

Putting Labor's House in Order: the Transport Workers Union and labor anti-Communism in Miami during the 1940s

ALEX LICHTENSTEIN

"Miami Chosen Center of Latin Red Network," screamed the headlines of the *Miami Daily News* on May 9 1949. Over the next 10 days, the paper ran a series written by former Communist Party (CP) and Transport Workers Union (TWU) member, Paul Crouch, exposing Communist infiltration of the Manhattan Project, Soviet plans to use the domestic CP apparatus to help overthrow the US government and capture the Panama Canal, and the Party's plans to foment a "negro revolt" in the South. For his Miami audience, Crouch emphasized that the city's powerful Transport Workers Union, with over 2000 Pan American Airlines workers in its ranks the largest CIO affiliate in Florida, was controlled by the Communists. Even though the TWU's international president, Michael Quill, had broken with the Party the year before, he had so far been unable to purge Communists from the ranks of Miami's Local 500, the union's largest air transport unit. As a consequence, Crouch proclaimed, "the Communist Party could ground every plane operated by Pan American in the western hemisphere." And in his most explosive charge, Crouch claimed that a Latin American red courier network operated under cover of the union.¹

After Whittaker Chambers and Elizabeth Bentley, Crouch was probably the most important ex-Communist red exposé the Cold War produced. Of course, there is good reason to doubt his reliability; indeed, even the FBI dismissed his allegation that Pan Am flight stewards served as CP couriers. "Much of the material appears fabricated...and written for public consumption," the Bureau fumed in an internal memorandum in response to their star informant's inflammatory articles. After an investigation, the FBI discovered that "the schedule of stewards' flights and assignments was so irregular...that courier activities would be quite impractical."²

Nevertheless, Crouch's sensational accusations against the TWU merit attention, for at least two reasons. First, Crouch maintained that by the late 1940s Miami had become "the base from which Communism is spread" throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, and pointed to the frequent trips made to Pan American Airlines bases in Latin America by Local 500 officials as the prime evidence of this interamerican subversion. Suggesting that Local 500 officers travelled in their official union capacity to carry messages between Latin American Communist parties and the apparatus in the US, Crouch charged that "Pan American Airlines unwittingly serves as a helper to the Party by carrying its agents into Latin America." Whatever the FBI thought, this

¹*Miami Daily News*, May 9-19, 1949.

²H.B. Fletcher to D.M. Ladd, May 26, 1949, June 3, 1949, File #61-6547-206, FBI-FOIA.

observation, and Crouch's similar testimony before HUAC that same month, had a good deal of credibility at the time, and thus made Local 500 extremely vulnerable to anti-Communist attacks. For Communists did indeed constitute the leadership of TWU Local 500, and from the local's inception in 1945 union officials had made frequent trips southward in an attempt to build affiliates in Puerto Rico, the Canal Zone, and elsewhere in the hemisphere.³

Second, long before he made them public in 1949, Crouch's charges against TWU Local 500 had worked their way to the highest levels of the CIO, touching off a jurisdictional raid on Local 500's membership by the United Automobile Workers (UAW) in the Spring of 1948. The resulting factional fight within the Miami local played an important part in TWU President Michael Quill's break with the CP, his purge of Communists from the TWU international in December 1948, and his willingness to bring his powerful union from the left wing of the CIO firmly into its center.

In the late 1940s, the TWU and Quill, a powerful and charismatic union leader who had long aligned himself with the Communists, played a central role in the CIO's gravitation into the orbit of the liberal anti-Communism of the Democratic Party. Under Quill's leadership Party members wielded a great deal of power within the New York-based TWU from its inception in the 1930s. In 1946 Quill had gone along with the Communist Party line to the point of disingenuously accepting the disastrous (for the Party) CIO resolution to "resent or reject" CP interference with union affairs. But by 1948 Quill's allegiance to the Party line had eroded, and Henry Wallace's Progressive Party campaign marked the beginning of the end for his Communist sympathies and CP influence in the CIO unions more generally. Quill, caught between his loyalties to the CIO and the Party's dictate to support Wallace, refused to take a firm position on the Progressive Party candidacy.

However, he did solicit the opinions of TWU locals and organizers. By the Spring of 1948, sure that the Party's insistence that its CIO "influentials" back Wallace would "play into the hands of the reactionary forces within the CIO," Quill broke publicly and decisively with the CP, and drove its members from the TWU leadership later that year, isolating the Communist leadership of Local 500. Despite its relatively small size (100,000 members), the TWU's break with the CP was significant because of Quill's prestige within the CIO and his union's political power in New York City, the East Coast mecca of the American left. Moreover, unlike many other leading CIO figures who distanced themselves from the Party, Quill never abandoned his commitment to militant, progressive trade unionism.⁴

³US House, Committee on Un-American Activities, *Testimony of Paul Crouch*, May 6, 1949, 81st cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1949), 216; US Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Communist Activities Among Aliens and National Groups*, 81st Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1950), 143; Frank Donner, "Paul Crouch," *The Nation*, Apr 10, 1954, 304–305 on Crouch's unreliability.

⁴There exists a wide range of material on the internal CIO fight over Communism; the most useful (and pertinent to Quill's role) were Joseph Starobin, *American Communism in Crisis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 144–148, 166–177, 293n35, 233n36; Edward P. Johanningsmeier, *Forging American Communism: the life of William Z. Foster* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 314–332; Josh Freeman, *In Transit: The Transport Workers Union In New York City* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1989), 286–317; Harvey Levenstein, *Communism, Anticommunism, and the CIO* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1981), 208–209, 227, 253, 270; Shirley Quill, *Mike Quill—Himself: a memoir* (Greenwich, CT: Devin-Adair, 1985), 194–207; L.H. Whittemore, *The Man Who Ran the Subways: the story of Mike Quill* (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1968), 143; Curtis D. MacDougall, *Gideon's Army*, 3 vols.

Quill's dramatic departure from the Communist wing of the CIO is commonly attributed to Communist-initiated programs to which he could not in good conscience subscribe. In addition to the Progressive Party campaign, Quill resented the CP's adamant opposition to a New York City transit fare increase which he backed in an effort to win a wage increase for his membership. Confronted with these choices "between his private politics and his union position," as Joseph Starobin puts it, Quill valued his allegiance to TWU members and to the CIO's political viability above his left-wing political commitments.⁵ This perspective accurately captures the tragic dilemma of CIO leftists who hoped to preserve the industrial unions as a genuinely progressive force in the American political landscape, even during the upheaval of the early Cold War.

But perhaps this view understates the internal pressures that began to build within the CIO in this same period, pressures which forced a generation of militants to choose between their "political" beliefs and their faith in the union movement. Josh Freeman, for instance, in his masterful account of Quill's break with the CP, suggests that the UAW raid on Local 500 provided a "nasty demonstration of what the combined forces of liberalism and reaction could do against a left-wing union," but still concludes that its impact on "Quill's thinking is unclear."⁶

In fact, the anti-Communist factional fight in Miami provided a powerful push to move Quill off the fence at a crucial moment; indeed, this is exactly what the CIO leadership intended when they permitted the UAW to raid the local in March 1948. Wedded to alleged reasons of state, a purely parochial union fight thus had a powerful impact on the national realignment of forces within the CIO. By the end of 1949, the basic incompatibility between Stalinist labor organizations in a non-Leninist union federation, as well as the national security rationale, the CIO's search for political respectability, and the Southern Organizing Committee's desperate efforts to build a non-Communist CIO in Florida combined to destroy what one organizer had called "an outpost of progressive unionism in the deep South."⁷

At the center of Miami's red scare in 1948 and 1949 stood Charles Smolikoff, the leading CIO and Communist Party figure in the Miami area throughout the 1940s. Born and raised in Brooklyn, Smolikoff moved to Miami in 1937 for his health even though he was only 21 years old. Soon after arriving in Miami he became active in CP and CP front activities. He immediately helped organize a movement to support the Spanish Republic's fight against Franco. Subsequently, he organized a South Florida chapter of the American Peace Movement, a CP front that soon outlived its usefulness when the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941.⁸ Then, in 1942 at the behest of Florida Communist Party leader Alex Trainor, Smolikoff began trade union agi-

(New York: Marzani and Munsell, 1965), vol. 1, 259–263; Robert H. Zieger, *The CIO, 1935–1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), pp. 253–293; Steve Rosswurm (ed.), *The CIO's Left-Led Unions* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 1–16. For Quill's discussion of his reasons see Michael J. Quill to Dear Friend [Luigi Longo], Apr 16, 1948, reprinted in Philip Jaffe, *The Rise and Fall of American Communism* (New York: Horizon Press, 1975), 144–151.

