Rethinking Radicalism: Socialism, the IWW, and Communism on the Cuyuna Iron Range, 1912-1933

By
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In 1933, the twenty-five-year-old mayor of Crosby, Minnesota, the largest city on the Cuyuna Iron Range, Emil Nygard, was on a nationwide tour, the highlight of which was a speech at Webster Hall in New York City. On October 19, 1933, the young mayor declared in front of a packed house: "We should not think that it is impossible to elect Communists to office in the United States of America." Many in Crosby Minnesota thought "I could not be elected as a Communist Mayor. . . . But because I led them in militant demonstrations . . . a Communist Mayor was elected." Nygard continued: "In the city of Crosby the working men have begun to realize that they cannot any longer depend on demagogues," the working-class understood "they must support the Communist Party." The crowd cheered its approval when Nygard added: "They are beginning to realize also that the Communist Party will not betray the working class!"[1]

If one looks at miners of the region with only a passing glance, Nygard's election, and a series of Progressive Era strikes led by socialists and a radical union, the Industrial Workers of the World, might lead one to conclude, as one historian suggests of Nygard's election, that it is was "the culmination of years of radical activity on the iron range."[2] However, connections with the Socialist Party and the IWW give the false impression that the miners were more radical than they really were.

The social and economic conditions of iron mining on the Cuyuna Range certainly bred discontent, but not radicalism. When miners looked to ease their dissatisfaction through collective action, only two organizations were available to support their protest. The Socialist Party and the IWW were means to an end, being the only organizational tools available for miners of the Cuyuna Range to use to achieve essentially non-radical goals. Whether under the rhetorical umbrella of the Social-

ist Party or the IWW, most miners acted collectively to enhance their economic security, not for a radical alteration of American society.

Furthermore, despite appearances, it would be a mistake to see Nygard's surprising election as Crosby's mayor in December 1932 as evidence of a large radical presence on the Cuyuna Iron Range. Instead, a unique set of historical circumstances—the Great Depression, the apparent embezzlement of municipal funds by council members, and a three-way contest for mayor—aided in Nygard's victory.

Historians commonly explain the alleged radicalism of Minnesota's miners by focusing on how migrants from Finland formed the vanguard of radical leadership on the Iron Ranges. Works like "Finnish Immigrant Leftists in America," and *Immigrant Socialists in the United States: The Case of Finns and the Left* are descriptive enough in their titles to show their perspectives.[3]

A look at the ethnic makeup of Cuyuna Range miners suggests an interesting mix of backgrounds. Immigrants made up over 75 percent of the miners' population, and by a slim margin Finns made up a majority of those miners born outside of the United States. Although the works cited above neglect to mention the Cuyuna, it would be safe to conclude that those scholars would suggest that Finns, given their high numbers and penchant for organization, would be at the forefront of radicalism on the Cuyuna Range.

In essence, such thinking explains away the radicalism of miners in a way similar to that which the capitalists opposed to it did: socialism has its roots outside of the United States; it is based on some foreign element that does not belong in this country. But was the goal of striking miners, as historian Melvyn Dubofsky defines radicalism, to promote "social change and a program for altering the foundations of American society and government?"[5] To answer these questions, more attention is necessary to the specific social and especially economic conditions present in the United States when radical ideas had their greatest support.

Finns in America formed far from a united front. As historian Carl Ross wrote, Finnish immigrants did not collectively embrace radical ideologies. Many retained conservative Lutheran religious beliefs or espoused American bourgeois values.[6] Historian Douglas Ollila points out that where a "minimum of four Finns" lived, that community "probably could produce two or more antagonistic organizations," with "churchmen divided into some twelve groups, all suspicious, and even hating each other," while the socialists

IMMIGRANT MINERS	
Country of Origin	**Percent**
Finland	27.72%
South Slav	27.11%
Sweden	19.28%
Austria	13.25%
Norway	4.82%
Other	7.83%

CUYUNA RANGE MINERS	
Country of Origin	**Percent**
United States	23.50%
Finland	21.20%
South Slav	20.73%
Austria	10.13%
Norway	3.60%
Other	5.99%

Cuyuna Iron Range, country of origin for immigrant miners and for all miners as sampled from the U.S. manuscript census of 1920.[4]

"divided into four major groups, all passionately hating each other."[7]

At best, such ethnic-based classifications can only provide an incomplete answer and raise an important question. How can one explain the large numbers of miners who came from nations where socialism was not part of their political heritage, but still joined radical organizations?

