and supported “gunboat diplomacy.” In 1905, *Slovák v Amerike* assessed the growing crisis of “Venezuela and the Monroe Doctrine.” An editorial that appeared on the same page that reported a brutal Mississippi lynching spoke dismissively of the Venezuelans’ incapacity for self-government, suggesting again that the accretion of articles dealing with race at home and abroad are difficult to disentangle. While, unlike Haiti, “the South American republic” was not labeled “a republic of negroes,” the editorialist nevertheless noted that it was bedeviling Washington by rejecting “the ‘Monroe Doctrine,’ a matter of principle that America is the only country to look after the Americas.” The writer noted that “due to poor administration,” Caracas was unable to pay its debts to foreign businessmen, and that President Roosevelt’s efforts to “urge Venezeula to properly pay its debts” were “greatly hated by Castro, president of Venezuela, who believes his country shouldn’t have to pay the debts.” When Castro moved to nationalize foreign mining properties, Roosevelt threatened to “send warships and thus . . . protect its citizens’ interests in Venezuela.” This is one of the few occasions when a Slavic paper expressed sympathy for mining “interests,” which otherwise suppressed strikes by immigrant laborers at places such as Lattimer, Pennsylvania.⁸¹ On this occasion, too, the writer noted, the president reasserted “a strict interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine,” declaring as “a matter of fact that the Monroe Doctrine

meant that the whole of the Americas belongs only to the United States, and that no foreign power should be mixed up in the Americas."⁸²

Three years later, Haiti again was of concern to Slovak journalists, as when *Jednota* reported on "Chaos on the island of Haiti." Threats to foreign businesses and embassies were related, and the writer stated, "We expect a great deal of trouble from this little republic of black people."⁸³ Unlike in the Philippines, no defense of fellow Catholics was articulated by *Jednota* when it came to Haiti. By May 1908 the paper spoke of a "new revolution in Haiti,"⁸⁴ while by December an editorial again invoked the Monroe Doctrine and "the big stick," English-language references to America's foreign-policy tenets in discussing the worrisome situation in the Caribbean. "What can arise from the revolution in Haiti?" the headline asked, and the writer quickly suggested, nothing good. In embracing the standard view of the United States that Port-au-Prince was a failed state since its inception, the writer asserted, "The rebels in Haiti are intoxicated by their victories. This happened long ago, for in this republic, ever since its inception in revolution, unrest has never ceased, and insurgents always managed to topple the government. Now how long happiness will persist, we don't know. It is certain that revolution will come again. . . ." The editorialist failed to mention the onerous trade embargoes and indemnities placed on Haiti by France and the United States back in 1804 as the price of freedom, but such elisions were usual in most newspaper accounts of Haiti from the early twentieth century.⁸⁵ *Jednota* was merely following the hegemonic narrative of eternally lawless Haiti, not expressing any special Slavic animus toward Port-au-Prince. Still, the writer also accepted the sacredness of Roosevelt's assertions of the Monroe Doctrine and America's sole proprietorship over the Western Hemisphere and warned, "The last Haitian revolution may have far-reaching consequences as regards the United States." It was not so much Haiti's strength as her weakness that was the worry, as the writer foresaw a coming "tussle [*zápletick*] with Germany, with this incessant international '*trublmakerom*.'" Here New World hegemony collided with Slavs' Old World enmities, for the editor warned that "the Germans want to have their 'big stick' in Haiti, just as our government does, too," employing, as in earlier articles, the English phrase that T. R. had popularized. The writer asserted for his immigrant readers that "it is imperative to command here," again echoing the aggressive U.S. stance toward smaller Caribbean nations; all worries of the justice of imperialism, as occasionally expressed with regard to the Philippines, were cast aside.

Still, while some worry was expressed at growing German "craving for new colonies to add to her African and Pacific possessions," the editorialist was fairly confident that German "butting into Haiti" would amount to nothing. "We are satisfied it will be enough to invite Haiti to behave properly, to keep her an obedient child, who will refrain from buying German goods and who will pay her debts honestly," the writer went on in an apt summary of McKinley's earlier "little brown brother" thesis. The writer added, "[T]he United States presently is perhaps thinking of taking the island of Haiti; they can get to this step by step,

depending on the circumstances. And many argue that these circumstances will certainly appear in the near future.”

The editorial’s final judgment was likewise almost a mirror of official expressions of unwilling assumption of Caribbean police duties: “This little republic of black citizens has supplied endless big headaches for Uncle Sam.” As in coverage of the Philippines, it was the United States, not the occupied country, that was portrayed as the aggrieved party.⁸⁶

The Slavic press often published citizenship courses, lessons on Americanization culled from high and popular culture, and primers in U.S. history, and certainly played an important role in facilitating immigrants’ acculturation to their new homes. Some of these history lessons likewise hastened an embrace of whiteness and condescension to a “little republic of black citizens” that might stand up to Uncle Sam.

When the United States indeed took the next step toward taking Haiti, and in 1915 began a 19-year-long occupation of the island, *Národné noviny* ran an almost minstrel-show image of a pipe-smoking black, “a native of the islands,” to accompany a feature on the “revolution” in Haiti (see Figure 5-6). The marines who restored “order” to the island imposed martial law, as well as segregation of the kind familiar to black residents of the United States. As in the earlier subjugation of the Philippines, some of the soldiers here were Slovaks, effacing some of their foreignness by engaging in imperial projects. One Slovak marine, however, did not fare well in Haiti, for in a story headlined “Murderous bandits in Haiti,” readers of *Národné noviny* learned that Mathew T. Liptak, Slovak of Coatesville, Pennsylvania, was drowned. His brother marines, however, blamed Liptak’s death on the “bandits of Haiti,” whom they slaughtered in retaliation.⁸⁷

As in the Philippines, those resisting occupation were axiomatically labeled “bandits,” for in the duration of this exercise in colonialism no possibility of legitimate black resistance to invasion was permissible. While it’s possible to commiserate with Liptak, meeting a sad death so far from either his Pennsylvania or Carpathian homeland, one wonders, too, if he or any member of his family had been witness—or participant?—in the 1911 Coatesville lynching, and whether this event had any effect on his perception of race four years before he shipped out to Haiti.⁸⁸

Articles in immigrant papers treating the rebellious black Haitians as bandits mirrored the mainstream press’s frequent contempt for colonized (or quasi-colonized) nonwhites. Henry Lewis Suggs has argued that only the African American press unambiguously “championed the Haitian revolutionaries [fighting U.S. marines] as freedom fighters in the tradition of African American abolitionists such as Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, and Nat Turner.”⁸⁹ While Slavic papers never went this far, even here the condescension of Caribbean peoples occasionally was mixed with an uncomfortable awareness that American colonization replicated an Old World pattern. *Amerikansky russhy viestnik*, for example, in 1919 described the inhabitants of the island of Puerto Rico as “with regard to color,

FIGURE 5-6: “A Native of the Island.” Haiti was characterized by another Slovak newspaper, *Jednota*, as “This little republic of black citizens” that “has supplied endless big headaches for Uncle Sam.” *Národné noviny*, September 30, 1915, 3.

black, and thus are known as [*nazvaný*] niggers.” In a mix of Rusyn and English, the article detailed with some amusement the pretensions of San Juan’s “black gentlemen” and “black ladies” [*čiernych džentlemenov, čiernych lejdís*]; to this extent the report seems to fall into a minstrel-show model of mocking colored peoples’

aspirations to enter high society. And yet this article's writer also saw some parallels between the Caribbean and the Carpathians. "The Puerto Ricans are a little like the black Carpatho-Rusyns," the writer admitted, speaking of "our patriots" who had recently won their freedom from Hungary. Astoundingly, and quite atypically, at least rhetorical similarity was expressed with the "niggers" of Puerto Rico, indicating that the stance that new immigrants took toward colonized peoples could sometimes be ambivalent, expressing both a racialized bemusement and some sympathy for a plight that might have resonated with recollections of Old World oppressions all at the same time.⁹⁰

More typically, however, when colonial subjects resisted their allotted, docile roles, it called up not comparisons to Slavic patriots, but alarm at rebellious natives. A strike of 40,000 sugar cane workers in Puerto Rico was depicted by *New Yorkský denník* as a sort of rebellion, noting that, "After the strike began, many plantations were destroyed by fire." While Slavs often read in their papers of the justified job actions of their peers, a racialized rebellion of Puerto Rican workers was characterized in less flattering terms.⁹¹

When the United States started building its Panama Canal, matters of race and labor were also at the forefront. The canal commission found that the use of non-white laborers would keep the construction costs down. Rusyns read in *Amerikanský ruský vestník* that contractors on the canal were exempt from the anti-*padrone* laws, and, while the paper asserted that "American laborers only should be employed on building the canal," a labor shortage was nevertheless forcing contractors to "import black islanders from Jamaica . . . to work on the canal. . . . They have been mixed together with Chinese coolies." As we shall see, Rusyns and Slovaks frequently read in their papers of the illegitimacy of black scabs and of the "Yellow Peril" that Chinese and Japanese laborers supposedly posed to wage rates in the continental United States; now nonwhite labor was viewed with alarm on this imperial engineering project as well. The paper neglected to mention that the United States authorities overseeing the canal project divided the work force into "gold" and "silver" workers, with Europeans and Euro-Americans judged gold and given better living quarters, higher pay, and generous vacation and recreation allowances; "silver" workers, from Jamaica, South America, and Asia, were given lower pay and none of the perks extended to whites.⁹²

Two years later, *Jednota*, too, reported, "After lengthy trials, our government and the building committee for the Panama Canal have finally figured out that in the building of the canal they inevitably need Chinese coolies." The paper hastened to reassure its readers, however, that those supplied by contractors would be ineligible to become permanent workers in the United States. Nevertheless, the peril to regular (white) wage rates was spelled out for readers, as some contractors sought to pay the Chinese only a dollar a day, while "others argue that the Chinese coolie can get 50 to 60 cents for a daily wage. On the Indian islands, lying quite near Panama, the wage rates are very low. There workers get 25–35 cents a day and food, which costs no more per day than

5–10 cents.”⁹³ While stereotypes of Asian and Caribbean docility and lower standards of living were on display here, *New Yorkský denník* would later report that Chinese merchants and small shopkeepers in Panama were organizing to protest intolerable conditions in the Canal Zone; Chinese militancy was viewed no more favorably than the supposed threat “coolie” laborers posed.⁹⁴

Slovak and Rusyn newspapers rarely questioned the justice of America's various interventions in its self-proclaimed Monroe Doctrine sphere of influence. At the end of 1909 readers of *Slovák v Amerike* learned that Washington was again sending the navy and the marines on a mission to restore a favorable business climate. “On the unrest in Nicaragua” featured a photograph of “Major Smedley Butler, U.S. Marine Corps.” It would take another 26 years for by-then Major General Smedley Butler to confess in his memoirs that “I was a Gangster for Wall Street” and that “War is a Racket.” None of this interpretation made it into *Slovák v Amerike*, whereas visits of Butler and his military peers to Nicaragua, Haiti, and Cuba were reported in detail.⁹⁵

Radical immigrants received a less celebratory vision of colonialism. *The Daily Worker*, many of whose readers were immigrants or children of immigrants—Slovaks, Rusyns, Ukrainians, Poles, and East European Jews among them—published a scathing cartoon on July 25, 1927, in the aftermath of yet another visit to Nicaragua by the U.S. marines. A bloodied, black *campesino* lies on his back, shaking his fist at an airplane labeled “U.S. Imperialism.” Behind him are the ruins of a devastated city, “Republic of Nicaragua.”⁹⁶ For Slovak readers of a radical bent, *Rovnost ľudu* of the Slovak Socialist Workers' Section offered the serialized “program of the Workers' Party in America” on “American imperialism.” The predecessor to the Communist Party of the United States of America in May 1922 published Slovak tutorials on U.S. actions “in Texas, Puerto Rico, Philippines, hegemony in Cuba, Panama, Santo Domingo, Haiti, Nicaragua under the sign of Wall Street. Guam and Samoa.” *Rovnost ľudu* delivered lessons on “A history that scandalized half the world.” Two years later the paper urged, “Let's stop talking about German imperialism; what about American imperialism?” and cited the Philippines, Haiti, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, and Mexico as proof. These were not the American history lessons regarding the Monroe Doctrine that appeared in *Slovák v Amerike*.⁹⁷

“U.S. Border at Risk”: Mexico

Within the nonsocialist papers, Mexico, too, was often characterized as a land of people prone to banditry. As early as 1906 *Slovák v Amerike* reported “Battles between Mexicans and Americans” along the Rio Grande, but this narrative refrain escalated with the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution against long-time President Porfirio Díaz.⁹⁸ Shortly after Díaz's contested re-election to an eighth term in early December 1910, *Slovák v Amerike* related the growing rebellion

against the Porfiriato in the province of Chihuahua. The paper offered "Scenes from the Mexican uprising" and said that "the insurgents are the winners." The term used to describe the "rebels" or "insurgents"—"*povstalci*"—did not necessarily carry connotations of savagery or primitiveness, but, as the Mexican Revolution grew, other Slovak papers began to employ such language.⁹⁹

By the fall of 1913, *Národné noviny* was cautiously optimistic that the worst of the violence was over, reporting that "the situation in Mexico is more promising." "After many fierce battles, intrigues and bloodshed, it is hoped that the unfortunate occurrences in Mexico perhaps will soon end and be followed by better and more peaceful times," the writer noted. At this point in the revolution, however, some doubt was voiced as to whether Mexicans could ever escape the cycle of violence, with a suggestion that lawlessness was something endemic to the land and its people. "For Mexico, the place of incessant warfare and bloody battles, there now comes news that, although slowly, but still surely the war may be coming to an end," the writer noted, "although maybe it's just simply a silent pause before the storm rises even more strongly." Still, the article relayed reports that Mexican President Victoriano Huerta would step aside and let more able men—men who met with Washington's approval—run for president. Two weeks later, however, any room for hope of peace was gone as the paper reported "Huerta is dictator of Mexico."¹⁰⁰

Huerta's self-appointment was resisted within Mexico from many quarters, and within five weeks, *Národné noviny* offered less optimistic assessments. "U.S. border at risk," the headline cried on November 20, 1913, in a refrain that might even speak to the phobias of some readers today. In 1913, though, Slovaks themselves were regarded by many immigration restrictionists as threats to the Anglo-Saxon sanctity of the republic; the long report out of El Paso, Texas, translated into Slovak, made no mention of the irony of this situation, however. Instead immigrants read that in El Paso one could hear the cannon fire in Juarez. "Rumors are flying throughout the city that General Villa has seized Juarez, and he is one of the leaders of the rebellion. . . . Bullets are flying across the border in El Paso, and there are serious concerns about the safety of the local American population." A month later the newspaper published a lengthy story on Pancho Villa, "the savage Mexican bandit chief." Even though the article said that Villa had restored order to the city of Chihuahua, it also related that he had issued new regulations in Spanish with respect to seized assets. The English-language press's narrative privileging the sanctity of private property—no matter under what conditions foreign assets had been acquired in Mexico under the Porfiriato—and as signifiers of Villa's "savage," "bandit" Mexican nature, were soon to result in the sending of U.S. marines to Veracruz to restore order, at least for American investors. Such narratives of Mexican banditry at least in this instance were replicated in *Národné noviny*.¹⁰¹

The cries of "banditry" and lawlessness were picked up with even greater intensity by *New Yorkský denník*. "Anarchy in all of Mexico," the paper reported on

February 3, 1915, while a sidebar warned "Foreigners are menaced." The U.S. consul in Tampico reported that the Mexican Army commander there "issued a decree, which says that every foreigner in Tampico will be immediately executed if they are providing assistance to the enemy."¹⁰² Six months later the paper reported "serious unrest in Mexico," where it was noted that "Francesco Villa is taking extreme measures against foreign businessmen in the territory that he controls. Foreign traders have been expelled or imprisoned. This general practice is occurring because of charges of loan sharking by foreigners due to food shortages, in which the poor people, especially in the city of Chihuahua, are dying of hunger." The article continued:

The heroic general had to summon all the merchants, and tell them to abandon their war profiteering, and then he addressed the government of the United States: "I'll take you to your business; your business is to help people. And if the U.S. government does not like my behavior, it can go to hell." . . . This tirade ended with the confiscation of all the businesses in Chihuahua by his government. . . . [A] merchant who tries to open his door for business will be immediately shot.¹⁰³

The context of a "tirade" against the United States suggests the general's "heroic" nature was read by many as ironic. Rather, alarming cries of "anarchy" and "serious unrest" implicitly equated Mexicans and lawless banditry, even if, for the moment, that charge was held in reserve.