⁵Freeman, *passim*, Starobin, 174.

⁶Freeman, 295–296.

⁷Maurice Forge to Michael Quill, Feb 1948, Folder 22, Maurice Forge Papers, Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, NYU.

⁸Smolikoff's background is pieced together from the *Miami Herald*, Dec 26, 1944, 8-B; John Steedman (ed.), *Who's Who in Labor* (New York: Dryden Press, 1946), 334; "Smolikoff identified as a key man for

tation among Miami's shipyard workers. Working as a volunteer, he distributed leaflets and the IUMSWA's *Shipyard Worker*, met (separately) with black and white workers, and even prepared an NLRB case for the union, all the while keeping his political affiliation clandestine. At the end of 1942 a visiting IUMSWA organizer praised his work, and especially commended his understanding of the "Southern approach, Negro problem and white workers angle." Smolikoff, this organizer claimed, "is respected by the negroes and whites alike in Miami."⁹

By June 1943 Smolikoff had helped the newly chartered IUMSWA Local 59, the first CIO union in Miami, win a contract for 1000 workers at the Miami Shipbuilding Corporation. Soon unsuspecting Shipbuilding Workers officials appointed the Communist organizer Florida regional director of IUMSWA, and with Smolikoff's help the shipbuilders union gained a foothold in several yards in Jacksonville and Miami. In 1943, because IUMSWA had more than one-half of Florida's CIO members concentrated in its Miami and Jacksonville locals, CIO officials named Smolikoff director of the state's newly formed Industrial Union Council. From this position he was ideally poised to help spearhead the effort to organize Pan American Airways, the next logical target for the CIO. This task became especially pressing for both the CIO and the CP as IUMSWA began to face the prospect of postwar layoffs and Pan Am began to hire dismissed shipyard workers, who formed a natural constituency for the CIO.¹⁰

Smolikoff worked closely with TWU organizers from 1943 onwards to help build a union at Pan Am, even though he was still on the IUMSWA payroll. In the aftermath of its January 1946 convention, however, IUMSWA "rid itself of the communistic...elements which had entered this union during the war," as President John Green later confided. Despite one trusted organizer's opinion that Smolikoff was "loved by the rank and file" and "one of the top organizers in the labor movement," in March 1946 IUMSWA dismissed him as its Florida regional director for being "more interested in following [the] party line than IUMSWA-CIO policies." The TWU national leadership, in which the Communist-oriented left remained strong, did not hesitate to hire a skilled organizer of Smolikoff's caliber as Local 500's director of "education and consolidation" to help build its most important local outside of New York City.¹¹

Joining Local 500 in May 1946, Smolikoff almost immediately placed himself at odds with Roy and Elisabeth Whitman, the husband and wife team that had successfully

reds," *Miami Daily News*, Mar 1, 1948, 1; author's interview with Berthe Small (Smolikoff), Dec 8, 1995; "Survey Report of Miami Florida", nd (c. Dec, 1942), Series VI, Subseries 3, Box 6, Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America (IUMSWA) Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, University of Maryland.

⁹Alexander Trainor to Charles Smolikoff, June 8, 1942, reprinted in the *Miami Daily News*, Feb 25, 1948 (probably acquired by the FBI, which had a "highly confidential source" with access to Trainor's correspondence, "Communist Infiltration of Transport Workers Union of America," Miami Report #100-7319-241, Dec 31, 1943, FBI-FOIA); "Survey Report of Miami Florida", IUMSWA Papers. My thanks to Josh Freeman for providing the FBI material cited throughout.

¹⁰*Shipyard Worker*, June 4, 1943, 6, Nov 19, 1943, 6; Charles Smolikoff to Allan Haywood, May 20, 1944, Series II, Subseries 4, Box 12, IUMSWA Papers; *Miami Herald*, Dec 26, 1944, p. 8-B; Smolikoff to Tom Gallagher, May 29, 1944, Series II, Subseries 4, Box 18; Smolikoff to Tom Gallagher, July 31, 1945, Series II, Subseries 4, Box 12, IUMSWA Papers.

¹¹Telegram from Ross Blood to Jack Livingstone (sic), Mar 19, 1948; Telegram from John Green to Hoke Welch, Feb 24, 1948, Series II, Subseries 4, Box 12; William Smith to Thomas Gallagher, "Report and Recommendations of Survey of Florida Area," 28 Jan, 1946, Series II, Subseries 4, Box 18, IUMSWA Papers; Charles Smolikoff to Douglas MacMahon, May 8, 1946, TWU-500 Papers, Transport Workers Union Collection, Robert F. Wagner Archives, NYU.

organized TWU Local 500 in early 1945. Within the space of one month, with the connivance of the TWU's secretary-treasurer Douglas MacMahon, also a Party member, Smolikoff maneuvered the Whitmans out of the local. The conflict between Smolikoff and the Whitmans puzzled even the FBI. According to an FBI informant the Whitmans, who had been sent by the TWU international to Miami in November 1944 to direct the Pan Am organizing campaign, were also associated with the union's Communist faction and should be considered "agitators." Similarly, the Federal mediator who oversaw the March 1945 union election described Elisabeth Whitman as "a fellow-traveller from way over on the left side of the road."¹²

Perhaps the Whitmans had drifted from the Party after moving to Miami, as one informant suggested. More likely, the conflict between Smolikoff and the Whitmans derived from the internal upheaval in the American CP that followed the Comintern's April 1945 repudiation of the "class peace" associated with Earl Browder's leadership of the Party. Smolikoff's efforts to drive the Whitmans out of Local 500 may have reflected both his embrace of the Party's sudden swerve to the "left" with the purge of Browder and the Whitmans' adherence to Browder's suddenly discredited line. Whatever the Whitmans' political affinities, however, Smolikoff appeared far more willing and eager than they to interject Party business into his day-to-day organizational role as a "trade-union Communist" and to reach into Local 500 to build a trade union section of Miami's Communist Party.¹³

Smolikoff, who directed Local 500's affairs from June 1946 onwards, frequently reported to MacMahon and TWU Air Transport Division (ATD) director Maurice Forge, both Party members, on his successful recruitment of "progressives", his sales of a "decent" newspaper to union members, and his creation of a "shop club of progressives" within Local 500. But Smolikoff was also a "Communist trade unionist", who worked hard to process the grievances of TWU members, to win good contracts for airline workers, and to push against the rampant racial discrimination at the airfield, despite the fact that African American porters, cleaners, and cafeteria workers made up only 10% of Pan Am's Miami workforce.