It is important to remember that most miners came to the Cuyuna Range for economic reasons. Historian Dirk Hoerder points out most migrants left their country of origin intent on improving "their personal or family fortunes." Most were interested in changing "neither the new nor the old society. Their interest in the political system of the new culture was secondary to the economic motive." If migrants turned to "trade unions, socialist parties, or reform movements" to demand better wages, it was because the "sacrifices" of their occupation "were too great" and the struggle for competency was "too large."[8]

When asked what he liked best about mining, one miner exclaimed, "Nothing!" Working in a mine, whether underground or open-pit, is physically demanding. A miners' day began at six and ended at four. One child of a miner remembered that her father "would come home, he had his meal, he was tired, and he went to bed." This left no room for entertainment. A miner's whole life and conversation was mining. Asked why he kept going back, one miner pointed out that "I had no choice, I had no education, and I had to take what was available for me." Another miner put it more bluntly: "You can kill yourself with work or slowly starve to death if you are unemployed. There is no choice—you take one or the other."[9]

One sacrifice common to all miners across ethnic backgrounds was the inherent danger of mining. Between 1910 and 1912, 224 miners died in Minnesota's mines and 10,277 were injured. This averaged 77 fatalities a year, higher than the "one a week" death tolls found on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.[10] If he were "lucky," a local newspaper might comment on the miner's death.

The vast majority of miners' deaths reported in the local newspapers placed the blame squarely on the miner's shoulders; some "failure" on his part or of a co-worker resulted in his demise. Typical was an item in the Cuyuna Range Miner, which noted that "Gust Saari, a Finn," died when he was struck by the skip. "He had told two of his fellow workmen not to start the skip...but a third member of the crew did not hear his instruction and gave the signal."[11]

Such danger had serious psychological repercussions. One miner remembered:

> It was scary. . . . There was a lot of accidents down there . . . you didn't know if you wanted to stay [down] there or not. I saw many injuries and helped carry a lot of injured people out. One I helped take out was killed [when] four tons of dirt comes down right on top of him and killed him. When you go down in the morning you didn't know if you were going to come back at night or not. I had many nightmares about the dangers. . . . I woke up and just couldn't sleep anymore. It really affected all the men like that. It was just scary.[12]

The dangers of mining left miners feeling that they should be better compensated for their risks. But miners on the Cuyuna Range could not decide how to channel their dissatisfaction over wages amongst a wide array of organizational options. In 1916, the American Federation of Labor (AFL) began a widely publicized "Labor Forward Movement" in Minnesota, and held its state convention in Hibbing on the Mesabi Range in June. However, the craft-oriented AFL's aim was not to organize miners; any new unions would include only traditional "skilled" occupations. After its involvement in the failed Mesabi strike of 1907, the Western Federation of Miners swore off Minnesota. The United Mine Workers, a coal miners' union, showed no interest in the Lake Superior

Mining Region. Therefore, miners of the Cuyuna Iron Range who looked to better their conditions had but two options: the Socialist Party or the industrially organized Industrial Workers of the World.[13]

These two separate but related organizations had more in common than is often noticed; both sought immediate improvements for the working class masked behind radical rhetoric. In Minnesota, Thomas Van Lear, who fostered a "pragmatic socialism," dominated the Socialist Party. Although they did not dismiss the idea of revolutionary class struggle, socialists in Minnesota felt it was imperative to curb the power of capitalists and improve the lives of the working class through reforms, not revolution.[14]

As for the IWW, although it proclaimed the goal of overthrowing capitalism by forming "One Big Union" of all workers—who would then seize the modes of production and thus gain control of society—its activities were far less radical. The organization concentrated on a series of strikes that aimed to immediately improve wages and work conditions for workers.[15]

Organizers for the Socialist Party arrived on the Cuyuna Range to solicit membership for the party in 1911. That they found a receptive audience is revealed by looking at the results of the elections of 1912, 1914, and 1916. In those years, the Cuyuna Range voted for socialist candidates at roughly three times the state average.