Other articles indicate that this anarchy was regarded as reflective of degenerate stereotypes of an innately Mexican lawless character, requiring U.S. intervention to impose order. Reports more explicitly referred to Mexicans as bandits who were terrorizing their own benighted country and had now crossed into the United States, as when the paper alarmingly announced "Mexican bandits terrorize Texas." In this report, "a great number of Mexican bandits" were said to have "assaulted ranches" near Cameron. The report said that, "It is understood that the fight developed between the federal army, horsemen and Texas ranch men on one side and Mexican bandits on the other." This report appeared on the same day as a six-column headline ran on page one, trumpeting Mexican banditry south of the border and the sending of two further warships by the United States to Veracruz in response. Another report related that "Mexican bandits kill two Americans" in the village of Sebastian, 30 miles from Brownsville. Killed were Al Austin and his son, Charles. The report noted that "Austin was chairman of the League of Law and Order in Sebastian."¹⁰⁴

Neil Foley has documented the peonage under which Mexican farm laborers suffered in Texas during the early twentieth century, and the efforts *campesinos* made to seek justice, efforts that were invariably stigmatized as banditry. He further notes that paramilitary forces such as the Texas Rangers were utilized by Anglo ranchers to keep Mexican laborers in subjugation, with vigilante groups

such as the League of Law and Order often aiding the Rangers in maintaining the “white scourge.” Any suggestion that “law and order” were differentially applied to non-white peoples, however, is absent from *New Yorkský denník*’s report. The paper already was too busy reporting on the anarchy of Mexico; under such circumstances it was impossible to suggest the “bandits” “assaulting” ranches and vigilantes (or U.S.-owned businesses in Veracruz) were actually seeking justice.¹⁰⁵

This Slovak paper continued to relate skirmishes between “Mexican bandits” and U.S. troops, with little reflection that Washington was intervening in its neighbor’s civil war and thus some of the “bandits” were likely combatants. One report, however, of “a battle that developed between Mexican bandits and American troops, who swooped into the United States” noted that Mexican President Carranza promised that “Villa’s troops are on the run” and asked Washington for four trainloads of armaments to finish the job. Under such circumstances it’s perhaps not surprising that Villa and his “bandits” fired back, even if *New Yorkský denník* didn’t draw this conclusion.¹⁰⁶

When Villa raided the United States at Columbus, New Mexico, this paper referred again to the “menacing Mexican bandits”; *Národné noviny* likewise spoke of “Mexican bandits” and warned “the consequences . . . may be grim.” While in January 1917, after a visit to U.S. troops stationed in Mexico, General Funston optimistically reported “there is no fear of Mexican bandits,” accounts of Mexican bandits and their “audacity” recurred in *New Yorkský denník* into 1922. The following year the paper reported that two Protestant preachers had been lynched by rebels in a Mexican village. Images of bloodthirsty Mexicans recurred with regularity in the Slovak press.¹⁰⁷

Still, not every paper always accepted the hegemonic narrative, either with regard to Mexican lawlessness or the justice of U.S. authorities’ actions at home and abroad. *Národné noviny*, which often denounced the injustices immigrants faced in industrial workplaces, in 1914 likewise denounced the hypocrisy of America using force at home against Southeast European strikers while arguing that U.S. forces likewise were needed to bring order to Mexico. The context for this comparison was the Ludlow Massacre, where the children and wives of striking immigrant coal miners were murdered at the hands of state militia. In September 1913, miners had gone on strike against the Rockefeller-controlled Colorado Fuel and Iron Company over deteriorating wages and working conditions, but also the company’s refusal to recognize the United Mine Workers’ right to represent their employees. After miners struck they were evicted from company housing and erected a series of tent colonies, including one at the small town of Ludlow. There on April 20, 1914, a day-long battle erupted between state militia working hand in glove with the corporation and armed miners. The militia and local deputies eventually gained the upper hand and torched the tent colony. Two women and eleven children who had taken refuge in dugouts burrowed into the ground under the burning tents died that day.¹⁰⁸

It was this disaster that caused *Národné noviny* to denounce the hypocrisy of using troops to bring both order to “lawless” Mexico and miners’ funerals to Colorado. “There is no crime that capitalism cannot even imagine, for capitalism itself is a case of crime,” the editorialist thundered. “A capitalist is the greatest patriot, his property is never in danger, but he wants to protest the fact that we protect the assets of our labor with our lives,” the writer continued, before asking, “Wouldn’t it be better if the United States forced Rockefeller to surrender battalions in Colorado before it forced Mexico to do so?” The writer further asserted that, compared to the militia of Colorado, the Mexicans elsewhere stigmatized as “bandits” were fairly innocent: “The only difference between the war in Mexico and the war against workers in Colorado is that the Mexican soldiers didn’t kill innocent women and children, but in Colorado they did.” In a display of international worker solidarity atypical in Slovak articles relating to Mexico, the writer recognized that, “The workers of the United States have nothing against the workers in Mexico, nor do the workers in Mexico have anything against U.S. workers.” A month after the Ludlow Massacre, the real enemy to this writer seemed easy to identify: “[W]ell, therefore, what war does concern our workers?—Who wants to take a guess!” The editorial concluded, “When will you free the workers, you big shots, when Uncle Sam deals unfairly with Mexico and always sends troops to fire on striking workers and their families?” In the aftermath of the latest coalfield war martyrdoms, the wisdom of chasing after “lawless” Mexicans was mocked.¹⁰⁹

Such recognition of immigrant worker solidarity with slaughtered Mexican “bandits,” however, was rare. More frequently the trope of Mexican bandits and primitiveness stood alone to create once again Latin American alterity for Slavic readers; even *Národné noviny* on other occasions referred to Villa as a bandit who spelled trouble for America.¹¹⁰

Indeed, the conflicted nature of some Slovaks’ identity formation was on display in the pages of *Národné noviny*. The paper spoke to a largely working-class membership that likely read with mixed glee and outrage accounts of Ludlow that lambasted Rockefeller as a hypocrite and capitalist political parties as assemblages of whores. The rhetorical twinning of Mexican and American workers as kindred people facing the bosses’ army likely resonated with Slovaks who were veterans of Ludlow, McKeesport, Homestead, or any one of numerous other working-class battlefields. Nevertheless, other Slovaks were already serving with the U.S. Army in places such as the Philippines, as we’ve seen; in such places whiteness, not class, became the most salient boundary marker. And other Slovaks sent letters to *Národné noviny* relating their own small part in the U.S. effort to rein in the bandit Villa. Like Dianish and Pavliak writing from the Philippines before him, in 1916 Ján Juhas, serving with the U.S. Army chasing “bandits” in Mexico, sent a letter to *Národné noviny*. “From New York we departed for Galveston and thence to an island,” Juhas, who had been unable to find work in his home of Clarksburg, West Virginia, wrote of his enlistment. “And then

things really got hot for the Fourth Regiment. I think you have read something about it in the newspapers. . . . We've had a few unpleasant times, as when we chased seventy Mexican bandits across the river."

Like other writers, Juhas made comparisons between newly encountered backward peoples and Old World pariahs. "What is the population like, these Mexicans?" he asked. "They're all poor people. Wherever we go, everywhere we see shacks made of straw, in which the poor people live miserably—worse than our gypsies in the old country. And they can't help it, they have no opportunity to earn something. The people here speak Spanish, and we, therefore, are uncomfortable, we can hardly speak with them. . . ." In a final paragraph, Juhas referred three times to the Mexicans as "bandits."¹¹¹

Unlike most news accounts from Mexico and other colonized or quasi-colonized territories, this letter was not a rewrite of mainstream wire services, but reflected a Slovak writer's own acceptance of the hegemonic construct of nonwhite, lawless Mexicans. Either Juhas hadn't read the editorial denouncing the even greater lawlessness of Rockefeller and the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, or, as a soldier of Uncle Sam, he was already having the enemy's inferiority drilled into him by January 1916. In either case, the irony is palpable. What was someone saying about the "fanatical" Dianish or backward Juhas—as well as other slighted Poles, Slovaks, Rusyns, Ukrainians, and Italians—back in West Virginia or Chicago chapters of the Immigration Restriction League? Whiteness was situational, and one of the situations in which it shone was in policing the borders of empire.¹¹²

Nor were Slavic immigrants alone in articulating a notion of Mexican savagery or backwardness. Jewish children at New York's Christadora House settlement on the Lower East Side in 1913 wrote and performed *Mexicana, an original musical farce in two acts* for the settlement's Unity Club. While such ethnic masquerades were common, the show included the musical number, "Stand Back, You Swarthy Pagan!" which was sung by the characters Vivian (Kate Schechter), Pierre Le Prue (Irvin Tannenbaum), and Tweezle (Herman Martinson). In 1913 reports of lawless Mexicans embroiled in a bandit-fueled revolution were common in English- and foreign-language newspapers. That Jewish immigrant or second-generation children, guided by settlement workers engaged in a project of Americanization, wrote songs warning of Mexican "pagans" suggests that messages of Mexican alterity were internalized by some white ethnics. Then, too, labeling Mexicans "swarthy pagans" suggests a melding of Old World phobias of the heathen East with New World concerns with racial boundaries.¹¹³

"People Chewers" of the World: Africa and Colonization

Even more explicitly denigrating boundaries were drawn between the savage and the civilized when Slovak papers considered Africa. Largely following the tropes of mainstream, English-language newspapers, immigrant journals often depicted

the natives of the "Dark Continent" as backward cannibals in need of the light of progress, even if cannons and rifles had to accompany this modernizing mission. Some of these stories in *Slovák v Amerike*, *New Yorkský denník*, and other journals were run for their cannibal "humor" content, but others were straightforward news accounts; in either case, a discourse of a hierarchized racial world order, in which European peoples naturally deserved to colonize other parts of the globe, was replicated for immigrant readers.¹¹⁴

As in Juhas's letter relating tales of backward, bandit Mexicans, travel accounts in *New Yorkský denník* similarly presented a picture of African primitiveness in language that East Europeans could understand. A two-part series, "Bravery in Africa," related a Hungarian baron's recent trip to Zanzibar and other parts of Africa. The nobleman followed well-established tropes in blaming both the climate and the natural indolence of the natives—not European exploitation and colonization—for Africa's backward state: "Infernal heat. The blacks here are lazy and don't want to work. It's not just the heat, they are sluggish and lie, because they're just like our gypsies in this sense, they don't want to work." The equation of African blacks with Gypsies may have resonated with Slovaks, but another slur applied only to non-Europeans was added when the baron referred to Africans' supposed cannibalism and "really sharp teeth." After spending some time in Zanzibar, the baron concluded, "[W]ell, blacks are all interesting, but they don't like to work."

Still, the Slovak readers were given a little dig at backward Hungarians (Magyars), too, for the baron recognized some potential kinship with these lazy black natives with "really sharp teeth": "I go. I greet them. Perhaps some of them from Hungary." As we'll see, Magyars were often cast in Slovak papers as savages, although more frequently as "Asiatics" or "Mongols." This series on "Bravery in Africa" was more interested in casting black natives as completely alien to European humanity, for the baron later commented on his trip into the interior, "That way the white man never walked."¹¹⁵

Either at home or abroad, blacks were often portrayed as savage, and the baron's reference to cannibalism was not atypical. It was echoed in a 1917 editorial, "The Latest in Cannibalism," which spoke of cannibalism in the Congo and also in Brazil, even though the writer said,

It would seem that around the world the days are already numbered of that terrible cannibalism—people chewers—and that this monster of human culture has died out for good. Man-eating is not mentioned at all by the latest tropical scholars . . . already it is safely stated that this is a dying habit or practice, a lingering religious ceremony, which in these days will be destroyed by the penetration of European culture.