Smolikoff won people to TWU because he developed what he called a "fighting spirit" in the union.¹⁴ He defended the right to Saturday overtime pay, regardless of the number of days worked during the previous week. He helped the flight stewards renegotiate their pay structure and seniority lists. He won reclassification grievances with back pay for 41 workers in Local 500's small unit in TACA airways, and threatened to take this same group of workers out on strike to block layoffs without proper notice. He backed an interracial job action led by black porters who refused to carry out work to which they were not assigned. And he took on the difficult but essential task of strengthening Local 500's auxiliaries at "down the line" Pan Am bases in Puerto Rico and the Canal Zone. Here he pressed to bring wage rates into line with those of the company's US workforce, claiming that the existing differentials allowed

¹²Aaron Spiegel to Richard Downes, Nov 13, 1944, TWU-500; "Communist Infiltration of Transport Workers Union of America," Miami Report, Dec 31, 1943, Apr 4, 1944, Oct 22, 1945, File #100-7319-241, FBI-FOIA; "Mediator's Report on Case R-1311," Box 205, RG13, National Archives II, 29.

¹³On changes in CP policy in 1945-46 see Maurice Isserman, *Which Side Were You On?: the American Communist Party during the Second World War*, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 214-243; Starobin, 71-120; Johanningsmeier, 293-313.

¹⁴Charles Smolikoff to Douglas MacMahon, June 29, 1946, Smolikoff to Maurice Forge, Nov 2, 1946, "Extra," flyer, c.Sept 13, 1946, TWU-500.

Pan Am to “more and more shift [maintenance] work from Miami to these L[atin]-A[merican] bases where...cheaper work can be performed.”¹⁵

Meanwhile, beyond the airfield and union hall, Smolikoff sought to bring Local 500’s growing clout to bear on local, national, and even international political issues of concern to the Communist Party. In Miami he attempted to forge an alliance with AFL unions to use consumer boycotts and picket lines spearheaded by the TWU to protest the increased cost of living that chipped away at workers’ wages. In 1947, the TWU backed a labor candidate, Edwin Waller, in a city commission primary election. Waller, who had worked with Smolikoff in IUMSWA, followed him to the TWU, and briefly joined the CP at his behest, lost the election but did win more than 6000 votes. And, as opposition to the impending Taft–Hartley Act grew that same year, Smolikoff and the TWU helped sponsor a mass meeting which drew an interracial gathering of 9000 to Miami’s normally whites-only Bayfront Park.¹⁶

Smolikoff also repeatedly brought controversial civil rights and civil liberties matters before Local 500’s membership. In August 1946, Local 500’s executive board passed a resolution in favor of a Puerto Rican independence referendum. Then, in November 1946, at MacMahon’s behest but in violation of national CIO policy, Smolikoff circulated a National Negro Congress petition to present to the United Nations. The following year he distributed Civil Rights Congress (CRC) flyers among the membership, and in 1948 he helped organize a Miami chapter of this Communist-supported civil rights organization. Finally, in early 1948 Smolikoff sought to raise money to defend John Santo, a national TWU leader who faced deportation proceedings because of his Communist Party membership.¹⁷

The Communist labor organizer also envisioned the TWU playing a hemispheric political role, for example in supporting the struggle for Puerto Rican independence. Under Smolikoff’s leadership, Local 500’s Balboa auxiliary forged a close alliance with the Communist-led United Public Workers (UPW) in the Canal Zone. In August 1946 the UPW and TWU Local 500 formed a CIO Council of Panama, and then led a march and rally to protest the “vicious labor practices” in the Zone. UPW leaders subsequently directed Smolikoff’s attention to the 4000 unorganized ship and fruit company workers in the Canal Zone who might fall under TWU jurisdiction.¹⁸

Given the scope of this activity, more striking than the intensity of the anti-Communism that shattered Local 500 in 1948 and 1949 was the fact that the attack was so long

¹⁵Charles Smolikoff to Maurice Forge, July 2, 1946, “TACA Grievances Settled to date by CIO—July 10” (1946), TWU-500; *Miami Herald*, Aug 2, 1946, 1-B; Aug 3, 1946, 1-B; “Union Plans Ultimatum Against PAA,” news clipping, nd; Smolikoff to Forge, Aug 14, 1946, Oct 21, 1946, TWU-500.

¹⁶Smolikoff to Miami Central Labor Union and Railroad Brotherhoods of Miami, July 1946, TWU-500; *Miami Daily News*, July 24, 1946, 1; *Miami Daily News*, July 25, 1946, 4-B; Smolikoff to Quill, Apr 15, 1947, TWU-500; *TWU Bulletin*, June 19, 1948, 6, Nov., 1947, 7; *HUAC, Investigation of Communist Activities in the State of Florida, Part 1*, 7292–7298; Transcript of Hearing, *Leah Adler Benemovsky vs. Jimmy Sullivan, Sheriff of Dade County*, Apr 27, 1948, Dade County Circuit Court, Box 31, Folder 38, John M. Coe Papers, Special Collections, Emory Univ., 20–26 (hereafter Coe Papers); Robert McNally to Father Charles Rice, Aug 11, 1947, Box 25, Rice Papers, Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh.

¹⁷Douglas MacMahon to Smolikoff, Oct 31, 1946, TWU-500; John Brophy to all Industrial Union Councils, Nov 26, 1946, NAACP Papers, Part 13, Series A, Reel 14, frame 303, University Publications of America; “Communist infiltration of Transport Workers Union of America,” Miami Report #100-7319-491, Oct 27, 1949, FBI-FOIA, 4; Resolution Passed by Local 500, Aug 12, 1946, TWU-500; *TWU Bulletin*, Aug 1946, 12; Smolikoff to Aaron Spiegel, Feb 2, 1948, folder 26, Forge Papers, University Publications of America.

¹⁸Smolikoff to Forge, July 14, Aug 14, 1946, Ed Cheresh to Smolikoff, Sept 2, 1946, Smolikoff to Cheresh, Sept 4, 1946, TWU-500.

in coming. After all, although his political affiliation remained clandestine, Smolikoff openly sold the *Worker* on the airfield, recruited Pan Am workers into the Party, held meetings of the CP's small trade union section in the TWU-CIO hall, pushed the "Negro question" in an inhospitable southern climate, had previously organized a left-wing faction in Miami's Local 59 of IUMSWA, and had been appointed to his position in the TWU by "Red" Mike Quill. Even at the moment of his appointment, the "Communist" epithet had been applied to Smolikoff by Whitman's partisans with little practical effect.¹⁹ It appeared true in 1946-1947, as Local 500 President M. L. Edwards later informed the House Un-American Activities Committee, that Communists were "acceptable as responsible union officers or members." Indeed, it is a measure of the acceptance Party cadre still might find within the CIO in late 1946 and early 1947 that the Southern Organizing Committee (SOC) sent Smolikoff a note thanking him for his "fine work...with airways employees in Miami," and worked with him in his capacity as Florida Industrial Union Council director to organize a small group of textile workers in a Miami plant.²⁰ Less than a year later the SOC would join the concerted effort to dislodge Smolikoff and his allies from Local 500.

Under the surface, however, trouble was brewing. Smolikoff consistently believed that his agitational approach had won him "virtually 100% confidence of the rank and file."²¹ But as early as April 1947, a small cell of anti-Communist dissidents began to form inside Local 500. Led by Robert McNally, a 37-year-old maintenance worker who described himself as an "ardent CIO-er," a handful of Pan Am workers began to meet in a "study club" with a local priest. McNally, a shop steward, had helped organize Local 500, and Smolikoff even appointed him to the interracial organizing committee he created in 1946. But suspecting that Smolikoff was a Communist (in part because of his distribution of the SCHW's magazine, *Southern Patriot*), McNally had begun a correspondence with the anti-Communist labor priest, Father Charles Owen Rice, who worked closely both with the CIO leadership and the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists (ACTU) to cleanse the new industrial unions of Communist influence. Naturally, Father Rice urged McNally to fight the reds in Local 500. McNally also volunteered his services to the FBI. Mirroring the tactics of the CP, over the next year McNally quietly built a cadre of 35 workers who could attempt to wield enough influence to swing democratically a union election away from Smolikoff's main allies on the Executive Board, President M. L. Edwards and Chief Steward Phil Scheffsky.²²

Before McNally could act, Smolikoff's political affiliation and influence over Local 500 became a public issue in the union and the community. In the first few months of 1948, three related developments brought Smolikoff's activities to center stage in

¹⁹US House, Committee on Unamerican Activities, *Testimony of Paul Crouch*, May 6, 1949, 81st cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1949), 213; Smolikoff to Douglas MacMahon, May 30, 1946; Smolikoff to MacMahon, June 9, 1946, TWU-500.

