



Opposing Jim Crow: African Americans and the Soviet Indictment of U.S. Racism, 1928-1937 (Justice and Social Inquiry)

Meredith L. Roman

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Before the Nazis came to power in Germany, Soviet officials labeled the United States the most racist country in the world. Photographs, children's stories, films, newspaper articles, political education campaigns, and court proceedings exposed the hypocrisy of America's racial democracy. In contrast, the Soviets represented the USSR itself as a superior society where racism was absent and identified African Americans as valued allies in resisting an imminent imperialist war against the first workers' state.

Meredith L. Roman's *Opposing Jim Crow* examines the period between 1928 and 1937, when the promotion of antiracism by party and trade union officials in Moscow became a priority policy. Soviet leaders stood to gain considerable propagandistic value at home and abroad by drawing attention to U.S. racism, their actions simultaneously directed attention to the routine violation of human rights that African Americans suffered as citizens of the United States. Soviet policy also challenged the prevailing white supremacist notion that blacks were biologically inferior and thus unworthy of equality with whites. African Americans of various political and socioeconomic backgrounds became indispensable contributors to Soviet antiracism and helped officials in Moscow challenge the United States' claim to be the world's beacon of democracy and freedom.

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