The writer referred to the cannibals with a neologism, "*ľudožrúti*," literally "people chewers." Still, his faith in the ameliorative effects of "European culture"

is telling; Slovak immigrants were themselves judged to be lacking in such gifts by many nativists, but here the editorialist made common cause with other white, European culture-bearers. Faith in culture's curative powers, however, was tempered by German Professor Wilhelm Volz's discovery of the Bataks of Sumatra, "the last cannibals under the hot sun." Slovak fears of the Bataks may have been allayed by learning that, "It is said on the whole island of Sumatra that the Batak tribe does not enjoy the meat of white people, and it's said that they always avoided it." Through such news items Slovaks made a case, at least among themselves, for alliance with fellow Europeans as "white people."¹¹⁶

Other references to cannibals appeared on the humor pages of *New Yorkský denník* in 1921. "A missionary wandered into the midst of a bunch of cannibals and asked one of them, 'And you know absolutely nothing about Christian religion?'" To which the cannibal replies, "Indeed, yes, we tasted it, when there last was a missionary here."¹¹⁷ While arguably this joke falls into a vaudeville strain of ethnic humor, in other articles African and Pacific Islander cannibalism and savagery were presented as straightforward news items. In 1902 an article told of the "people chewers" of New Guinea. "In spite of all the English efforts to help and educate them, these people show little interest in becoming civilized." The indigenous people, who the article made a point of noting were "blacks," reportedly still widely practiced cannibalism, in spite of many years of enlightened English rule. "In Malaysian the island is called Papua, and they are considered the most uneducated people in the world," the reporter added. "Travelers say that Papuans are very stupid and wild." Who was saying or considering this to be true, the article did not say. Other natives resisting colonization by the French in African Guinea were dismissed as "ceaselessly restless savages" who now had to be punished by the French military because their sultan had been unable to pacify them (see Figure 5-7).¹¹⁸ By 1911 Slovak papers were not considering whether European colonization was what natives were ceaselessly restless about. Instead, this supposed savagery was said to justify colonization. As early as 1901 *Slovák v Amerike* had also informed readers "people chewers" in New Guinea and Spanish West Africa threatened missionaries. "The cannibals in West Africa have gobbled up seven swimmers," one report stated, noting, "A military expedition will be sent against the people chewers to punish them." Illustrations of savage cannibals in front of skull-bedecked huts drove home the need for European pacification (see Figures 5-8 and 5-9). Similar illustrations of cannibal chiefs also appeared on humor pages, but the jokes were reinforced by the supposedly hard "news" accounts of the travails of colonizers and missionaries facing "*tudožrúti*." While occasionally mild condemnation of white lynch mobs appeared in Slovak papers, curiously no illustrations of Mississippi people chewers accompanied the texts.¹¹⁹

As Roslyn Poignant notes, many European authors' exposés of cannibalism in Australia had only the most tenuous connection to fact, and "the cannibalism invoked in show business publicity and newspaper reports was a product of Western

FIGURE 5-7: “Natives from the French province of Guinea,” characterized as “ceaselessly restless savages.” *Slovák v Amerike*, April 11, 1911, 3.

fantasizing” regarding savage colonized people. The showman R. A. Cunningham, for example, from the 1880s published lurid souvenir tracts that appealed to European and American consumers’ appetite for cannibal spectacles. And as in the interchangeable illustrations in *Slovák v Amerike*, the same “graphic stereotyping” was used in circus advertisements and news stories regarding “cannibals”

FIGURE 5-8: Illustration of life “Among the cannibals” to accompany a “news” story about the New Guinea islands. *Slovák v Amerike*, July 1, 1902, 6.

and “wild men of Borneo,” thereby “[giving] form, and therefore substance, to the image of the savage” through “the constant recycling of the same pictorial elements. . . .” The Slovak press similarly presented such ethnic exotica in the guise of news stories accompanied by graphic reproductions of wild Africans.¹²⁰

The coverage of “darkest Africa” with its cannibals accompanied news of black subordination at home, for many stories that uncritically asserted African brutality appeared on the same day as American lynching accounts. Even when some headlines screamed of “the brutality” of a particularly savage torture-mutilation of a lynching victim, often in the same edition other stories reported on

...v...
...om, aby
...gku.
...vda mo
...ých ka
...do p...
...e na ka
...hird k
...by, a o
...mlu?
...Hm!
...oprav
...tam kus
...om jedn
...ný o se
...fe pohol
...xy od ce
...al das to
...obed, da
...se na pa
...hutorim
...som mu
...na; bor
...lnem na
...pod balo
...peli som
...tistučka
...v tomto
...vrdanjem
...šoveo
...u dl'a
...l'ndu.
...ryučby v
...ia l'ndu
...jaka 18.
...sa na
...udových
... (76); v
...ej (79).
...rčnanskej
...ach. 100
...dzame v
...pravskej
...ke (10).
...ej (18).
...oskej (11)
...14), do...

...v...
...aku, zbúrali sa udeje, sedliaci,
...ktorí trpia veľkú zárm. V Sama
...tare, hladujúci, sedliaci, vyplnili
...radnice a domy, bohatých obyvate
...l'ov. Proti vytrúškom vyslané
...bolo vojakov, ktoré zabilo 40 sed
...llakov. Podobné udalosti udaly sa
...vrá aj v Prestravke a Andervenke.

Obete l'ndokrátov.

Kanaňail v západnej Afrike zohrali sedem
...plavcov.
Z Rio Muni, španielskej kolono
...v západnej Afrike, došiel chýr,
...že domorodci zjaili nedávno sedem

Africký l'ndokrát.

...by bol aj sablička, aby neboli
...bývali na blízku policajti. Ale tí
...to zabíjali cestu väznej motnej
...bliko.

Parobel posor!
Vystriham ot. slovenských mlá
...depov, aby dali dobrý posor keď sa
...lenia, že by ich nevesta nepivila
...do nešťastia. Tu sa oženil istý krajan
...a Nedecse zo spískanej stol. a o tri
...meniace už bol vdovcom, lebo ho
...verná manželka opustila. Druhý ešte
...horšie pochopil, lebo tomu ušla žena
...už na tretí deň po sobatí a vyzla mu
...aj \$30. Niektoré dievky dávajú svo
...jich milencov lapet a keď ich dostanú
...do svojej moci, potom s nimi nešijú.
Tedy mladenci posor!
Slamený vdovec.

Veselky.
Rockland Lake, N. Y. My Slo
...váci v Rockland Lake nativne
...spolu vo svornosti a veľkej láske,
...ktorá má za následok, že sa naša
...mládež vrhá do rukových pút man
...želstva. Dňa 5. októbra sobrali sa
...p. Lud. Banovič a al. M. Kunkl.
Dňa 26. okt. zas mlieha vstúpil do
...stavu manželského p. Lorino Bobák
...a al. Emília Pollak. Obom párikom
...blahoželáme! Znaty.

...mal alebo on sám ne
...pše, p d adresu
...Box 374, Unlostown

Hľadám svojho bra
...ZAVADSKÝ, ktorý
...vš v Mt. Pleasant,
...Javorík 360 E. B
...Youngtown, O.

OHIO, MENTOL
LUCAS COUNT
FRANK J. OHANE
tvrdí, že je starší
...lom army F. J. Ohe
...stniacej obdoh v m
...spomenutom štáte a
...menutá firma saptat
...za každý prípad ka
...sa nedá vyľadiť uti
...katráneho lieku.
FRANK J
Prisahané na to
...podpísano v mojej pri
...dňa 6. decembra, R.
{Pod} A. ve
Hollova katarna
vntorhe a udinkuje
a povrch sústav. P
ky, zdarna.
F. J. CHE
Predáva sa v lek
Mrs. Mary
Zkásená porodn
1021 Perry Str.

VYZVANIE.
Hľadám svoju sestru MARIU
DORIN, rod. Marcinčák z Chlivie
z ugarskej stol. Kto by o nej s
...nech píše láskave pod adreßou Paul
Marcinčák, 21. Ave C. Newark, N.Y.
Hľadám svoju sestru MARIU
VADÁŠ rod. Tomáško, ktorá sa má
...zdravovať pri Tróy, N. Y., a pocháda
...za z Nizného Slavkova so šarlskej
...stol. Mám jej sdeliť dolešité vech.
Nech sa hneď hlási alebo kto by o
...nej znal nech mi láskave píše. John
Tomáško. 66. Hallam st. Brides

FIGURE 5-9: Illustration of an African “cannibal” (*l'ndokrát*—literally “people chewer”) to accompany a “news” story about West African natives in the Spanish colonies. Such interchangeable stereotype illustrations accompanied many stories, and created a template to illustrate timeless African savagery. “Among the cannibals,” *Slovák v Amerike*, October 18, 1901, 3.

non-Europeans as barely human. The weekly accretion of such stories provided a cognitive map of racial differences, indicating for new immigrants which people were subject at a moment's notice to the brutality of the “enraged people,” in Africa or North America. By 1915 notions of African cannibalism were so

ingrained that New York's Slovak National Hall saw nothing untoward in hosting blackface musicians billed as "the Cannibal Symphony Orchestra." The festivities also featured a Charlie Chaplin impersonator, suggesting for new immigrants popular culture and race-tutoring went hand in hand.¹²¹

Africans even earlier had proven to be spectacles of amusement for Slovaks, as for other white Americans. *Slovák v Amerike* gave front-page coverage to "Ota Benga and his Orang Outang," discussing how he and other African "bushmen" were living at the Bronx Zoo and New York's American Museum of Natural History. Benga had already been brought for public display to the St. Louis World's Fair, where, like Filipino "savages," he proved quite a draw. He then was moved to New York the following year. "We publish these pictures of African blacks, who are now on display at a New York museum," the immigrant paper captioned the illustrations of the collectible bushmen. "They are primitive bodily specimens even when full grown. Spectators are flocking to the Natural Museum and admire these little wretches." It was not only Anglo-Saxons who were learning a science of race (see Figure 5-10).¹²² Certainly many only regarded Ota Benga as a humorous diversion, yet others by their silence at the very least accepted the notion of an African dwelling in a zoo. Marianna Torgovnick and Elizabeth and Stuart Ewen have documented the manner in which presentations of non-Europeans as zoo, museum, or world's fair "natural history" specimens served to "naturalize" the inferiority of blacks as belonging in these subordinate spaces, not civilized locales. Now even Slovaks who couldn't flock to the New York museum could gaze on African primitiveness. When such a message was displayed in lead-story position, it likely influenced at least some Slovaks' sense of the racial taxonomy

FIGURE 5-10: "Blacks of South Africa. Ota Benga and his Orang Outang." Natives of Africa and Australasia were often displayed in carnivals, world's fairs, and zoos, a practice familiar to many southeast Europeans courtesy of impresarios such as Carl Hagenbeck and R. A. Cunningham. *Slovák v Amerike*, October 26, 1906, 1.

of their new homelands, where blacks from whatever locality were accorded less than full human status.¹²³

Even before they had migrated to the United States, some Slovaks, like other Southeast Europeans, had seen spectacles of Africans and Pacific Islanders displayed in “human zoos,” often literally in zoos, as in Prague, where postcards of savage Dahomeans could still be bought as souvenirs into the 1920s. These zoo-like depictions of “savages” from Africa and Australasia continued in venues such as the World’s Columbian Exposition and St. Louis World’s Fair. The irony of at least some immigrants judged as not all that civilized gawking at wild Africans and men from Fiji—not always really from those places but sometimes professional actors masquerading as African warriors—was not lost on the humor magazine *Puck*, which as early as 1888 offered a peak “In the Dressing Tent.” There the “Wild Zulu” asks his mate, “How wor t’ings in Roscommen, phin yez lift th’ place, Corrigan?” To which the “Savage Moor” replies, “Fine Dinnis, fine, barrin’ the evictions; it’s many a poor man over there wud be thankin’ the saints fer the foine, plisant job that you an’ me do be havin!” This sly dig seems to be directed more at Irish backwardness than at the “Zulus” or “Moors” on display. But *Slovák v Amerike* offered no irony with its depiction of the savage bushman in his zoo cage, and even those Slovaks who couldn’t make it to the Bronx Zoo enjoyed a front-page glimpse of Ota Benga and his Orang Outang.¹²⁴

In their own venues, too, Slovaks mocked savages, as when residents of Yonkers heard “a hilarious lecture of Mr. Novák” regarding “a journey to Tahiti.” At least no references to cannibalism were employed here, but when he “noted that on the island of Tahiti people live a care-free, work-free life, and that they have no need to work, which is said to be the ‘duty’ of women, not men, some of our men [in the audience] deeply sighed. And one who was near me murmured, ‘That’s the life!’” The reporter rebutted this desire for “primitive” indolence, however, asking, “Who’d want to live there, where the natives know nothing of fashion. Or it might be you’d like to always wear the kind of ‘dress’ that Adam and Eve wore in Paradise!” While the author allowed that in Tahiti “You don’t even have to worry about food as the trees bear fruit all year round, the food of the ocean is also plentiful. Hey, that’s the life!” he nevertheless cautioned that this was not suited for non-Tahitians. “But civilized people,” he added, “and here for example, we can cite our Slovaks, know that we would not want to live without work.” The contrast between civilized peoples—and here Slovak ascendancy to this category would not automatically have been granted by Nordic Americans—and lazy savages is again on display. Yonkers Slovaks had by 1921 begun presenting their annual parish fundraising minstrel show, a topic about which we’ll hear more in the following chapter. Hard-working Slovaks had already begun making slighting reference to lazy blacks at home and abroad.¹²⁵

Lessons of black savagery came from a variety of venues. In 1923, *New Yorkský denník* advertised new Hollywood offerings being screened in New York. *The Hottentot* was playing on the same bill as *Land of Our Forefathers*. In the same

issue it was reported that Passaic Slovaks performed a play demonstrating that although they were becoming Americans, they had preserved the Slovak ways that they had brought with them from the land of their forefathers. That land was decidedly not the land of the Hottentots; as early as 1896, when Yonkers Slovaks asserted their right to have non-German priests ministering to them, they complained to New York Archbishop Corrigan, "Does your Grace keep us for U.S. citizens or for Kaffirs or Zulus of Africa? Why do you punish us . . . with German or English priests. . . ?" Presumably colonial administrators were acceptable for "Kaffirs or Zulus," but not white immigrants, even Slovak ones.¹²⁶

Czech Americans in Chicago and Saint Paul, Minnesota, likewise performed their own depictions of African savagery, evidence that immigrants did more than just passively consume mainstream stereotypes of black inferiority. Dramatic societies in both cities staged *The Daughter of Africa*, a 1918 comedy by Bretislav Ludvík that was first published in Prague. The farce features Hroneš, an explorer returned to Prague from Africa with tales of the "charitable Zulu-Kaffirs" who pulled him out of the mud, and his various exploits among the sun-tanned "people chewers," but also with a surprise for Czech society—his African daughter. The play seems to have had much in common with the vaudeville farces featuring blackface slapstick, but Ludvík also likely was influenced by the African zoo-like displays featured in Prague and other East Central European cities in the late nineteenth century.¹²⁷ The African explorer's friend, Dr. Materna, tells him that he knows all about blacks, for

In vaudeville once, it is already twenty years ago, there performed a duet of black dancers, Mr. Bob and Miss Amanasi. One time an alarmed citizen went up to them on the day of their performance, since he'd fallen in love with a black girl. He met with her and then she confessed a love of champagne. Although she didn't really understand him, she knew what he meant when he offered her a gold bracelet. Soon it slipped to her foot. She said to the citizen: "Amanasi love you so much!" And to prove her love for him, she rubbed her nose on his nose.