²⁰"Communist Infiltration of Transport Workers Union of America," Miami Report #100-7319-491, Oct 27, 1949, FBI-FOIA, 5; Carey Heigler to Smolikoff, Oct 4, 1946, TWU-500; Smolikoff to MacMahon and Forge, June 1, 1947, TWU-257. On this sort of short-lived cooperation between Communists and non-Communists in the South see Barbara S. Griffith, *The Crisis of American Labor: Operation Dixie and the defeat of the CIO* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 139-160.

²¹Smolikoff to MacMahon, July 25, 1946, TWU-500.

²²Robert McNally to Charles Rice, Apr 7, 1947, Aug 11, 1947; Newspaper clipping on McNally, nd, Box 22, Rice Papers; Smolikoff to M.L. Edwards *et al.*, July 2, 1946, TWU-500. On the impact of Rice's Catholic anti-Communism on the CIO see Steve Rosswurm, "The Catholic Church and the left-led unions," in Rosswurm (ed.), *The CIO's Left-led Unions*, 130-133.

Miami, and McNally “had to come out with everything”, as he told Rice. First, at Smolikoff’s urging and in concert with the Miami chapter of the SCHW, in early 1948 Local 500 placed itself in the vulnerable Communist-advocated position of endorsing Henry Wallace for president, even while the national CIO repudiated the third party effort.²³ At the same time, the *Miami Daily News* stirred up a community-wide Red Scare, culminating in a March 1948 HUAC investigation of Communism in the Miami area and Local 500’s temporary rejection of Smolikoff’s leadership. Finally, with McNally and his comrades forming a key constituency, UAW organizers undertook a jurisdictional raid on Local 500 in spring 1948. The Miami Red Scare and the UAW raid contributed to TWU president Michael J. Quill’s pilgrimage into the anti-Communist camp within the CIO and his subsequent purge of Communists from the Miami local.

In contrast to Quill’s reluctance to endorse Wallace, Smolikoff issued a personal endorsement of the candidate and used his position in the Florida Industrial Union Council to openly endorse the Progressive Party. Wallace was greeted in Florida by screaming mobs; rotten tomatoes were thrown at him in Jacksonville. But in Miami Smolikoff helped organize a rally on 20 February 1948 in Bayfront Park attended by 12,000 supporters.²⁴ Unfortunately, these highly visible activities coincided with the *Miami Daily News*’ exposé of Communist Party influence in Miami. In January 1948, the paper noted the local arrest of Communist leader Alexander Bittelman, and suggested that the “petty bourgeoisie[sic] spa” of Miami Beach equaled New York and Hollywood as a center of Communist activity. “Communist Rally at Beach Raises Funds for Comrades,” blared the headlines when Elizabeth Gurley Flynn spoke at a Miami Beach hotel the following month to raise money for Bittelman’s defense. When a *News* reporter photographed Smolikoff meeting with Flynn and Florida CP leader George Nelson the following day, Local 500 came under direct attack. Two weeks later a HUAC subcommittee investigating communism in Miami declared the union “under communist domination,” fingering Smolikoff as the Party’s Miami leader.²⁵

Smolikoff was thrown on the defensive by these attacks. In the wake of his meeting with Flynn and Nelson, a movement to oust him from Local 500 quickly gained momentum. Characterized by Forge as “former Whitman followers, Kluxers, ACTUers, [and] well-meaning-but-not-too-advanced rank and file workers,” this group demanded Smolikoff’s resignation. Denying outright that he was a Communist, Smolikoff proclaimed that “we take no dictation from *any* outside party,” and suggested with some justice that the press voiced the opinion of those in Miami who “fear and hate CIO.” On 21 February, a large group of Local 500 members voted 343 to 7 to remove Smolikoff from the union, but Quill quickly flew to Miami to defend him and

²³Robert McNally to Charles Rice, Mar 16, 1948, Box 22, Rice Papers; *TWU Bulletin*, Jan 3, 1948, 3; *Miami Daily News*, Jan 11, 1948, 11-A, Jan 26, 1948, 8-B, Feb 20, 1948, 1-A, Forge to Quill, Feb 1948, Folder 22, Forge Papers; Clark Foreman to Leo Sheiner, June 10, 1947, Box 18, Folder 3(2); SCHW Board of Representatives Minutes, Oct 16, 1947, Box 18, Folder 6, 4, Carl and Anne Braden Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

²⁴*Miami Daily News*, Jan 26, 1948, 8-B, Feb 20, 1948, 1-A; Forge to Quill, Feb 1948, Folder 22, Forge Papers. For a graphic description of mob harassment of Wallace in Florida see John Coe to Charlie and Mansy, Oct 21, 1948, Box 22, Folder 20, Coe Papers.

²⁵*Miami Daily News*, Jan 16, 1948, 1-A, Jan 18, 1948, 10-B, Feb 16, 1948, p. 1-A, Feb 17, 1948, 1-A; Mar 4, 1948, 1-A; Mar 5, 1-A; Mar 30, 1948, 1-B; Paul Crouch, “Broken Chains,” unpublished autobiography mss, Box 17, Paul Crouch Papers, Hoover Institution, Stanford University, chap. 22; “Communist Infiltration of Transport Workers Union of America,” Miami Report #100-7319-491, Oct 27, 1949, FBI-FOIA, 5.

engineered a reversal of the vote. In the *TWU Bulletin* Quill exposed the family connection between the *News* and Eastern Airlines, suggested that Southern anti-semitism animated much of the feeling against Smolikoff, and reminded readers of the Klan harassment Local 500 had faced in Miami. "Smolikoff is hated by the employers because he is an honest and effective union leader," declared Quill in his brief against the *Miami Daily News*' "phoney red scare." M. L. Edwards, President of Local 500, attributed Miami's anti-Communist climate to the TWU's victories in contract negotiations, ability to organize the unorganized, staunch commitment to interracialism, and support for the Wallace campaign.²⁶

The *Miami Daily News* "exposure" of Communist control of TWU Local 500 and the resulting HUAC investigation did not so much drive Smolikoff out of the TWU as provide CIO anti-Communists with the weapons they needed to put pressure on both him and Quill. Indeed, the *News* itself had relied on the President of IUMSWA for some crucial information on Smolikoff's Communist background and activities.²⁷ As for Quill, even as he defended the Communist leadership of Local 500 the TWU president privately counselled Smolikoff to "put the interests of TWU first and his political beliefs second," much as he himself was doing. Indeed it was during these same months—February and March 1948—that Quill finally made up his mind to break with the CP and what he called its "crackpot" policies.²⁸ Within the CIO, Quill could best secure his position not only by openly repudiating Wallace but by getting the reds out of Miami's airline industry. Quill easily fought off the red-scare headlines in the *Miami Daily News*; but a UAW raid on the TWU's largest airlines local and most important Southern outpost was another matter. Indeed, much of the evidence suggests that this raid was explicitly designed to help push Quill over to the anti-Communist camp of the national CIO.