The African explorer assures his friend, "Yes, that's how the black nations do it, instead of kissing." Materna's friend is reunited with his African lover 20 years later, and Hroneš, too, gets reacquainted with his African daughter. Indeed, the explorer has difficulty integrating into Czech society after having been so long in Africa; he is told by Dr. Materna, "But you're also all tanned and burned! You look like a native of Africa!" an observation that alarms the explorer. The doctor also wants to know why Hroneš's daughter insists on wearing an "African costume," even though by the end of the play fashionable ladies of Prague are adopting "savage" dress. Hroneš also, it turns out, has forgotten most of his Czech: "I still talk a little bit with a foreign accent, different from how the natives talk, but I get by."

Hroneš thinks he's being helpful when he paints another of his friends completely black, a minstrel-show gesture that by 1918 would have been familiar to many Chicago or Saint Paul Czechs. "White men are eaten by the people chewers," Hroneš helpfully informs his friend.

The explorer's daughter despairs of finding a lover in Prague, and asks her heathen deity, "Why do I have these lion claws, or have teeth like a crocodile?! Why can't I eat men like a cannibal, like my mother did! Oh great U-kulunkulu, why hast thou forsaken me?" In general, the play pokes fun at the difficulty/impossibility of blacks—and those who have gone native—fitting into "normal" Czech society. While the jokes are no more mean-spirited than the barbs of the Marx Brothers' Captain Spaulding, "the African explorer," the fact that they were performed by East Europeans who otherwise read straight news stories of African "people chewers" indicates a trope of African savagery was propagated in a variety of venues.¹²⁸

Czech actors in the Chicago troupe likewise purchased sheet music such as "Dance of the Hottentots" and the "Cottonfield Dance," both composed in 1895 by Arthur M. Cohen. Michael Rogin has argued that by performing minstrel-show sketches, recent arrivals to the United States, such as Jewish immigrants, were able to stress their whiteness under a familiar, American genre of a satirical black mask. Whether "Dance of the Hottentots" was performed in blackface or not, Czech immigrants likewise enacted a tale of African savagery (maybe humorous, maybe not) against which Czech whiteness stood in relief. To be sure, vaudeville and Tin Pan Alley were certainly replete with ethnic humor—including minstrel-show moments of humor about blacks, as we'll see in the following chapter. Nevertheless, such cultural productions did not occur in a void. Immigrants performing such songs were also reading straight news stories in their papers concerning African cannibalism or ostensibly dangerous blacks reined in by the "people's justice" closer to home in places such as Mississippi; such songs contributed to a worldview placing blacks lower on the scale of civilization.¹²⁹

The discourse of empire and colonialism occurred in a context in which assumptions of non-European savagery were never far below the surface. In noting that Abraham Cahan included in the inaugural issue of his socialist *Arbeiter Zeitung* a condescending translation of a *Scribner's* article on "Life Among the Congo Savages," Rogin observes that Jewish immigrants "began to move from being the objects of exotic interest to being the reading subjects interested in exotic places, from what they shared with cannibals to what they shared with readers of *Scribner's*."¹³⁰ Sometimes radical Slavs at least could use tropes of African savagery as a cudgel with which to beat supposedly even more savage American capitalists. When the socialist newspaper, *Rovnost ludu*, wanted to stick it to the capitalists in 1922, it ran a cartoon of top-hatted millionaires with knives and forks cavorting around a cauldron in which enchained "labor" was boiling. "Modern cannibals callously dispense with labor," ran the caption.¹³¹ Less class consciously, though, notions of African or South Seas cannibalism were deployed,

humorously or seriously, with regularity in Slovak newspapers, as well as on the immigrant stage. The Catholic paper, *Jednota*, related that the savage island cannibals (again, labeled “people chewers”) had “slaughtered, baked and eaten two Protestant missionaries,” and while the paper reported the “details of this horrific, cannibalistic act,” it skeptically noted that no one had actually witnessed the people eating, and found it “interesting that Protestant missionaries were appealing to the taste of black patriots.”¹³² As a dig at Protestants, punch line of a joke, or a filler news item, black people chewers were an editor’s best friend. As for Cahan’s Jewish readership, so, too, Czechs and Slovaks moved from being just the objects of persecution to readers of colonized African “savages.”

As late as 1953, African savagery was advertised in *New Yorkský denník* when it noted the premier of “the great travelogue film of darkest Africa,” *The White Witch Doctor*, at New York’s Roxy Theater. The film, starring Robert Mitchum and Susan Hayward, would never be mistaken for high art, but ever since *Birth of a Nation* Hollywood had been peddling black savagery to an eager, partially immigrant audience. The ad indicates how ingrained in the culture by 1953 were tropes of witch doctors, “darkest Africa,” and exoticized black savagery. Moreover, the ad promised that the film, premiering on July fourth, would be accompanied by a stage show, “‘Broadway Memories’ and the ‘Yankee Doodle Review’ for the Fourth of July.” Whiteness and patriotism were entangled on screen and stage—and elsewhere—not just for Slovaks but for most Americans. One wonders, however, if African Americans felt welcome at this celebration.¹³³

While it is possible to overstate the effect that popular culture such as newspapers, carnival side shows, world’s fairs, and, later, motion pictures had on consumers’ and spectators’ worldviews, when we consider that newspaper depictions of Africans appeared in tandem with coverage of blacks’ subordination at home, these articles contributed at least partially to the creation of a hierarchy of races for some new immigrants.

While Slovaks often had nothing good to say about Magyars, and certainly contended bitterly with Irish foremen and other immigrant groups for scarce urban resources, it was only non-Europeans who were categorized in such a fashion. Even considering the anti-Semitic and anti-Italian articles studied in Chapter 4, nothing like the treatment of Africans as cannibals or zoo denizens is repeated in Slovak papers regarding other European groups. This is not to suggest Slovaks were any more racist than other white groups, simply that hierarchies of civilized European versus savage everyone else were part of U.S. culture to which new immigrants acculturated, and that these hierarchies were reproduced in immigrant newspapers.

Learning a Lesson from the “Half-wild Blacks”

The slighting treatment of nonwhite anticolonial aspirations was on display in the sympathetic coverage of the Boer rebels against British rule, when compared to

the scathing condemnation later offered to natives of "Tripoli" resisting Italy's civilizing colonial missions. Complimentary articles on the Boers' war against English imperialism appeared in the same issues of *Slovák v Amerike* that carried illustrations of the savage, Stone Age Igorots battling the enlightened rule of Uncle Sam. Perhaps it was the fact that Afrikaner soldiers such as General Piet Joubert and President Steyn were white that earned them laurels of glory in articles detailing their martyrdom.¹³⁴ A certain symmetry between the Boer fight for autonomy and as yet inchoate Slovak discontent with rule by Hungary may also have influenced the sympathetic treatment afforded Joubert and his Afrikaner comrades.

Yet in at least one Slovak article it was the whiteness of Boer *Vortrekkers* that was celebrated as they heroically brought civilization to a backwater in spite of the treachery of the bloodthirsty Zulus. *Slovák v Amerike* in 1900 featured a history of the Boer nation with an illustration of a "Zulu-Kaffir" chieftain almost identical to the "people chewer" illustrations accompanying other articles (see Figures 5-11 and 5-12).

The "History of the Boers" translated into Slovak could have come from the desk of President Steyn. Readers learned how in the 1830s "emigrants," led by an Afrikaner "noble patriot," had "purchased land in Natal from Dingaan, the wild king of the Zulu-Kaffirs." But the *Vortrekkers*' legitimate purchase of the land—a trope that resonated with images of "civilized" homesteading and property-owning familiar from the American pioneering narrative that effaced displaced native peoples—was invalidated by "Zulu-Kaffir" treachery, when the "savage" king told the Boers "he wanted to take back the land that they had bought."

English duplicity was evoked in the article as well, for the imperialists offered no protection "against the treacherous, wild blacks." The British arrived not to aid the Boers in their cause,

but to confiscate their weapons so that they could not defend themselves against the barbarian Zulu-Kaffirs. Such a tyranny, such a persecution of an innocent people is unprecedented in the history of the world! Today, this land is the English colony of Natal, because England robbed the Boers. . . . There was great fear that the English would call on the Kaffirs for assistance, and against the allied forces of the wild and the civilized barbarians [the Boers] could not stand. As a result of English perfidy, the "wild savage Zulu-Kaffirs fiercely besieged the settlement. . . . The Boers learned that the sword alone can ensure the peace and life against the wild barbarians." ¹³⁵

When a colonizing nation sided with blacks against whites it was judged a "robber" or "civilized barbarians"; other operations, such as the French mission to Guinea, were deemed necessary against "ceaselessly restless savages."

It was not until after World War II that some reservations about the justness of the Afrikaner cause were expressed in Slovak newspapers. When Pretoria began implementing strict racial apartheid following the 1948 victory of the National

FIGURE 5-11: “Zulu-Kaffir” illustration to accompany a news story on the “barbarian” king of the Zulu-Kaffirs who resisted the Boers. *Slovák v Amerike*, March 1, 1900, 4.

Party, *New Yorkský denník* editorialized against the “fantastic solution to the race problem in South Africa.” It lamented that such “Nazi ideas and methods” were being spread in a “land that once was a model of coexistence among people of different nationalities.” Such a characterization of South Africa suggests a naiveté, or lingering sympathy, for the Boers on the part of Slovak writers. Such a characterization is profoundly at odds with the actual state of race relations in the Orange Free State; even if apartheid was a hardening of a formerly more fluid situation, the asserted model of harmony was more a mirage. Still, if by 1953 full-bore apartheid

staneš český i pštro-
vera tak. Jak sme
ku od horúčosi l'u-
koně zdychajú, vy-
— Kuny Ajlandu na
plem še, reku, vy-
lžeme znač raportní-
krajanom; co me

Sloviaci, kamaráci
i, to pri nás hlavná
e vás to urobili, ta
a jak tam bolo. Ta
by tam vidzeli tote
ání, že co my za
tak vyoblikali:

ak bolo, kmotricku,
že šumne totá za-

sme cestách
kráčac
východ
západ.

olu —
obre majú,
lenky
erajú...

kedli na náš auto-

Racik: Hej, bolo to tam i vecej
takých pracíloh, ale ih mena neda-
me do novinkoh, aby nemali trubel
doma.

Rip: Bula tam v jednom šumne
vycifrovaným: kuciku jedna pre-
krásne oblečená dzivka, ale lem do
driku mala celo, na jedným stofe
zo skla bula vyložena, ale zato žila,
hutorela, a s očami lem tak žmur-
kala na nás. Co s jej spodným
celom zrobili, to neznáme, ale ško-
da bula, že lem verhnú polovku
bulo vidzec znej, ja sebe tak dumal,
že i to še nadjze, keď dachto bárs
hledá.

Racik: Ja chcel ju potogiofovac,
ale še nedala. Tak še mi šnilo, že
tak zdarma nemož nič s ňu počac.
Ta miesto nej zachytil som jednoho
indianskeho božika, radujce i čuďu-
je še nad nim. Ja z mojej strany
bulo som s nim lepše spokojný.

Rip: Ale kmotricku, my naši pos-
tým naš ostatoch dya, a dľve
dľaky, ba tujece to celkom nebárs
buly také drľve, ak tu vypatruje
na tým obrázku.

mali uložené svoje cenné veci, alebo
peniaze, tí neztratia nič, lebo tie
zostali neporušené. Teraz hlavný
úradníci banky sú pozatváraní, ale
všetci nie. Pokladníkovi sa totiž
podarilo nujazdiť a dosiaľ nemôžu
mu na stopu prísť. Čtení krajania
mali by si pri ukladaní svojich
ťažko zarobených peňazi lepší pozor
dávať. S pozdravom. Zpravodaj.

Passaic, N.J., 6. avg. — Čtená
redakcia:— Prosím vás, ráte uve-
rejniť týchto pár riadkov ohľadom
Passaickej Slov. jednoty. Všetkým
ct. čitateľom je známo, ak pekne
napreduje tento spolok, o čom bola
tiež zmienka vo zpráve o pikniku,
ktorý naša Jednota vydržiavala.
Preto teraz nejdem sa o tom roz-
pisovať, ale pripíšem k veci, o
ktorej vlastne sa jedná. Hlavný
úrad na svojom zasadnutí uzavrel,
že usporiada báľ k počte ct. úrad-
níkov a delegátov, ktorí budú zase-
dať na konvencii vydržiavanej kon-
com novembra. Lenže deň nemohol
byť ustálený hlavným úradom, po-
nevyť nebolo možno dostať miest-
nosť na vydržiavanie zábavy. Preto
zábava bola odložená na deň 31.
december, na Silvestra. Pokladáme
si za povinnosť upozorniť na to na-
še rozhodnutie ct. miestne spolky,
z ktorých by snád niektorý tiež
chcel v ten istý deň vydržiavať zá-
bavu, aby z toho potom neporúta-
ly neaké nezrúlosti a kľebty. Zna-
čím sa a účtujú a so záručným po-
zdravom na ct. redakciu a na všet-
kých ct. čitateľov a čitateľky
Slov. v Amer. Joz. E. Kurnath,
hl. zpisník.

Blairville, Pa., 6. avg. — Čtená
redakcia:— Nemám mnoho času,
ale predsa nechytám vera aby som
ct. čitateľom v Slov. v Amer. tiež
niečo dľal, a teda opíšem to tieto

FIGURE 5-12: This illustration of a cannibal, which accompanies a “Rip and Račik” humor column, is almost identical to the illustration of a “barbarian” king of the “Zulu-Kaffirs” that accompanied a news story in the same newspaper. As amusement or news item, Africans were depicted as interchangeably savage. *Slovák v Amerike*, August 14, 1906, 3.

unsettled the paper's editors, they did not embrace independence and anticolonial movements by black Africans, either. The Mau Maus seeking independence for British East Africa (Kenya) were denounced a year later as violent fanatics in their own right. Even in the more enlightened milieu of post-World War II America, old habits of race-thinking were difficult to jettison completely.¹³⁶

In the heyday of empire the attitude toward Africa was more unequivocally spelled out in narratives of civilizing missions by Europeans and ungratefully bloodthirsty savages. As the great power participants at the Congress of Berlin had already carved up most of Africa in 1885, not many prizes remained to be grabbed by the time Slavic newspapers were founded. Coverage of the fate of some of the last autonomous African nations, however, indicates the ambivalence with which some Slavs could view nonwhite Africans and their battles against colonizers. In 1896 *Amerikansky ruscky viestnik* reported on "The Italian War in Africa," Rome's ill-fated attempt to acquire a colony in Abyssinia. The justification for such a project was perhaps apparent to Rusyn readers, who also that year read of a riot of wild Algerian colonial troops against their French masters. And two years prior to this, *Slovák v Amerike* reported that the death of the sultan of Morocco, Muley Hassan, was certain to set off a jockeying for power in the North African country between France, England, Italy, and Spain. In 1902, reports were again published, this time in *Jednota*, on England's recognition of Italy's right to preeminence in Tripoli (Libya), although in this instance the paper admitted it was unclear how Turkey would view this European gentlemen's agreement. At other moments Moroccans seeking to limit foreign influence in their country were labeled "fanatics."¹³⁷ European power plays in North Africa were made to seem natural through such coverage.

Yet Slovaks were not always condescending toward Africans fighting against colonization, and miraculously on at least one occasion native resistance to subjugation by imperialists was held up as a template possibly worthy of emulation. "The Slovaks can learn a lesson from the blacks in Africa," *Slovák v Amerike* editorialized upon the occasion of the death of Ethiopia's Emperor Menelik II. The emperor was praised for keeping his country free of European colonization, a lesson that the Slovaks still in thrall to the Magyars (Hungarians) were urged to take to heart. "Here is a new example for the Slovaks," the editorialist wrote. "Half-wild blacks in Africa have shed their blood for the freedom of their nation, and defeated their enemies, just as did the Americans and other nations. History teaches us that only those nations that loved freedom above life itself ever gained liberty."¹³⁸ This was one of the few times, prior to World War II, that any admiration was shown for blacks, in or out of Africa; Ethiopia's successful resistance to Italian colonization earned the respect of Slovak editors frustrated by their countrymen's continued captivity in Central Europe. Still, the labeling of Ethiopians as "half-wild blacks" indicates that tropes of African savagery acquired in side shows, "human zoos," and news stories of cannibals had left their mark.

"Civilization Lies Only in Europe"

When Africans were less successful in resisting colonization, Slovak writers were even less charitable. *Slovák v Amerike* reported in 1903 that the British army's "King's

African Riflemen” put down an uprising of the “Mad Mullah of Somaliland.” The “English expedition . . . pacified the Somali population and has already defeated the dreams of these savage, wild Mullahs,” the paper reported.¹³⁹ And the year after Menelik’s death the Italian invasion of Tripoli (Libya) occasioned sympathetic portrayals of Italians as bearers of civilization to an ungrateful and half-wild people. An editorial in *Slovák v Amerike* approved of Italy’s expedition to North Africa. “Replacing Mohammed’s Crescent with Christ’s Cross,” ran the headline. Stereotypes of African backwardness were in this instance wed to tropes of “barbaric” Turks and “Mohammedans” as the Slovak press finally had a good word to say about Italians.¹⁴⁰ The paper reported on Italy’s ultimatum, but *Národné noviny* also noted, “Apparently the Turks are not willing to surrender Tripoli to the Italians without a fight.”¹⁴¹

When some of the Italian troops’ actions in Libya were criticized as inordinately brutal, Italian dignitaries came to their country’s defense, employing tropes of European culture in conflict with African savagery. In reprinting a letter first sent to the *New York American*, *Národné noviny* reported that “Italians justify the atrocities [ukrutností] committed against Arabs” and that “The Arabs’ treachery [zradcovstvom] is said to have forced the Italians to have used such sharp rigor in invading.” The immigrant paper’s editor noted that,

The rumors of abuses by Italian soldiers, who have allegedly committed horrific murders of Arab women and children, is every day I find seriously refuted by influential people in Italy. The Pope himself was very offended over these reports that foreign journalists fed to their readers, and instructed his Tripoli missionaries to examine the matter in detail, and if the Italian troops were somehow guilty of this, he told them not to be silent about it. The missionaries said the anti-Italian items were based on false reports, as can be imagined.

The editor then urged, “Now hear the words of Italian historian and socialist member of parliament, Professor Guglielmo Ferrero, against the ‘atrocities in the newspapers’ and the vicious rumors.”

Ferrero’s letter, as translated from the *New York American*, complained of the “great enthusiasm for the Arabs” expressed throughout Europe and America. This angered the professor, for he asserted that it was the “rebellious natives” who “used dirty tactics against the Italians.” How a people defending their homeland against invasion could be “rebellious” or “revolting” the scholar did not say. Instead, he charged, “We equate them with the wild herd of Hun-Hungarians, who in their travels have left nothing behind but wilderness and rivers of blood.” While Ferrero was writing in the first instance for a mainstream, English-language American readership, his invocation of “Hun-Hungarians” surely had resonance for Slovak readers, who, as we’ll see below, had already for years charged their Magyar (Hungarian) rulers with Hun tactics and Mongolian and Asiatic despotism.

Any Italian transgressions were excused as the result of fear “in the face of religious excesses by the fanatical, murderous Arabs, and due to the unusual climate.” Ferrero wondered at the criticisms from Europe, which “wants us to liberate this land, and also to recognize the rights of Arabs, that is, to let the Arabs go when they have transgressed against us, stabbed us in the back and murdered our troops.”

Ferrero blamed the “sneaky, secret, traitorous” Arabs for any “strict measures and appropriate punishments” taken by Italian generals, in order “to deal with any possibility of future betrayal” by the Arabs. Again, assumptions that “Arabs” ought to be loyal and grateful, not resentful, toward Italian invaders underscored the professor’s letter. “Similar pictures of savagery occur only in the wild lands of the half-savage,” he added, “such as Tripoli. Civilization lies only in Europe.” Such hierarchies of enlightened Europe and “half-savage” everywhere else abounded in 1911 America; now they were reprinted in the newspaper of the National Slovak Society.

Ferrero further invoked stereotypes of Arab cruelty to justify Italy’s firm measures. “It must be remembered that the Italians were fighting against the rotten Arabs, who are only impressed by severity and violence. . . . [T]hey are the barbarians, the Arab savages are bloodthirsty, and they were justly and duly punished. . . . [T]hese lies must also account for the hysteria of civilized people living abroad in the midst of these Arab things.” Similar language arguing the necessity of violence against a savage people was invoked in other contexts. When the Pennsylvania State Constabulary was founded to suppress striking Slavic coal miners in 1903, the force’s official historian explained the necessity of force, for, “A Polack only understands an argument that comes at the end of a knout.”¹⁴² Such symmetry between anti-Slavic and anti-Arab violence was, however, unremarked upon on this occasion by *Národné noviny*. Instead, the paper’s editors allowed Ferrero to conclude his letter uninterrupted, and the professor had a warning for the rest of Europe:

If the Turks and Arabs drove the Italian forces into the sea, this would be seen by the Turks and Arabs, both Muslims, as a victory for their arms, and would at the same time be a triumph for the Islamic religion. Arab and Muslim populations in Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco after their decades-long wars and struggles [against the European colonizers] would now easily rise in revolt, following the flags of holy war. This would deal a fatal blow to European rule in Africa.¹⁴³

The warning to the rest of Europe and to Euro-Americans was clear: We must be allowed to succeed, by whatever means the Arab “barbarians” made necessary, or your colonial possessions will be threatened.

The opinions of “influential Italians” such as Ferrero, the Pope, and the inventor Marconi were reprinted verbatim in Slovak to refute allegations of atrocities in a

colonial invasion. No Libyan voices made it into this paper; whatever enmity they felt toward working-class Italian competitors for jobs, some Slovak immigrants developed more affinity for fellow Europeans than for fellow colonized peoples.

Ferrero's letter was first disseminated to English-language newspapers, seeking to rally American public opinion behind Rome's imperial ventures on behalf of Christian civilization. That it was reprinted in Slovak by editors of *Národné noviny*, who affixed no criticism of the Italian soldiers' actions, indicates colonial ventures in Africa were regarded as something editors felt readers needed to learn about and understand from the European powers' point of view. Menelik II no longer offered Slovaks a lesson.

To be sure, as in the English-language press, the most egregious excesses of European colonization were denounced, but not as a call to jettison the imperial project, rather as inoculation of more "enlightened" colonizers such as the British and French. The aberrations of King Leopold's rule in the Belgian Congo were related in *Slovák v Amerike*, which noted President Roosevelt and Secretary of State John Hay joined a missionary delegation in lodging a complaint of atrocities committed against natives. "The delegates had produced many photographs of maimed children, some only a few years old," the paper noted. "The Belgian authorities had committed atrocities against these native children simply because their parents hadn't provided the daily quota of rubber." Still, neither the delegation nor the president condemned colonialism per se, and *Slovák v Amerike* was likewise mute on the broader issue. By exposing the supposedly more horrendous excesses of the Belgians against the accepted rules of the colonial game, newspapers permitted inoculated British and French administrators in Africa to continue with their allegedly more humane civilizing missions.¹⁴⁴

Whether Leopold needed curbing, Slovak newspapers joined most white Americans in endorsing colonialism for non-Europeans. More typically an editorial in *Jednota* in 1902 considered "paganism" and the threat to civilization posed by black and yellow regions of the world.¹⁴⁵ For all its earlier denunciation of Rockefeller's brutality, *Národné noviny* in 1916 reprinted an article first published in the *Chicago Examiner* on "The Seven Rivals, or, The Race Struggle." This article repeated the prevalent Darwinian view of white struggle against other races, and warned "the United States must reckon." While the article was more alarmed by the growing power, and large numbers, of Japanese and Chinese, it also had quite unflattering things to say about blacks, and in this instance the received wisdom of mainstream English-language race-thinkers was passed directly to new immigrants. In a subsection on "blacks and the competition," the writer discounted meaningful competition from blacks "for the time being," but added, "[T]heir vale of tears is the worst. They constantly have to wrestle with the tropical sun, jungle and wild beasts, and therefore cannot be as developed or evolved as members of other races." Still, the writer warned that the 200 million Africans could yet become a menace to whites: "[T]he Mohammedan faith [*úžasne*] has spread in Africa, and . . . one fine day these millions of blacks may become a tool

and weapon of Islam.” In the end, though, the writer believed “the inhabitants of Africa would be ignorant troops, not easily unified or mobilized.”¹⁴⁶

New Yorkský denník likewise in 1920 ran an editorial offering the standard Eurocentric view of “the development of human civilization,” with unflattering comparisons to less advanced Africa and Asia. The nativist 1920s saw the imposition of immigration restrictions that sharply curtailed the annual inflow of Slavs, Italians, and other “new immigrants,” but it also saw the publication of popular racial diatribes such as Lothrop Stoddard’s ominous warnings of “The Rising Tide of Color” and “the menace of the underman.” Some Slovak editorials seem to have accepted the fears of Asian and African demography, even if many immigrants likely would have disagreed with Stoddard and other Nordic thinkers on the danger posed by Slovaks. The hegemony of the social order circa 1920, at least in terms of European subjugation of Africa and Asia, was naturalized in Slovak newspapers.¹⁴⁷

Just as Professor Ferrero defended Italy’s venture in Tripoli and warned other Europeans of the danger of restless Africans, *Jednota* editorialized on the potential menace posed by the Dark Continent. In assessing “Africa now and in the future,” the paper noted, “Look at the present map of Africa and you see that almost all of it is controlled by European powers.” While acknowledging that Abyssinia (Ethiopia) and Morocco were independent, “at least nominally,” the editorialist noted that both countries were “small and weak.”

“Aside from Abyssinia and Morocco,” though, “the Dark Continent of Africa, with no less than 150 million black people, is all partly or completely under the control of whites.” But the paper reflected on the trouble Germany had been experiencing with her “natives,” as well as the difficulties Zulu uprisings had caused England, before noting Menelik’s successful resistance to the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. “There’s no doubt that black African natives can fight and will fight, even if they don’t have half a chance of gaining independence from whites,” the writer added. “The future of the earth lies in their combative skills and modern equipment. If each native had a Mauser rifle, and he knew how to use it, whites would soon have no place in Africa.”

Fears that Africans would gain modern weaponry were exacerbated by the rivalries among European powers, notably Germany and England, which had extended to Africa. It was alleged the rivals had been arming natives in the other powers’ colonies. “In these ways the African blacks may come to possess modern weaponry, and then all they’ll need to do is join together and the days of white rule in Africa will be numbered. . . . [T]he white race is coming to a battle with the black and yellow races. And that day of reckoning is not far.”¹⁴⁸

When World War I broke out, the mustering of nonwhite troops was reported, sometimes in ways that reflected the fears of an armed contingent from “the black and yellow races,” as *Jednota* had warned. A front-page photo ran across all six columns of *Slovák v Amerike* of the disembarkation of Indian soldiers at Marseilles. “The Indian Army, which disembarked at Marseilles, was sent to the front, to assist

the French left wing," the accompanying story reported. Perhaps engaging in wishful thinking, the article added, "The Indian Army is with great enthusiasm fighting for Great Britain, which reigns today in all of India." Two months later the paper reported on the use of Indian soldiers by the British Army fighting in the trenches of Europe's western front. The article described the colonial troops as "Pathans," and "fanatical Mohammedans," but at least these "fanatical Mohammedans" were fighting on the side of the Allies, unlike the Ottomans who two years earlier were urged to get back to Asia.¹⁴⁹

Indians and other Asians had not always been so avidly greeted by the white subjects of the British Empire. Just before the outbreak of World War I, *Slovák v Amerike* had reported on a riot that broke out in Vancouver when the army sought to prevent the landing of 350 "Hindus." Earlier, riots against Japanese "Mongols" in Canada were reported, with illustrations of Prime Minister Sir Wilfred Laurier and a Vancouver mob chasing Japanese.¹⁵⁰ The internecine warfare in Europe required the assistance of Asian and African colonial troops; by war's end more than three million Indian troops had been employed by the British alone, many serving even in the European theater. For some, the empire was coming to roost uncomfortably close to home.