Sensing it was time to act, Robert McNally, in early March 1948, contacted UAW President Walter Reuther and J. L. McFarland (head of the UAW's airlines division), as well as Van Bittner and Allan Haywood, CIO Director of Operations, and invited them to organize Pan Am's workers for the UAW. He went to the right place. The UAW had long been jealous of TWU's success among airline workers, having in 1946 filed a jurisdictional grievance with CIO leaders. More importantly, under Reuther's stewardship the UAW had become one of the most resolutely anti-Communist CIO affiliates, and it quickly informed TWU members that "UAW had removed the Communists from its ranks." But it is worth noting that Local 500's dissidents were, as they repeatedly insisted, loyal CIO members, for they deliberately eschewed asking the TWU's old AFL rivals, the IAM, to intervene. Using the shell of a defunct Delta Airlines union, UAW Local 1000, to create a Miami affiliate, the UAW and CIO leadership agreed to McNally's plan—but not necessarily for reasons understood by Local 500's anti-Communist faction at the time.²⁹

²⁶*Miami Daily News*, Feb 18, 1948, Feb 22, 1948, Feb 25, 1948; Crouch, "Broken Chains," chap. 22; Freeman, 294–295; *TWU Bulletin*, Apr 3, 1948, 8, June 19, 1948, 6.

²⁷Telegram from John Green to Hoke Welch, Feb 24, 1948, Series II, Subseries 4, Box 12, IUMSWA Papers.

²⁸"Michael J. Quill Answers The Rantings of the Edwards–Smolikoff Open Letter," pamphlet, Sept 30, 1948, TWU-500, 4; Mike Quill to Dear Friend, Apr 16, 1948, in Jaffe, *The Rise and Fall of American Communism*; Freeman, 286–302. Shirley Quill puts the exact date of Quill's decision to break at Mar 28; Shirley Quill, 196.

²⁹McNally to Rice, Mar 16, 1948, Box 22, Rice Papers; "Empty Chairs Mark UAW Meeting," TWU flyer, nd [March, 1948?], TWU-500; "Program of the T.W.U. Committee for Democratic Action," nd,

With more than a touch of self-importance McNally told his mentor, Father Rice, that the fight against Communists in TWU Local 500 “has developed into a National affair [and] we’re going to clean house from Quill right on down.” Yet, according to Milton Zatinsky, a young Socialist Party activist living in Miami placed on the UAW payroll to spearhead the organizing campaign, it was clear from the start that “if Quill comes over [we would] pull out of [the] drive.” For Zatinsky, an ardent anti-Stalinist of the left, the good fight against Smolikoff and his comrades had an added dimension: the UAW leadership quietly informed him that they had been asked to intervene by the Truman White House because Local 500 was “using the [flight] steward system...to run a courier service for Communist movements throughout [Latin America],” the very charge made publicly by Paul Crouch a year later. Zatinsky carried out the UAW organizing drive with this motive (whether bogus or not) firmly fixed in his mind, but TWU’s membership remained ignorant of this charge. Thus the UAW campaign, while perhaps generated by specific matters of possible breaches of national security, had to be fought for the most part on the terrain of practical unionism and popular anti-Communism.³⁰

UAW organizers rather implausibly told Pan Am workers that “in an airlines system, Communist control cannot be tolerated in the present crisis,” because of the threat of political strikes. They also claimed that “PAA is a very important link in our national defense in the event of a war with Russia.” In a public statement in Miami, John Livingston, a UAW Vice-President, cryptically alluded to “activities” which made the Local 500 fight “an international affair.” Perhaps sensing the weakness of these appeals to the average airline mechanic or porter, however, the thrust of their campaign was to suggest that Communist leadership made for ineffective unionism. The shop paper UAW organizers handed out at the airport gates, *Airline Facts*, claimed that come contract time the TWU would be in a “weak position” because of the recent bad publicity, and workers might have to endure a strike to enforce their demands. By contrast, “PAA can’t get tough with UAW—it’s too strong, too popular and too militant,” the organizers proclaimed. “PAA workers...want a union free of the stigma that is on the TWU,” claimed the UAW. McNally’s UAW-front, the “Committee for Democratic Action,” seconded this with cries of “we are respected in our community and can’t afford the tinge of Communist domination associated with our union” and “the issue of whether Smolikoff (sic) carries a Party card is not as important as is his

provided to author by Milton Zatinsky; UAW Temporary Steering Committee, “Fellow PAA Employees,” nd, provided to author by Milton Zatinsky; Thomas Starling to Emil Mazey, Apr 12, 1948, Emil Mazey Papers, Box 21, Folder 1; Walter Reuther to Philip Murray, June 21, 1946, Box 61, Folder 1, Walter Reuther Papers, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University (ALUA-WSU), Detroit. On the UAW’s anti-Communism see Martin Halpern, *UAW Politics in the Cold War Era* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988).

³⁰McNally to Rice, Mar 16, 1948, Box 22, Rice Papers; Zatinsky interview with author, Dec 19, 1994; Zatinsky to author, Jan 10, 1995; Zatinsky to Robert Repus, June 24, 1949, provided to author by Zatinsky; *Testimony of Paul Crouch*, 216; US Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Communist Activities Among Aliens and National Groups*, 81st Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1950), 143, Crouch testimony; Frank Donner, “Paul Crouch,” 304–305 on Crouch’s unreliability. In correspondence that used transparent euphemisms to refer to Party business there is no direct evidence of such a network in the TWU papers. There is, however, plenty of evidence of close ties forged between Local 500 and its “down the line” Latin American affiliates. The UAW counselled Zatinsky not to use the courier charge in the organizing drive, perhaps to protect the original source, he speculates. On the neglected Socialist Party role in driving Communists from the CIO see William C. Pratt, “The Socialist Party, Socialist Unionists, and organized labor, 1936–1950,” in Maurice Zeitlin, (ed.), *Political Power and Social Theory*, 4 (1984), 63–99, 76–90.

complete future ineffectiveness in the Miami area." Moreover, adherence to a Communist trade union might jeopardize workers' representation altogether. "If the government, the company, or the public, had to kick the commies out, you would lose the protection of a union," *Airline Facts* warned.³¹

Most damning, however, was the close scrutiny the UAW turned on the contract recently won by "Smokey" and the TWU. In order to hold its disgruntled members, the UAW claimed, "TWU gambled the PAA working conditions against a compromised pay increase." While the 1948 contract with Pan Am granted a 12 cent wage increase, it also shifted many clauses on work rules and conditions to company discretion. To cite but one example, premium pay for dangerous work remained, but the company, not the union, determined whether work was "dangerous" or not. "The contract immediately becomes a Company Policy Manual....PAA has the contract and employees have 12 cents more per hour," UAW organizers charged, with some merit. Thus the Communists appear to have relinquished to the company one of their strongest rank and file appeals, their ability to enforce union control on the shop floor.³²

McNally and his fellow dissidents, "many of whom were instrumental in getting TWU into PAA in the first place," formed the core of UAW strength, especially after they were expelled from TWU for "dual unionism" and openly chartered UAW "Local 1000."³³ But UAW organizers were able to tap the growing disaffection among Pan Am's black workers as well. Based on his work with retail workers in St Louis, and as a committed socialist, Zatinsky believed the CIO should not "conform to the mores of the Southern Community" on racial matters, but "from a long range point of view the labor movement must buck the racial attitudes of the South if it wants to build on solid foundations."³⁴ Although much of the material published in *Airline Facts* appears pitched to the white mechanics—by far the largest unit of workers at Pan Am—Zatinsky also found the black porters receptive to the UAW "for good trade union reasons." Led by an erstwhile ally of Smolikoff's, Roosevelt Winfield, the porters and cleaners decided that the Communists "were using them to [gain] muscle within the TWU for the [Maurice] Forge caucus," that is, to cloak themselves in the mantle of the "Negro question" without really representing black interests at the airfield. Indeed, according to Zatinsky, TWU's black members felt Smolikoff "was not taking on their broader fight in the community as a black community."³⁵

Smolikoff's activities on behalf of the CRC and the SCHW—the very associations that made his politics suspect—might belie this, but there is some evidence that even sympathetic African Americans began to question the Party's commitment to the cause of interracialism. One Party stalwart later recalled that he and another black union member were hustled out of a hastily called CP meeting because of a phone call

³¹Zatinsky to J.L. McFarland, Apr 16, 1948, *Airline Facts*, Mar 29, April 7, May 7, 1948, "Program of the T.W.U. Committee for Democratic Action," nd, all provided to author by Milton Zatinsky; *Miami Daily News*, Mar 21, 1948, 12-A.

³²*Airline Facts*, Apr 21, 1948. On the CP's emphasis on "workers control" see Stephen Meyer, "Stalin Over Wisconsin": the making and unmaking of militant unionism (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992); James Prickett, "Stalin Over Wisconsin": the left and the CIO," *Radical History Review*, 61 (Winter 1995), 161-165.

³³*Airline Facts*, Apr 21, 1948; "Fellow PAA Employees," nd, provided to author by Milton Zatinsky; Thomas Starling to Emil Mazey, Apr 12, 1948, Mazey Papers, Box 21, Folder 1, ALUA-WSU.

³⁴Zatinsky to "Dear Friend"; [the NAACP], Aug 13, 1945, NAACP Papers, Part 13, Series A, Reel 14, frame 271.

³⁵Zatinsky interview, Dec 19, 1994; TWU-Local 500, "Bulletin," Aug 1948, TWU-500.

received from the Klan. He linked their eventual disaffection with the Party to this incident and the confusion and panic engendered by the *Daily News* coverage.³⁶

Predictably, Smolikoff struck back by accusing the UAW of sowing “ethnic and racial discord.” Unfortunately for Zatinsky, the UAW airline division soon sent him some unsolicited help in the form of a Tennessee organizer with “some racial attitudes that were not the best.” This “typical Southern guy,” William Etheridge, subtly made “special appeals on an ethnic or racial basis” to Pan Am’s Southern white workers, according to Zatinsky; he complained about Etheridge’s “personal lack of sympathy with UAW’s strong civil rights policies” to the UAW’s Fair Practices and Anti-Discrimination Department. Where Zatinsky “insisted on equal status for our baggage handling members...and involving them in a significant way in our steering committee and leadership,” Etheridge “insisted on a different direction.” Unaware of the UAW’s real reason for wanting to remove the Communists from Local 500, Etheridge treated the fight as a typical Southern jurisdictional dispute, which in a white majority union might be won on the racial issue.³⁷ This certainly could not have helped the UAW’s cause with the Porters and Cleaners Section.

In the face of this concerted attack, Maurice Forge counselled Smolikoff to “center our [counter]attack on the airlines and identify the Un-American Committee, the local anti-labor forces, the press, the Klan, the opportunists and traitors in UAW...as willing allies and dupes” of Pan Am and Eastern Airlines, which the TWU was attempting to organize. Emphasize the fact that “the airlines want no unions,” and tone down inter-union rivalries, he warned. Disregarding Forge’s advice, Smolikoff used the Florida Industrial Union Council to issue an attack on the UAW and the CIO’s Southern Organizing Committee, which backed the campaign, for “carrying on jurisdictional warfare” and “disruptive carpet-bagging tactics” instead of “organizing the unorganized.” Forge and Smolikoff also believed that in a straightforward showdown, TWU had “the best record of any union in the airline industry for winning grievances and Board of Adjustment cases,” and could turn back the UAW challenge based on its record.³⁸

Even Zatinsky admits that “based on trade union issues” alone Pan Am workers faced a tough choice, since many found the CP’s militant economism appealing. Moreover, fear of “being on the outside from an entrenched machine” would make oppositionists vulnerable on the field. If TWU remained, union stewards might then refuse to pursue the grievances of former bolters (this indeed occurred in early 1949). No doubt the early expulsion of McNally and the other UAW partisans for “dual unionism” reinforced this perception. Finally, in a fluid and rootless community like Miami, one of the first CIO locals in town “offered a feeling of security” that many workers proved reluctant to abandon over what appeared to be an internal CIO dispute

³⁶Transcript, *State of Florida v. Leo Sheiner*, Dade County Circuit Court, Case No. 167991, July 2, 1956, Box 54, Folder 1, case file #5897B, Coe Papers, Emory Univ., 630–32; *Investigation of Communist Activities in the State of Florida, Part 2*, 7444; “THIS IS IT”, Local 500 Committee for Defense of Airline Workers Rights, flyer/petition, Sept 30, 1949, TWU-500.

³⁷Zatinsky interview, Dec 19, 1994; Zatinsky to Author, Dec 28, 1994; William Oliver to Zatinsky, June 15, 1948, provided to author by Zatinsky; Zatinsky to Author, Oct 10, 1994; Zatinsky, phone conversation with author, Nov 1, 1994.

³⁸Forge to Smolikoff, Mar 9, 1948, folder 26, Forge Papers; Florida Industrial Union Council to Dear Sirs and Brothers, Mar 22, 1948, TWU-257; “Empty Chairs Mark UAW Meeting,” TWU flyer, nd, TWU-500; *Miami Daily News*, Mar 21, 1948, 1-A; Robert McNally to Charles Rice, Mar 16, 1948, Rice Papers; Forge to Smolikoff, May 25, 1948, Smolikoff to Forge, Aug 16, 1948, folder 26, Forge Papers.

with an uncertain outcome. Thus, while the UAW made some serious inroads, McNally's prediction that they could win an election "in a couple of months" proved unrealistic. Under National Mediation Board rules, the UAW would have had to collect authorization cards from fully half of Pan Am mechanics to conduct a new election. Before they could reach this goal, "Quill's change of line pulled the props from under the drive," as Zatinsky wrote a friend at the time. "It was a good deal, fighting the commies in a key situation," he remarked somewhat ruefully.³⁹

Quill indeed found himself under a great deal of pressure to demonstrate his loyalty to the CIO by purging the CP from Miami's airline industry. In June 1948, Van Bittner, Director of the CIO's important Southern Organizing Campaign, informed Quill in a personal letter that "the fight would be practically ended in Miami if Smolikoff were removed." Aware of the TWU President's potential loyalty to former comrades, Bittner concluded that "this may be a hard thing for you to do but I think you should do it in the interest of your union." By September 1948 Father Rice wrote McNally to assure him that "Quill has ceased to cooperate with the Communists" and was "ready to move against Smolikoff," a prediction swiftly borne out when Quill took to the pages of his old nemesis, the *Miami Daily News*, to denounce the "cockeyed Communist activities" of Local 500. Rice suggested that "in spite of past differences.... cooperation with Quill is the proper action now." Quill, for his part, informed the national TWU membership that the union's "growth has been stunted for years by the ravings of those who would rather bow to the crackpot decisions of the Communist Party than bow to the will of the membership."⁴⁰

But not until early 1949 did the core of dissidents in Local 500, who had hoped to join the UAW, fully realize what had happened. At the CIO's 10th Annual Convention in November, UAW President Walter Reuther publicly agreed to discontinue the Pan Am raid and "support president Michael Quill in his anti-Communist fight." Yet even in December of that year, UAW "Local 1000" requested 500 membership cards from the International (perhaps indicating the degree of their penetration of TWU). By this time Quill had already fired Smolikoff as part of his successful purge of Communists from the International at TWU's 1948 Convention; the Communists and their sympathizers on Local 500's Executive Board had promptly hired him back as a "special representative." Finally realizing that Miami's "PAA employees...were drawn into the UAW and then left dangling at the mercy of the Company and the Communists," dissident Richard Robb penned a scathing letter to the UAW's Emil Mazey. "This is the local union that Walter Reuther and the Int. Union sold down the river at the [CIO's] Portland convention," he bitterly charged.⁴¹

Once Quill removed Communists from the TWU's national leadership in December 1948, he still inherited the surprisingly difficult task of dislodging the tenacious Communist leadership from TWU Local 500. Now suddenly dependent on the man

³⁹Zatinsky interview, Dec 19, 1994; McNally to Rice, Mar 16, 1948, Rice Papers; Milton Zatinsky to Robert Repus, June 24, 1949, provided to author by Zatinsky; US National Mediation Board, *Twenty Years Under the Railway Act, Amended and The National Mediation Board, 1934-1954* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1955), 32.