Perhaps with fears of assertive colonial peoples on their minds, the editors of *Obrana*, a Cleveland-based journal advocating Slovak independence, ran in October 1916 a grinning, Rastus-like cartoon of "The African" designed to remind readers that they were white people, too (see Figure 5-13). The accompanying poem mocked both blacks and hypocritical British imperialism, but the broadly racist cartoon left little doubt as to the real target of the satire:

A nigger from Africa serving in the war
While reaching for some honey
Hurt himself on the shelf.
On the shelf, but also in his hand.
He woke up in the hospital with his hands bandaged up.
In the hospital all the nurses,
They petted him and treated him like a king.
The African was happy with this but not a little puzzled
Because it was the first time the Brits hadn't greeted him with curses and
blows.
Finally he asked a nurse, who told him it was, everyone knew,
Because a Negro with a broken hand can't swing a razor so well.
At that he looked happy.
But suddenly exclaimed,
Quick, Miss, send me back to Africa before I get better!¹⁵¹

It is certainly possible to read this poem as a sardonic commentary on European imperialists' dilemma now that they were reliant, at least in part, on colonial

FIGURE 5-13: “The Wounded African” illustration accompanies a humorous poem that deflected some of the fears of arming colonial troops during World War I. *Obrana*, October 27, 1916, 12.

troops in order to beat back the Hun. But the invocation of Africans swinging razors—as we’ll see in the following chapter, a standard trope of the minstrel shows so avidly attended and performed by Slavic Americans, among others—suggests the joke is at least partially at the benighted, out-of-place colonial native’s expense.¹⁵² By 1916 Slovaks on the world stage had already set up an invidious comparison between themselves and Oriental despotism by semi-Asiatic Magyars (at least as told by Slovaks). Paeans in Bohemian bazaars to Slovak kinship with the principles of Juraj Washington, *Otec Vlast’* (Father of Our Country), occurred during the war, too.¹⁵³ Now came “The African.” Here Slovaks fell into the familiar pattern already practiced at home: comparison to an even more benighted group could only heighten—or was that whiten?—chances for inclusion as part of the self-ruling elite. Indeed, as the war neared its end, readers of *Amerikansky rusksky viestnik* learned that “England was determined to protect Portugal’s interests in Africa.” Self-determination was not for everyone.¹⁵⁴

Any sympathy for “niggers” hurt in the war collapsed when Slovaks were conflated with Africans as captive, colonial peoples. Following the war, a Czechoslovak

Legionnaire—one of the Slavic soldiers who fought with the French to win freedom from Austria-Hungary—wrote to *New Yorkský denník* objecting to his compatriots' treatment by the French. "The brethren who came out of the Balkans were told that they should be lumped together with the Foreign Legion, numbered as just like the blacks and other African tribes, who whenever they protest are sentenced by the four gods of the military court to time in Algiers." While the writer allowed that the Bohemian and Slovak volunteers had agreed to serve in the French Foreign Legion, the injustice of their relegation to the status of Africans was, to the writer, beyond question. Bohemians and Slovaks, he continued, "have nothing in common with Senegalese, Arabs, and Kabyle Anamim [Algerian Berber] Foreign Legions; these are colonial armies." While some immigration restrictionists questioned Slavs' fitness for self-government, this writer was certain of the injustice that had occurred when his people were grouped with Africans. By 1920 Slavs' service to the Allied cause had won them independence; the Algerians would have to wait 40 more years.¹⁵⁵

Following World War I, it was only socialist Slovak newspapers that suggested the right to self-determination championed by President Woodrow Wilson ought to be extended to African and Asian peoples. *Rovnost ľudu*, organ of the Slovak Socialist Workers' Section affiliated with the Workers' (Communist) Party, ran photos of African anticolonial fighters accompanying stories noting that, "The defenders of imperialist France and England are interested in Africa." Cartoons featured the confrontation of a muscular, rifle-toting man, "The Communist International," with a rich, top-hatted "British imperialism" who was dragging a slave, Egypt, by a rope. "The Fops of English capitalism in Egypt foiled by the international forces of proletarian solidarity," ran the party-approved caption. Most of these items first ran in the CPUSA's English-language newspaper, *The Daily Worker*, but were reprinted for Slovak comrades, too. A second cartoon appearing in both newspapers had workers labeled "China," "India," and "Africa" carrying hammer, pickax, and gun greeting marching workers with a red flag. In the middle, a rather oblivious "Kipling" scribbles on a pad, "The East is the East and the West is the West, and never the twain shall meet." A class-conscious cockroach tells him, "You're a liar." Elsewhere *Rovnost ľudu* wrote approvingly of Gandhi's campaign in India and anticolonialism on the world stage and told of Slovak cooperatives' humanitarian mission to Turkmenistan, now a Soviet Socialist Republic, while immigrants who picked up *The Daily Worker* in 1925 would have seen a cartoon featuring giants labeled "China, India and Africa" confronting the well-dressed midgets of U.S., British, and French imperialism. "Who is that you are going to whip, Mr. Legree?" the grinning proletariat asked.¹⁵⁶

Into the 1930s, other radical immigrants criticized imperialism in Africa, as when Croats and Slovenians read in *Majski Glas* (*May Herald*) denunciations of Mussolini's campaign against Ethiopia. Still, even writers for this socialist paper elsewhere employed hierarchical race-thinking, as when they criticized Franco and the Spanish fascists for bringing in "these foreigners," troops from

“black” regions such as Spanish Morocco, to subjugate “civilized Europeans.” This label may have been sarcastic, for the same article declared European civilization to be “bankrupt.”¹⁵⁷

In the middle of World War II, colonialism became an embarrassing piece of baggage for at least some supporters of the Allied nations. *Národné noviny* reprinted an English-language argument to this effect from *Progress*, the journal of the United Electrical Workers, a left-leaning affiliate of the CIO. In considering the case of “Our Colonial Allies,” *Progress* noted that the peoples of the South Pacific, India, and Africa had not fully committed themselves to the Allied cause, but argued this was understandable, since “these nations and their inhabitants have suffered in the past from the exploitations of imperialistic interests in America and England.” The writer pointed to rule in Puerto Rico as “a black spot on America’s honor,” that had “roused much suspicion of our motives in South America.” He hoped, though, President Franklin Roosevelt’s steps toward granting some self-government toward the island would rectify earlier missteps of gunboat diplomacy.

Progress further noted:

Japan has used to great advantage all instances of anti-Negro discrimination in this country, seeking to win the peoples of the South Pacific to their side by propaganda about “co-prosperity,” and the fight against white supremacy. This is, of course, a vicious fraud, for the Japanese exploitation is the worst ever, and “co-prosperity” is a bitter sham. But as long as we in America permit discrimination to exist, the Japanese will have a talking point.¹⁵⁸

For a brief moment, with wartime talk of guaranteeing to all peoples the “four freedoms,” unionists and some white ethnics could consider the necessity of decolonization abroad and civil rights at home. Perhaps it was no accident that both *Národné noviny*’s parent organization, the National Slovak Society, and the United Electrical Workers ran afoul of postwar anticommunist witch hunters and ended up on the Attorney General’s List of Subversive Organizations.¹⁵⁹

In the Cold War aftermath of World War II, Slovak newspapers more typically denigrated anticolonialism in the name of resisting Third World communism. *New Yorkský denník* reported France was standing up to Moscow-backed Ho Chi Minh, and needed U.S. aid in retaining her Indochinese colonies. The paper likewise editorialized on the dangerous Mau Maus fomenting trouble for Great Britain, a bad example also followed by anticolonialists in Guyana. The Mau Maus, the writer noted, were even engaged in violent activities in the heart of London. Lest Slavic American readers felt this had no relevance to their lives, the editorial warned, “We may have a similar situation to contend with in New York. There are beginning to grow some conspiring Puerto Ricans, not just on that island but here in the heart of New York.” The fine words of *Progress* advocating more autonomy for the U.S. colonies were forgotten, or maybe the Slavic press’s

earlier pronouncements on savage and ungrateful little brown brothers held more salience for white ethnics, even in 1954.¹⁶⁰

“Yellow Peril”: China and Japan

A slightly different, if no less racist, discourse circulated in the immigrant press regarding China and Japan. While belittling treatment of colonized peoples implied these savages deserved, even needed, the firm hand of European civilizing administrators, the larger Asian empires were often depicted as demographic, and, for Japan, military, rivals who might subsume the white race. Such alarmist screeds were rife in English-language sources that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries warned of a “Yellow Peril,” but this rhetoric was reproduced in Slovak and Rusyn sources, too.

As early as 1894, *Amerikansky ruský vjestník* hinted at Japanese brutality in its conduct of its war with China, but only to argue coal companies were as brutal as Asian despots in their treatment of striking immigrants. In an article on the strike in Connellsville, Pennsylvania, the paper reported, “One of the leaders of the strikers at the coke mills, Valent Nováček, Polack, reported that 5,000 Polacks have been treated the way the Japanese fighting against China treat their enemies.”¹⁶¹ While on this occasion Japanese brutality was used to criticize coal barons, in other instances it was the supposed docility and lower living standards of the Chinese that repulsed Slavic writers and served as a metaphor for the unjust working conditions against which they struck. *Amerikansky ruský vjestník* again invoked Asian metaphors in 1907 when it reported agricultural workers near Budapest were on strike in opposition to the Chinese-like “coolie wages” they had been paid.¹⁶²

Slovaks, Poles, and Rusyns toiling in coalfields or steel towns may not have faced an invading Japanese army per se, but they were familiar with the violence of the New World, even if industrial warfare was sometimes depicted using tropes of Asian savagery. In 1912 a *Národné noviny* editorial charged “the offenses of the capitalists are more excessive in their barbarism than those of the Persian tyrants in darkest Asia,” citing West Virginia’s coal country as a particularly benighted realm. This editorial indicates race-thinking among *Národné noviny*’s editors had already proceeded to the point where assumptions of Asian despotism had become part of their cognitive atlases.¹⁶³

Nor were anti-Asian stereotypes only employed as metaphors. Slovak papers avidly covered the United States’ efforts to exclude Chinese and Japanese immigrants. While this coverage will be more fully treated in Chapter 7, it should be noted here that foreign reporting on the “Yellow Peril” abroad occurred in the same years in which papers such as *Národné noviny* were informing readers that anti-Chinese laws were “one of the means of learning to discriminate between desirables and others” and “a protective measure of the white race” and necessary

to protect "our white country."¹⁶⁴ *Slovák v Amerike* likewise reacted with outrage when it learned that Princeton's Woodrow Wilson had, in some of his academic writings, made less than flattering remarks about Southeast European immigrants. Especially galling was Wilson's assessment, "[A]nd yet the Chinese were more to be desired as workmen if not as citizens, than most of the coarse crew that came crowding in every year at the eastern ports." The paper urged its New Jersey readers to remember this when they headed to the polls to elect a governor.¹⁶⁵ The paper had already reported on court cases in Chicago that had decided that "As members of the Mongol race, Japanese can't become citizens of our republic."¹⁶⁶ The pronoun is telling, for in 1906 there were many immigration restrictionists who were convinced it was Slavs, Mediterraneans, and other European newcomers who were polluting their republic, even if, as Thomas Guglielmo, Matthew Frye Jacobson, and others have demonstrated, marginalized Caucasians were permitted to emigrate and naturalize, something Asians were not.¹⁶⁷ Whatever little advantage Slavs had in the marketplace or court of public opinion was pressed vis-à-vis Asian migrants, as when *Slovák v Amerike* urged continued restrictions on Japanese migration.¹⁶⁸ The paper had earlier reported on a court case attempting to determine whether Chinese born in the United States were nevertheless ineligible for citizenship. The applicant at first

appeared to be on solid ground, as he was born in California so therefore an American citizen. But the customs official at the port wouldn't let him enter, saying he was a member of a nation that is not allowed to be U.S. citizens. . . . Up until this time the U.S. has held to the logical insight that only he is a U.S. citizen who was born here and he whose parents are also local people. If at the time of birth, however, his parents are second-class citizens, then and there the person born here is not a citizen of the United States.¹⁶⁹

Likewise, 19 years later, the South Carolina federal court decision that Syrians were ineligible for naturalization earned front-page coverage in the paper. Following this decision, Syrian Christian writers to Syrian American newspapers began to make their claims to citizenship rights by casting aspersions on blacks and East Asians, asserting their whiteness as against these pariah groups. Questions of who was eligible to work and live in the U.S., and who deemed permanently alien, appeared frequently in the immigrant press.¹⁷⁰

The United States' derogatory treatment of Asians at home and abroad caused some degree of foreign policy woes for Washington, and these were covered in immigrant journals as well. *Jednota* reported on the aftermath of the Western powers' suppression of the Boxer Rebellion when they alleged that "the Chinese are extremely glad" to have their cities handed over to Western military authorities. Still, on the same day the paper reported that two Protestant missionaries had been killed in the city of Zhu Chen, "but the Chinese government has already brought the murderers to justice and asked forgiveness from the Australian and

English governments.”¹⁷¹ Three years later the paper reported on the end of a Chinese boycott of American goods, and also reported on “the unpardonable tactlessness of the Chinese envoy” in criticizing America’s Chinese Exclusion Act. The paper likewise showed about as much contempt to Asian American residents as President Roosevelt, who when petitioned for a relaxation of the immigration restrictions simply noted that the courts had upheld these regulations.¹⁷² In 1906 *Slovák v Amerike* reported on a recurrence of Boxer insurgency, with illustrations of the Chinese rebels. “Boxers again on the move,” read the headline. “The hatred of the yellow race against white people and against Christianity is inextinguishable [*nevykorigiteľná*]. The fanatical Chinese, called ‘Boxers,’ again are on the move and have become the terror and danger of all white people residing within the borders of the yellow empire, particularly Christian missionaries.” Any suggestion that the Chinese might have grounds for resentment of quasi-colonizers, 60 years after the Opium Wars, was left out of this edition.¹⁷³

Yet, as is frequently the case, the juxtaposition of various stories in the Slovak press is instructive. On the same day as news of the “savage, fanatical,” white-hating Boxers, items were printed, too, of the U.S. Army’s continued attempts to subjugate the wild Igorots of the Philippines. Published on that day, too, was news of an imminent lynching of a black man by an enraged group of white citizens in Virginia. The hierarchy of fanatical and civilized was a discourse that operated worldwide in 1906, and Slovak readers viewed race in all its permutations courtesy of immigrant newspapers.

At least regarding “Japanese, Chinese, and Hindus,” some Slovak immigrants learned to embrace shibboleths of illegitimate outsiders. In 1907, *Jednota* ran an article titled “Against Japanese Immigration,” but alongside it also ran a letter from Allegheny City (Pittsburgh) from a “Slovak of Šariš province.” The letter writer declared, “The war is on, we have a great anger toward these nomads from Asia who wandered from Mongolia. They should go to find their houses over there and not invade our houses. . . . For now, they are still in Asia.” Ironically, the letter writer was complaining not just about the Japanese “invading” America, but also about the Magyars (Hungarians), to argue that the Magyars had also illegitimately invaded the Slovaks’ Old World home, employing tropes of invaded homelands that were first directed against the Japanese and Chinese.¹⁷⁴

Similarly, and more directly targeted at Asian “invaders” of America, in 1915 Štefan Ďuraňa of Detroit wrote to *New Yorkský denník* of the menace caused by ostensibly lax immigration policies in Canada, the “anti-Mongolian” riots in Vancouver reported in *Slovák v Amerike* notwithstanding. “Uncle Sam has become worried by some of the actions of the Canadians,” Ďuraňa wrote. “It’s stupid to worry about Austrians, when we know that some of those entering the United States from Canada are Chinese, Japanese, Hindus and Mongols.” Even though a year into the Great War many Slovaks had no love for Austrians, this Slovak migrant had already learned that in the New World Asians were regarded as a greater threat to the white man’s republic. A similarly alarmist report had been

published in *Slovák v Amerike* seven years earlier, warning in that instance that Chinese were sneaking into the United States from Mexico. Ďuraňa's letter, and the report of Chinese "invasion," indicates that at least some immigrants were developing anti-Asian biases of their own, perhaps after reading years of anti-Japanese coverage in their newspapers. To be sure, Pittsburgh steelworkers and other laborers faced dire competition for jobs that paid a pittance; that some at least chose to see Japanese as impermissible competitors, in ways that few fellow Europeans were characterized, suggests something more than a rational economic calculus. By the early twentieth century, Slavs were looking to collect the "wages of whiteness" to which David Roediger refers.¹⁷⁵

The greater threat to the white race was perceived to come from Japan, for while China had proven to be relatively easy to subdue, by the early twentieth century Tokyo seemed to be on the ascendant. As early as 1904 the Russo-Japanese War led to alarmist warnings that Europe and America faced a "Yellow Peril" that only Russia could thwart. "The Japanese Army has behaved against the Russians completely like Tatars," *Slovák v Amerike* declared in an editorial, "Mongolians at War," which repeatedly denounced the Japanese for their barbarism and "Mongolian blood." In the Social Darwinist milieu of 1904 America, many writers were obsessed with the threatening activities of supposedly inferior "races," Slovaks among them. But here it was an immigrant writer who sounded the trumpet of white supremacy.¹⁷⁶

As noted in Chapter 3, the tsarist regime was sometimes embraced by Russian and Slovak newspapers as a bigger Slavic brother, but the war with Japan also offered an opportunity to assert one's whiteness as a European Slav, in distinction from the "Mongolian" Japanese. As is also detailed in Chapter 3, *Jednota* lauded a member of the First Catholic Slovak Union for condemning American newspapers' alleged support of "the glorious Mongols" (i.e. Japanese). The writer Pavel Kadak praised Russia's role in "spreading Christian civilization," as opposed to the "pagan" nature of the enemy.¹⁷⁷ Later that year, as it became clear that the tsar's forces were hopelessly outclassed, *Jednota's* editorial warned of a coming "Yellow Peril" on both the international and domestic fronts. In an otherwise completely Slovak editorial, the familiar English-language phrase, "Yellow Peril," was repeated several times. Immigrants had many venues in which they could learn of the threat that white Americans saw from the East, but slurs of Japanese savagery and menace were repeated in their own journals, as well.¹⁷⁸

After Japan's defeat of Russia warnings of the danger of allowing Tokyo's power to grow unchecked were sounded in *Jednota*, which again praised Russia as a valiant (albeit recently unsuccessful) defender of "Aryan" civilization. In publicizing a book, *Aryans and Mongols*, by the German author Carl Christian Spielmann, the Slovak Catholic journal quoted Spielmann as warning for 20 years in pamphlets such as "The New Mongolian Storm" that "the danger now consistently is going against us. . . . [T]he ratio between the Aryans and Mongols, will grow even greater and then shine in the future. After twenty years of studying the history of the Far East I am able to make such a statement." Spielmann saw Russia

as the defender of Aryans from a Mongol onslaught and wrote, "Europe has committed a great error by allowing the Japanese to reinforce the Asiatic lands that are bordering Russia, which is our last defense before the Asians." He further argued that, "[a]ll the Japanese . . . who live outside of their country should be under strict supervision by the police because they are dangerous spies; this crafty little island is a menace to the whole civilized world." Prefigurations of the World War II internment of Japanese Americans are on display here, but seem to have worried the editors not at all, for no condemnation of such sentiments is offered. Instead, the article concluded that, "The whole Aryan race should see in Russia their front line of defense and their first champion fighter." At a time when many immigration restrictionists in America discounted the Slavs' qualification for Aryan status, *Jednota's* editors no doubt welcomed praise from whatever quarter. Still, by their selection of such an article for inclusion, at least some Slovak editors deemed it important to make a case for Slovak membership in the "Aryan" race, as part of America's white "us."¹⁷⁹

As Tokyo objected to anti-Asian measures enacted in California and other states, fears of a U.S.-Japanese conflict grew. "Will it be war or not?" a *Slovák v Amerike* editorial pondered. The writer urged Washington to build more battleships to keep pace with the Japanese. "We know that America lives and works for peace," he added, "But if the Mongols want war, fine, they should well know that the outcome will be that the harmless Mongols will be humbled by generous Uncle Sam!"¹⁸⁰ As in coverage of America's gunboat diplomacy in the Caribbean, Uncle Sam's innocence in any brewing dispute was taken for granted. Four years later, fear of a coming war with Japan was still in the news. The paper ran a composite photograph of President Taft and the emperor of Japan "playing chess," and expressed the growing fear of Japan as an emerging power. "In recent years, reports have frequently circulated that in a short time war will break out between the United States and Japan," the paper reported. "As a matter of fact, after the victory over Russia Japan has actually acted as if they wanted to be boss of this whole country."¹⁸¹

The frequent reports in *Slovák v Amerike* and other Slovak newspapers of anti-Japanese measures relegating migrants to second-tier status went unremarked on this occasion. There was no suggestion in the main Slovak newspapers that a relaxation of anti-Japanese measures in California or elsewhere might be warranted to ease international tensions. Instead, for example, reports were published of the justice of moves in California and Nebraska to exclude Japanese children from white schools. Alarms of the "Yellow Peril" rang just as loudly in immigrant newspapers as in the journals of Hearst.¹⁸²

"That Roving, Tyrannical, Revengeful Horde"—Mongolian Magyars

Notions of a "Mongolian" threat were familiar to many white Americans circa 1910, but Slovak immigrants had another enemy less infamous to other Americans: the

Magyars in charge of the Kingdom of Hungary. When the Slovak press urged its compatriots to shake off the “Mongolian, Magyar yoke,” and during World War I called upon the American government to recognize Slovak difference from Magyar and support an independent Czechoslovak nation, some of the arguments at their command were formulated in anti-Asian tropes.

Politicians and academics disparaging the new immigrants often questioned their whiteness or European backgrounds. Senator F. M. Simmons of North Carolina dismissed newcomers as “nothing more than the degenerate progeny of the Asiatic hoards [sic] . . . the spawn of the Phoenician curse.”¹⁸³ Slovaks readily employed such tropes against their enemies. Slovaks never tired of pointing out that Magyars (Hungarians) were Asiatic nomads who were interlopers in the European heartland, even if they had first trespassed there 1,200 years ago. That distant Asian connection was emphasized by Slovaks, such as a letter writer from Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania, who objected to the slur “Hun” when used in English-language newspapers “against all hated foreigners.” Only the Magyars, he claimed, were “the true ‘Huns.’”¹⁸⁴ When a group of Magyars celebrating on Scranton’s Court House Square paid homage to George Washington, Slovaks felt compelled to write an English-language letter to the *Scranton Times*. The Slovaks reassured English-speaking readers of the paper that “we Slovak American citizens, born in Hungary, subscribe to each and every word said about George Washington and in regard to our glorious adopted country of the United States. However, we protest against the misrepresentation of Hungarian liberty and against the comparison of Kossuth to George Washington.” Instead, the Slovak writer painted a portrait of “unheard of tyranny and oppression” perpetrated by the Hungarian government. The writer asserted that, “The Slovaks lived in the territory of Hungary many centuries before the arrival of Huns and Magyars from Asia. At present Hungary is inhabited by several nationalities of entirely different tongues and even of different races, the Magyars being of Mongolian, and the Slovaks and others of Caucasian race.” Not the least of the writer’s complaints was the injustice of “Caucasians” under the control of “Mongolians,” even if the Magyars had converted to Christianity in 1000 and been resident in Central Europe for a century before this. While much has been made of new immigrants’ assertions of their fealty to symbols of American patriotism, little attention has been paid to immigrants’ simultaneous embrace of their place in “the Caucasian race.”¹⁸⁵

In 1907 a spate of “Indignation Meetings” were held by Slovaks throughout the United States. These were held to protest first the imprisonment by the Austro-Hungarian authorities of Reverend Andrej Hlinka, a deputy of parliament and advocate of greater Slovak autonomy, and then the infamous Černova Massacre, in which Slovaks holding a protest vigil at Hlinka’s parish were fired upon by Habsburg soldiers. The rhetoric at these Indignation Meetings reflected the growing anger of some Slovaks at continued rule by Budapest, but in the United States hatred of Magyars was often couched in “anti-Asian” rhetoric. Slovaks in the

Connellsville area were called to a meeting slated for New Haven, Pennsylvania, under the cry "Away with the Huns!" The meeting's Slovak organizers particularly resented being referred to as Hungarians in the English-language newspapers and the Cleveland "*Sabadság*," a Magyar newspaper. *Jednota* similarly editorialized that the Magyars were Gypsies who did not speak for the Slovak nation.¹⁸⁶

At one Indignation Meeting, Dr. J. M. Slabey made explicit these slurs on Hungarians' pedigree. In an English-language speech in New York reprinted in *Slovák v Amerike*, Slabey decried the oppression of Slovaks "under the control of the Magyars:—an entirely different race, with as different a language as it is possible for the mind to conceive, different habits, customs, and entirely different physical appearance." The Magyars, he charged, "are descendants of that roving, tyrannical, revengeful horde originating from Asia at whose head was that beast Attila. This Attila, a man without conscience, had only one object in view and that was destruction of everything in his path."

Slabey asserted that the Slovaks had already been occupants of the lands now known as Hungary, and out of pity allowed the Asian interlopers to settle among them after the Huns' eventual defeat by the Germans. Alas, this mistake was realized too late, and the brutality of the Asians in their midst led to Slovak suffering. Slabey added, "I also believe in hereditary traits of character, and now more than ever as I don't see more gentleness, at least not in the Magyars who constitute the Magyar Government today as in the olden times under Attila or Zoltán." At the beginning of the twentieth century Social Darwinist belief in racial types was commonly paraded before New York audiences, and now Slabey followed suit. To underscore the injustice Slovaks faced from an official policy of Magyarization of Slavs, he declared, "[W]e cannot be coerced to become Magyars any more than become Chinese. . . ." ¹⁸⁷ Another Indignation Meeting in Passaic heard the Rev. Jozef Martinček thunder,

Hungary, this land of wild and savage people, has blasphemed against the faith of Christ. . . . The Magyars in general arrived with no cultural knowledge, no economy or agricultural know-how, etc. . . . Our Slovak ancestors helped Saint Stephen and the Hungarians in acquiring some knowledge of farming and of various cultural things, etc. . . . The Magyars, it is said, are Turks. Murderers, these Turks. The Slovaks have to strike down these murderers, the Turks.

Hungarians were portrayed as interlopers in the country they ruled, and savage, Asiatic ones at that.¹⁸⁸ In years to come, other letter writers such as Ján Vanco of Sharon, Pennsylvania, referred to the Magyars and their supporters as "not even as civilized as the savages in darkest Africa," while the humor columnist, Godfather Švablik of Kakašovec, demanded, "[A]re we Slovaks like those Hottentots in Africa? Nosiree!" Other Slovaks in Yonkers, New York, had years before this likewise framed their grievances at being denied Slovak priests as an unfair treatment only fit for "Zulus or Kaffirs," and in the opening months of World

War I *Národné noviny* accused the Germans of being “more savage than the Hot-tentots.” In Jim Crow, Asian-excluding America, there was no greater slur than to accuse one’s opponent of employing African or Asian methods.¹⁸⁹

More frequently items in the Slovak press reminded readers of the Asian forebears of the Magyars. When Hungary’s Count Apponyi made a goodwill tour of the United States to burnish Budapest’s reputation, *Slovák v Amerike’s* comic columnists, “Rip and Račik,” were quick to note that all Magyars were “Asiatic” and “Mongol,” and therefore “Count Apponyi should be deported” from the United States, since “Apponyi is a Mongol” and “Mongols are Asiatics, and Asiatics are not permitted to travel to the U.S.” In this instance most venom was directed at the Hungarian nobleman, but tropes of perpetual Asian alienness were malleable, powerful weapons in the fight to gain Slovaks a nation. A year later the paper’s other humorist, Godfather Švablik of Kakašovec, took up the cry: “Every one of them therefore came out of Asia. We should therefore conclude that we should ship all the Magyars C.O.D. to Asia, let them all go.”¹⁹⁰

If “Asiatics” from China and Japan were regarded as a threat by most Americans, characterizing one’s Magyar foes as Mongolians or Asians might win Slovaks a sympathetic hearing in the United States. Yet it wasn’t only, or even chiefly, to native-born Americans that Slovaks were addressing their comments. While some of these speeches were reprinted in English, their appearance in Slovak newspapers indicates it was the cognitive maps of immigrants themselves that were being rearranged to situate Budapest and her Magyars in the heart of Asia.

Prior to the 1910 census *Národné noviny* editorialized against the indignity of immigrants being forced to identify themselves solely as natives of Hungary, with no way to indicate ethnic affiliation. To make clear just what an outrage this was, editors turned to racialized language. The paper urged its readers to answer the question “place of birth” with “Slovakland—Slovakia! Wake up, unite in our camp with this deed!” Editors ruefully observed, “On the one hand, we are branded by all officially as ‘Hungarians,’ which has given rise to the derogatory ‘Hunky,’ while on the second we have been amalgamated on the other side of the water by the old rulers, in statistical assignations as Magyars.” The editors continued with all the racial indignation they could muster, “‘Hungarian’ and ‘Magyar,’ it is not all the same! They are two different things and the difference is huge! That DIFFERENCE is acknowledged by every linguist, that the Magyar will never lose his INNATE MONGOL-CHINESE CHARACTER!”