⁴⁰Van Bittner to Michael Quill, UAW Raid unprocessed folder, TWU papers; Charles Rice to Robert McNally, Sept 11, 1948, Box 22, Rice Papers; *Miami Daily News*, Sept 14, 1948, 1-A; *Daily Worker*, Sept 17, 1948, 5; "Michael J. Quill Answers The Rantings of the Edwards-Smolikoff Open Letter," pamphlet, Sept 30, 1948, TWU-500, 8.

⁴¹*TWU Express*, Dec 26, 1948, 17; "Communist Infiltration of Transport Workers Union of America," Miami Report #100-7319-491, Oct 27, 1949, FBI-FOIA, 7; J.W. Barrett to Emil Mazey, Dec 27, 1948, Richard D. Robb to Mazey, Feb 3, 1949, Box 21, folder 1, Mazey Papers, ALUA-WSU.

they had vilified as a red less than a year before, “the [Miami] members of UAW are in a hell of a spot,” the now anti-Communist Ed Waller wrote Quill. In January 1949, a desperate Richard Robb implored Quill that “the sooner you can come to Miami and lift [Local 500’s] Charter, the better for all concerned,” and proclaimed the UAW now ready to “help finance your fight against the Communist element in Local 500” with Local 1000’s union hall, typewriters, and resources.⁴²

Despite Robb’s prognosis that the Smolikoff faction would lose in an open election, the balance of forces was not at all clear. Polling the membership in early 1949 (and, of course, excluding those who had joined the UAW), Smolikoff won a vote of confidence by 824 to 287, mandating “a continuation of those militant fighting policies” he claimed to champion. Local 500 soon elected Phil Scheffsky, a long-time Forge–Smolikoff ally, its new President. A private letter from Smolikoff to Forge on the eve of the union election suggests how Smolikoff, Forge, Edwards, Scheffsky, and the other Communists in Local 500 worked behind the scenes in their “club meeting” to insure a favorable outcome. Recognizing that they “were taking workers further than they were prepared to go,” Smolikoff urged cooperation with allies who “are backward and will never be progressive and [are] even anti-Negro” but opposed Quill on the question of local autonomy.⁴³

Opposition to Smolikoff, Edwards, and Scheffsky appeared to be concentrated among white mechanics in the Airways Department, where Richard Robb and other UAW members worked. Scheffsky almost immediately agreed to 80 company initiated layoffs in this Department, thus eliminating “most of the people who are leaders against the Communist movement in Local 500,” including Robb. Howard Page, who had backed Whitman against Smolikoff three years earlier, warned Quill that the Communists had effectively positioned themselves as the defenders of local autonomy against Quill’s “one man union in which the needs and desires of the rank and file have no place.” Local 500’s membership was convinced, Page claimed, “that they obtained a good contract [in December] despite great obstacles thrown in the way by the International,” thanks to Smolikoff’s militant leadership. Smolikoff had officially “resigned” in March 1949, after the *Miami Daily News* called attention to his presence at a CRC meeting. Nevertheless, it appeared that he and Forge continued to “pull some strings from behind the scenes.” Opposition to Smolikoff remained strong among “workers who have left or are not yet in Local 500,” but in a vote on Smolikoff’s return among members “in good standing” the union would split down the middle, Page informed Quill. “As you can see, Mike, we’ve got a problem that isn’t going to be solved easily,” he concluded.⁴⁴

Quill’s hesitation during these first months of 1949 might be attributed to his reluctance to provide Maurice Forge’s allies within the national TWU, who continued to snipe at him on the question of local autonomy, with any more ammunition. With Paul Crouch’s May 1949 revelations of interamerican subversion, and when confronted by the possibility that the CIO might completely lose its position in air transport to the IAM, he finally took decisive action against “the seat of remaining left-wing disruptionists in TWU.” Robb had warned Quill in January that the UAW’s prevarication and

⁴²Ed Waller to Michael Quill, nd, TWU-257; Richard Robb to Quill, Jan 13, 1949, TWU-500.

⁴³Richard Robb to Quill, Jan 13, 1949, “Bulletin,” Jan 10, 1949, TWU-500; Smolikoff to Forge, Feb 5, 1949, folder 41, Forge Papers; “Communist Infiltration of Transport Workers Union of America.” Miami Report #100-7319-491, Oct 27, 1949, FBI-FOIA, 2.

⁴⁴Robb to Quill, Feb 19, 1949, Robb to Quill, Feb 21, 1949; Howard Page to Quill, Mar 28, 1949, TWU-500; *Miami Herald*, Mar 9, 1949; *Miami Daily News*, Mar 9, 1949; “Statement of Resignation,” March 7, 1949, TWU-500; “Action on Letter of Resignation,” Mar 22, 1949, folder 41, Forge Papers.

Local 500's reputation had "done great harm to the CIO Southern Organizing Drive," and that "PAA employees are sick of the CIO." By May, with the situation still unresolved, Charles Cowl, Florida Director of the Southern Organizing Committee, warned the TWU that "the IAM...is making quite a bit more progress at Pan American Airways than we would ever imagine," and was "signing up men daily." "I hope this situation is squared away so that the CIO can start winning some elections in South Florida," he concluded pointedly.⁴⁵

Giving weight to these fears, McNally sent Quill a handwritten ultimatum. After the TWU Convention, he told Quill, "we were delighted and ready to back you up in the fight. Now 6 months later we are still waiting for action!" Throwing down the gauntlet, McNally warned Quill "if you are sincere in your efforts to clean house, immediate action is necessary. If not, TWU will lose Pan Am, which no doubt will eventually mean all airlines." Obviously referring to the IAM drive, he drove the point home: "we have been contacted by other organizations who want Pan Am enough to fight for it. Do you?...What's your answer Mike? Its now or never."⁴⁶

At the same time, Crouch prepared to serialize his "memoirs" of life in the CP in the *Miami Daily News* and to testify before Congress on Communist subversion. "Crouch was familiar enough with the inner-circle of Local 500 to stir up quite a fanfare," ex-Communist Ed Waller warned Quill. "A fresh out burst of red hysteria in Miami at this time may bring the IAM drive into full swing."⁴⁷ Confronted with this situation Quill immediately appointed a special committee of the International Executive Board to investigate "Communist party sabotage" in general and Local 500 in particular. However, it took Philip Murray to drive the nail in the coffin of Local 500. "In a letter to Michael J. Quill," the *New York Times* reported on 7 June 1949, "Mr Murray asserted that the progress of the CIO's Southern Organizing Drive was being 'hampered seriously' in Florida" by Local 500's renegade behavior. "Put your house in order in the Miami area," Murray ordered the TWU.

This public ultimatum to Quill, however, had been drafted by the TWU leadership itself, not Murray. In an extraordinary letter to CIO Director of Organization Allan Haywood, TWU Secretary-Treasurer Gustav Faber laid bare the use of Operation Dixie as a club to be used against Communists in the Southern CIO. In addition to hindering the TWU's organization of "some 6000 other airline workers" in the Miami area, "the reputation of Local 500 gives uninformed workers the impression that all of CIO is left-wing and Communist controlled, and makes almost impossible the efforts...to conduct an organizing drive in the state," Faber told Haywood. He asked the SOC to provide six organizers to prosecute "an intensive drive to organize the 6000 other airlines workers, so that we could consolidate all the workers in this transit field." At the same time, in order to help TWU purge Communists from Local 500, whose "membership is entirely confused," he enclosed "a draft of a letter" for Murray to send to Quill. "Put your house in order in the Miami area," this draft letter concluded. Such were the tactics used by the CIO to sweep its ranks of the active Stalinists.⁴⁸

⁴⁵*TWU Express*, June 6, 1949, 5; Robb to Quill, Jan 13, 1949, Charles Cowl to Gustav Faber, May 2, 1949, TWU-500.