A curious linguistic fact, that the Magyar language was not Indo-European, was transformed by Slovak editors into a matter of “huge” difference over “innate character.” Pointing out to Washington the travesty of classifying a Slovak as a Magyar might only get one so far. The idea that a Caucasian, even from the Carpathians, was in danger of being amalgamated with a race innately “Chinese-Mongolian”—in 1910 America, this almost certainly would be acknowledged a far graver sin.¹⁹¹ The Slovaks, who 20 years earlier had been denigrated by Henry Cabot Lodge as “not a good acquisition for us to make, since they appear to have

so many items in common with the Chinese," were now highlighting their European consanguinity with Anglo-Saxons by belittling Magyars as Asians. As early as 1904, in the same *Jednota* article slurring "the pagan Japs," Magyars were derided as "Hungarians of the Mongolian race."¹⁹² What more lethal weapon could editors lob in the battle for acceptance vis-à-vis Magyars? Asians in 1910, and for decades to come, were ineligible for citizenship.¹⁹³ The Census Bureau relented to the pressure of Slovak and other immigrants' complaints, and in 1910 added a question on "native tongue" to record Central Europe's varied ethnicities.¹⁹⁴

During the Great War, matters of Slovak identity assertion reached fever pitch, and cries of Mongolian Magyarism helped immigrants make their case for independence. As early as 1914, Vincent Kubiš of Daisytown, Pennsylvania, sent in to *Slovák v Amerike* his satirical reworking of the Slovak national hymn, "*Hej, Slováci!*" The satire was at the expense of the Mongolian Magyars, whose time in power, some hoped, would now be short. "Hey, dear Slovaks, / We have all survived / All the horrible Habsburgs— / At least to this moment!" Kubiš began, with many digs at "Old Franny Joey."

But then Kubiš got to the heart of the matter, asserting that after the fighting "each lamb could go to his rightful place in Asia." He repeated, "Let them take / Their place in Asia, / And that may be / In pagan Turkey."

He continued equating the Magyars with Mongolians:

Now we Slovaks
When we win the war,
The Mongolian Government
Will be given no more.

The Mongolian Government
Has long plagued us
And Slovak schools
We were also prevented.

Truly we were wronged
In our old country,
We also had to in our churches
Sing in Mongolian

Old Franny Joey,
Tyrant over Slovaks,
Open to you
The hell gate.

Old Franny Joey!
Death is at the door

And devils are waiting
For you with forks.

They wanted to uproot
All we Slovaks,
Slovaks, they wanted to sell you
To their Mongolian horde.

But the Mongols
Somewhat miscalculated,
Because it is already upon them,
The whole world's angry force [*zhnevany*]

Of all the world's parties
Only the Mongolian horde,
Was a foundation that would destroy
Our Slovaks.

In his concluding verses, however, Kubiš reassured his compatriots that the Magyars would fall before the Russian Cossacks; as in coverage of the Russo-Japanese War ten years before, the Cossacks were forces not of barbarism but civilization and liberation. In the war's first months, it was the Magyars who already were reworked as Mongols and Asian tyrants.¹⁹⁵

The Habsburgs continued to be derided as a motley racial crew, as when *Národné noviny* mocked the state funeral for Franz Josef in Vienna. Of the Habsburgs and Hungarian nobles, the paper wrote, "On the face of these people is the cast of a gypsy portrait." In the weeks following the armistice the paper similarly mocked Count Károlyi's short-lived Hungarian government. "They started a democratic republic and elected ARCHDUKE Joseph, the son of the eccentric, nay, tainted lover of gypsy lore, gypsy language, and gypsy women, as their president," the paper wrote of the Hungarians. "His estate at Alcsut was the scene of many a feast, where the gypsies walked around clad in a string of beads and a smile. . . . How foolish and benighted are these Asiatic Nobles of the Empty Cranium. . . . Thus we have the oddest thing in the world, worthy of Barnum's Side Show. . . ." The evocation of carnival freaks and displays from Asia such as the "human zoos" that thrilled crowds in Vienna and Prague (as well as American extravaganzas such as the "Asiatic" Filipino villages at the St. Louis World's Fair) put the Magyars in their place. Poignant notes that Barnum's "Ethnological Congress of Strange Savage Tribes" in the 1880s featured Australian aborigines, as well as "other performing groups of Zulu, Toda, Nubians, and Sioux, who had been . . . dispossessed on other colonial frontiers." By invoking Barnum side shows in relation to Magyars, Slovaks asserted that wild Magyars weren't fit to run an empire and more properly belonged behind bars.¹⁹⁶

Without the side-show references, regular Slovaks writing to their papers from across the country slighted the Magyars' Mongolian savagery. Štefan Cmero wrote to *New Yorkský denník* on behalf of his "Sparrows Point Slovaks" in Baltimore to denounce the "Mongolian slavery (yoke)" under which "that old sinner Fraňo Jozef," with the aid of "Willie the Lunatic" kept the Slovaks. "I'm sure we'll find that every freedom-loving Slovak wants to shake off our hated tyranny and the shackles and oppression of that wicked, wild Mongolian scum."¹⁹⁷

Other letter writers combined Old World and New World racialized stereotypes in arguing the Slovaks' case. Andrej Bugoš of Los Angeles wrote to *Národné noviny* in 1915 to denounce the Mongolian Magyars, saying "Slovaks live under the worst slavery and suffering in the world." In this regard he was on familiar terrain, making arguments readily understandable even to those back in the Carpathians. But he continued in a complaint that could only have been learned in the New World: "Indeed if you really look at it, we have it worse than the Negroes. Indeed these days in California Negroes are enslaved to luxury, and you see what 'tents' they have! But among our backward, dirty [*zadubení*] Austrians, see how we're treated like sheep, how our women are enslaved. . . . The Slovaks are kept as slaves." Later familiar tropes of lazy blacks supposedly living in luxury while hard-working white ethnics were cast as the real victims were already employed during World War I to argue that Slovak suffering trumped anything African Americans had known. Even before the war, a little filler item in *Jednota* complained, "Blacks in the United States have established various high schools and institutes. Blacks are allowed to have these, and our brothers in Hungary are truly worse off in this than the American blacks!" While it was a familiar complaint that the Magyars' prohibition on Slovak-language high schools was an injustice, the allegation that blacks were benefiting in special ways from Jim Crow schools was an unusual argument on behalf of Slavic suffering.¹⁹⁸

More problematically, Slovaks even employed rhetoric and imagery of lynching to highlight the alleged severity of Slovak oppression back in the Kingdom of Hungary. In early 1917, at a time when Czech and Slovak Americans, as well as other captive peoples of the German and Austro-Hungarian empires, were attempting to coax America into the war, a grim cartoon appeared on the front page of *New Yorkský denník*. Three lynched corpses sway in the wind as buzzards peck at their flesh. But this was not a condemnation of the lynching of black Americans, a phenomenon that along with urban anti-black race riots was on the ascendancy during World War I and shortly thereafter. While *New Yorkský denník* and other Slavic immigrant newspapers failed to condemn these atrocities, this lynching cartoon told readers that, "In Hungary at Christmas they erect such Christmas trees." The hanging bodies are labeled "freedom," "truth," and "humanity" (see Figure 5-14). While Budapest's rule over non-Magyars was far from kind, lynchings were not endemic to Upper Hungary. Once again tropes of violence against blacks were redeployed to allege that our (white ethnic) suffering was "the worst slavery in the world."¹⁹⁹

FIGURE 5-14: Lynching imagery was employed during World War I to allege that Slovak suffering was “the worst slavery in the world.” “In Hungary at Christmas they erect such Christmas trees.” The hanging bodies are labeled “freedom,” “truth,” and “humanity.” *New Yorkský denník*, January 11, 1917, 1.

At other moments immigrants readily turned to racialized language when writing of their woes. In a speech at Gettysburg National Cemetery, Rusyn advocate Gregory Žatkovich reminded Woodrow Wilson and the world that while Lincoln had freed the slaves, in 1919 many white nations still lived in slavery in Europe. Similarly, Ján Smolnický of McKeesport, Pennsylvania, wrote to *Jednota* of the 16-hour days Slovak agricultural laborers toiled on nobles’ estates. “And about

this slavery, haven't we poured out our hearts? Has anyone said a prayer for us in church? No! . . . Make no mistake, what these vile Magyar counts have been doing is worse than what occurred on American plantations, with their black slaves, who were freed by the sainted honored martyr, President Lincoln. What other people can be said to have endured what the Slovaks have?"²⁰⁰ Of course, Smolnický had answered his own question as to who had it worse. But just as Irish-born workers of the 1850s spoke of their woes as "wage slaves" to disparage blacks' supposedly lesser plight, not build cross-racial working-class alliances, Slovaks now referred to slavery to heighten their grudges.²⁰¹

At other moments Slovaks asserted their identity as non-Magyars. In 1915, *Jednota*, worried that Slovaks would be mistaken for Magyars or Czechs, published its declaration of identity:

Us?

No. We are Slovaks.

The Magyars say that we are Magyars.

And the Czechs that we are Czechs.

But we are Slovak!

And may God grant that we remain Slovaks.

We say so nevertheless clearly.

Why is it our brother Czechs do not understand us?"²⁰²

Slovaks took great pains to differentiate themselves from the hated Germans and Magyars. "WRK" of Philadelphia wrote to *Obrana* in February 1916 insisting, "we are not Germans, not Magyars," but rather "thoroughly-purely Slovaks." He railed at "the deaf-mute-blind idiocy" of Americans who couldn't tell the difference. In 1918 with the United States in the war, Anton Chlebuch, also of Philadelphia, rhetorically asked, "Am I happy at being called an Austrian?" before going to a "Mr. Honorable Notary to draw up an affidavit that I am a Slovak and not an Austrian and not a Magyar! And that neither Germany nor Austria-Hungary are my true country!"²⁰³

Chlebuch was right to worry. In April 1918 the front-page headline in *Jednota* again screamed, "Accused in lynching." Only this time it wasn't an African American but a German who met this fate. The story chronicled the investigation into the murder of Robert Prager in Collinsville, Illinois, noting one of the accused "said that the crowd claimed it was acting under the authority of the Army of the United States."²⁰⁴ Two weeks later several Teutons narrowly escaped Prager's fate. "Two Austrians Tarred and Feathered," *Jednota* announced, telling the story of two miners "grabbed from the mine in Mineral Spring" near Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, "and then smeared with tar and covered in feathers because they had refused to buy Liberty Bonds." A German nearby was likewise assaulted by a mob of "maybe 200 workers," who "tied him with a rope and said they were going to lynch him." After the German begged for mercy they "marched him to

the bank, where he pledged to buy a Liberty Bond for \$500." Perhaps superfluously, editors placed as a tag line to this and every other story in *Jednota* the message "KUPUJTE LIBERTY BONDY—BUY LIBERTY BONDS."²⁰⁵

The most familiar slurs against the Magyars, though, continued to be that they were Asian aliens to civilized Europe and thus had to be defeated. Slovaks meeting in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, passed a "grand manifesto" declaring the justice of the Czechoslovak independence movement. The manifesto began, "Whereas, the foreign invaders of Mongol, Hun origin, succeeded by wile, intrigue and force to foist their unwelcome rule over our peace-loving and unwary forebears, which rule they exercised ruthlessly and pitilessly for over 1,000 years. . . ." Like much of the Slavic agitation for independence, the manifesto echoed American icons such as the Declaration of Independence, asserting that the "Huns" had denied said "peace-loving forebears" the "God-given right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. . . ." Nevertheless, invocations of Hungarian "Mongol" origin resonated with Johnstown audiences, too. A few weeks later *Národné noviny* again derided the "Mongolian origin" of the hated Magyars.²⁰⁶

In the war's aftermath, a letter writer gleefully wrote that "a thousand years of slavery has ended and the Slovak nation has finally dawned. . . . At last we can proudly shout: We are a nation! No longer are we under this Mongolian yoke!" A second writer confirmed that Slovaks had "chafed under this Mongolian yoke," while *New Yorkský denník* compared the Magyars' brutality toward captured Legionnaires to darkest Africa and "the Chinese barbarian warriors." The paper later dismissed Magyars' continued irredentism toward the Slavic lands they had lost at Versailles by stating, "Mongols will always remain Mongols." In 1920 *Národné noviny* continued to kick a Magyar when he was down, deriding the "artificial hegemony of a Mongol-Turanian tribe with a veneer of European culture," "a race of parasites," with "the Asiatic mind of a nomad. . . ."²⁰⁷

Only a year after the war's end, however, the brutal suppression of the Great Steel Strike dampened Slovak laborers' glee at European liberation. In places such as Donora, Pennsylvania, the promise of Wilson's Fourteen Points rang a bit hollow, and Slavs again equated their industrial woes with black slavery. From that city a letter writer lamented the situation. "Look out now," he warned, "we're in darkest Africa, and the culprit is the state Cossacks. . . . Freedom, in a word, has been suppressed."²⁰⁸ The equation of the strikebreaking State Police with the Cossacks is more typical of Slovak *štrajkujúci* (strikers) in this period, but the writer already equated un-freedom with "darkest Africa" and seemed to suggest the troopers' suppression of freedom was the kind of treatment no *white* working man—not even a Slovak—should have to endure.

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The continued evocation of black slavery to depict an immigrant's injustice suggests that we should not overstress the anti-Hungarian animus of Slavic Americans. For all their grievances with Magyars, Slavic immigrants had learned

that non-Europeans were America's ultimate outsiders, who, as we've seen, continued to be derided in stories of colonialism or as figures of cannibal "fun." Indeed, when New York immigrants founded a Slovak Hall, they celebrated its inaugural, as noted, with a blackface cannibal orchestra.²⁰⁹

Such minstrelsy became a staple of white ethnic entertainment. Jokes at blacks' expense, including the popularity of minstrel shows at immigrant parishes and social clubs, indicates New World boundary lines continued to be important even as Old World grudges were carried and elaborated upon in racialized language. The coverage of savage African cannibals coexisted with denunciations of Hungarians, but lines of black-and-white for some came to seem the most salient identity markers. Whether as minstrel-show jokes or, more seriously, as victims of white-on-black urban race riots, African Americans continued to appear in immigrant newspapers, figuring as America's ultimate pariahs.

In the final two chapters, we shall return to immigrants' coverage of black Americans, first in minstrel-show distortion and then in violent competition for urban residential and economic resources.