⁴⁶Robert McNally to Mike Quill, May 4, 1949; "Bulletin," Mar 21, 1949, TWU-500.

⁴⁷Ed Waller to Quill, May 2, 1949, Waller to Quill, May 8, 1949, TWU-500; *Miami Daily News*, May 10, 1949; May 11, 1949; *Testimony of Paul Crouch*, 215; *Communist Activities Among Aliens and National Groups*, 142-143, 150-152.

⁴⁸*TWU Express*, June 6, 1949, July 1, 5, 14, 1949, Sept 1, 2, 4, 1949, 1; Gustav Faber to Allan Haywood, May 23, 1949, TWU-500.

That summer the TWU did indeed “put its house in order” in Miami. Charging Local 500’s leadership with giving “aid and comfort to the airline companies,” and incurring speed-ups and layoffs, Quill placed Local 500 under the control of Forge’s ATD replacement, William Grogan, and expelled Smolikoff’s allies from the union. Ironically, the final report on the expulsion of Edwards, Scheffsky, Local 500 Secretary–Treasurer David Frazier, and head Flight Steward Armand Scala failed to mention the words Communist or Communism. Instead, they were held accountable for misappropriating union funds and attempting to “disrupt, divide, and destroy” the TWU. Grogan called a new election for Local 500 officers in October 1949; “none of these new officers...have any connection with the Communist Party,” assured one of the FBI’s informants.⁴⁹

“In the labor movement,” Maurice Forge lectured one of his remaining contacts in Miami, “it takes the logic of necessity and the compulsion of self-interest to make workers do the right thing.”⁵⁰ In the crucible of the early years of the Cold War committed partisans of warring factions had struggled to swing that logic and compulsion in their direction inside Local 500. As a true believer, Smolikoff stood out; his fellow travellers may have joined the Party at his behest, but they fought not for a Soviet America but to build and maintain a militant trade union, often (as they saw it) in opposition to the International’s New York leadership, and to protect against jurisdictional raiding. This group included white Southern Communist recruits like M. L. Edwards and Phil Scheffsky, black Party members attracted to the Communist program by Smolikoff’s outspoken advocacy of civil rights, and less “progressive” elements who distrusted the growing autocratic behavior of Quill.⁵¹ In opposition, Robert McNally and the UAW cultivated Catholic anti-Communists, black workers disillusioned with what they saw as an opportunistic Communist leadership, and the large number of non-ideological workers who recognized that the “bad publicity” generated by Smolikoff weakened their union’s power.

Members of each faction had helped organize Local 500 in the first place, remained committed to its tradition of militance, and believed that the CIO could effectively defend their collective interests against the powerful and oligopolistic airlines industry. But as Howard Page pointed out to Quill in the Spring of 1948, each faction increasingly had to win the hearts and minds of newcomers with little sense of the union’s short but dramatic history of confrontation with Pan Am. In trying to sway this group, neither side eschewed unprincipled tactics. With the combined power of a reformed Quill, the UAW, the Southern Organizing Committee, the national CIO leadership, ACTU, HUAC, and the press arrayed against them, however, the Communists never stood a chance.

Despite its rather parochial character, the conflict over the presence of Communists in TWU Local 500 both mirrored and influenced the larger paroxysms that shook the CIO during the years 1946–1950. Too often, accounts of the impact of local red scares

⁴⁹Quill to William Grogan, July 2, 1949; Quill to All members of Local 500, July 6, 1949; “Report to the ATD Membership and Other Members of TWU,” nd, TWU-500; *TWU Express*, Oct. 1949, 10; “Communist Infiltration of Transport Workers Union of America,” Miami Report #100-7319-491, Oct 27, 1949, FBI-FOIA, 3.

⁵⁰Forge to Armand Scala, Dec 21, 1949, folder 34, Forge Papers.

⁵¹For a good list of those committed to Smolikoff through 1949 see “THIS IS IT,” Local 500 Committee for Defense of Airline Workers Rights, flyer/petition, Sept 30, 1949, TWU-500, signed by 22 individuals, including Poppo, Edwards, Scheffsky, Scala, and a handful of other Pan Am employees labelled as Communists by Crouch.

on Communist-led local unions and the concerted efforts to drive Party members from leadership roles in CIO internationals are understood as separate (if parallel) developments. Alternatively, the purge of Communists from progressive and perhaps peripheral CIO locals is portrayed as solely the result of machinations emanating from the increasingly powerful center of the union hierarchy, without any authentic base. But the history of anti-Communism in TWU 500 suggests that this process may have worked in reverse as well. Indeed, in this instance grassroots anti-communism played an important, if not decisive, role in Quill's break with the Party and his subsequent unrelenting attack on his former comrades. At the same time, however, local anti-Communism in the Miami labor movement ultimately required the intervention of powerful outside forces to achieve success. The nascent national security state brought pressure to bear against both local militants and the CIO at the highest level.

The charge that the CP used Local 500 to set up a courier system in Latin America remains mysterious and difficult to prove one way or the other. In his unpublished autobiography, Crouch claimed he learned of this activity when he was a TWU member and the Communists in the union were still unaware of his break with the Party; TWU correspondence confirms that Smolikoff regarded Crouch as an ally at that time. In 1947, however, Crouch secretly went to "the proper branch of the United States Government" as an anti-Communist informant (this is corroborated by his FBI file).⁵² Yet as we have seen, the FBI did not credit this particular accusation, and it is unclear whether or not Crouch provided this tidbit to the Bureau before revealing it in the *Miami Daily News* in May 1949. How then to explain the curious displacement of Roy Whitman by Smolikoff in the Spring of 1946; the cryptic remarks of UAW organizers about military necessity in March 1948; the presence of six UAW organizers sent by the international to Miami to prosecute a jurisdictional raid that was organizationally insignificant to the autoworkers; and Milton Zatinsky's direct claim, 50 years later, that he participated in the raid at Reuther's behest with the express goal of destroying the courier network? Furthermore, there is no question that between 1946 and 1949 Communists led Local 500 of the TWU; that M. L. Edwards, a CP member who worked closely with Smolikoff, made frequent trips to Panama and Puerto Rico on trade union business; and that while in the Canal Zone, Edwards was in touch with the *Daily Worker*, which interviewed him there in August 1946 regarding a Klan attack on the union's black workers back in Miami.⁵³ In the absence of a smoking letter linking a national security agency to Philip Murray or Walter Reuther, however, there is no way to sort out the truth of the matter.

Yet it is the very plausibility of the accusation in the context of the early Cold War, the apparent willingness of anti-Communists in the CIO to believe and act on it, and the press's exploitation of anti-Communism to attack the labor movement, that remain significant. With Smolikoff at the helm, TWU Local 500 became the mainstay of the CIO in Florida in the late 1940s, challenged segregation at the airfield, won good contracts from Pan Am, organized Latin American workers, and militantly defended the rights of its members. But Smolikoff also used the union to recruit Party members, sell the *Daily Worker*, endorse Wallace, support a Puerto Rican independence initiative, and raise money for Party causes. Defensible as those activities are, in the face of the CIO's search for political respectability they made the union vulnerable to anti-Communist attack from within and without, and ultimately undermined the CP faction's control.

⁵²Crouch, "Broken Chains," chap. 21, 4, chap. 22, 6.

⁵³*Daily Worker*, Aug 8, 1946.