In the first week of April 1913, Rogers-Brown Ore Company posted notices announcing a lengthening of the hours of the night shift. This order was to take effect April 7, but before it could, the miners on night shifts of the ore company's mines walked out. By the next day, the strike had spread, as miners employed at non-Rogers-Brown mines downed tools, increasing the number of men on strike to over eight hundred.[17]

A few days before the strike began, the nearby city of Brainerd elected a socialist mayor and city council. Party leaders sensed that if they did not show sympathy for the miners, they would lose credibility amongst workers. The Socialist Party sent two organizers, T. E. Latimer from Minneapolis and Morris Kaplan from Duluth, to aid the strikers. Working with the miners' strike committee, they helped craft a list of demands to present to mining officials. The demands centered on an increase in wages and a reduction of weekend hours:

> First. That we be granted a straight eight hour work day. Second. That for all over[-]time we be granted time and one-

Year and Office	Minnesota Total Votes	Minnesota Percent	Cuyuna Range Votes	Cuyuna Range Percent
1912 President	27,505	8.20%	114	23.88%
1912 Governor	25,769	8.35%	81	24.70%
1914 Governor	19,086	6.63%	65	16.80%
1916 Governor	26,306	6.82%	102	18.33%

Socialist electoral results for Minnesota and the Cuyuna Iron Range.[16]

> half. Third. For all Sunday work time and one-half. Fourth. The abolition of all contract work. Fifth. That a minimum wage scale of Three Dollars be granted for all work done in the mines—underground. Sixth. That the hospital fee shall be borne exclusively by the mine operators.[18]

None of the demands can be defined as "radical." All addressed the primary concern of miners of the Cuyuna Range: to increase their pay. Miners knew that if they could reduce their workday to eight hours, mining companies would have no choice but to have miners work "over time," which would result in higher earnings. Furthermore, replacing the contract system with a "minimum wage scale" would give miners more certainty as to what their income would be, in addition to boosting their wages by nearly fifty cents per day. Finally, by doing away with the "hospital fee," miners would take home anywhere from one to three dollars more per paycheck. Noticeably absent are any demands for the recognition of a union or changes in working conditions.[19]

The mining companies insisted they would only meet with the miners if the business community of the Cuyuna Range could be present. Socialist Party officials agreed, hoping the local merchants would see the miners' plight and force the mining companies into a settlement favorable to the strikers. However, this did not happen on the Cuyuna Range, where strong social and economic attachments bonded mine owners and local businessmen.

George Fenton, an IWW organizer soon chased away from the strike by miners, was present at the meeting. He noted that the miners' strike committee was "unable to handle the English language as well as their adversaries." The owners took advantage of this, cracking jokes about the miners' grievances for the benefit of the businessmen. In a plea aimed much more at local business owners than the strikers, mining officials proclaimed if the Cuyuna Range was to be a major "producer and shipper of ore [it was] essentially incumbent on the employees of the Cuyuna to cooperate with the mine operators to the extent of not trying to impose unreasonable rates of wages."[20]

By April 18, the strike was petering out. Striking miners realized that unless some settlement occurred soon, many would be unable to feed themselves or their families. A so-called "compromise" settlement ended the strike on April 20. Mine owners conceded that workers would be paid from $3.00 to $3.25 per day in a wet place, and a minimum of $2.65 in a dry place. Moreover, they agreed that "all the miners that took part in the strike will be taken back to work," and that they "shall not be put out of work on account of having taken part in the strike.[21]

The "Agreement by the miners and mine operators," seemed, on paper at least, to be an equitable compromise. Yet, in reality, the miners gained nothing. They were still obliged to begin their unpaid descent into the mine "when the whistle blows," fifteen minutes before actual working time. They gained no reduction in hours or increase in pay. Responding to a query as to "what concessions" had been made to the miners, a superintendent for Inland Steel proudly asserted that "no concession[s] of any kind were made to the men as far as we are concerned. The men went back under the old wage schedule and [the] same hours." Charles Roulo, George Crosby's representative on the Cuyuna Range—Crosby was the founder of the town of Crosby and held title to many mines in the region—spoke of how the united front of financiers and local merchants aided in putting down the strike when he wrote that the town of Crosby had been in the "storm of a struggle," and its "staunch business men lent every aid in the adjustment of differences."[22]

The Cuyuna Range would thereafter remain strike-free until August 1916. However, this should not be taken as proof that Cuyuna miners were satisfied with their circumstances. Rather, given the decreased demand for iron ore, collec-

tive action would have come with an even greater chance of economic hardship; fewer jobs meant more unemployed miners willing to take a striker's spot. In 1913, 1,327 men were employed in mining on the Cuyuna range. This number dropped to 1,054 in 1914.[23]

This reduction in mine employment coincided with an increase in the population on the Cuyuna Range, making jobs even more precious. The *Brainerd Journal Press* noted one of the conditions of the 1913 strike settlement was not being followed. It stated "no discrimination should be made in taking the men back but men are being laid off week by week by a strange coincidence. It appears to be those who were most active in the strike whose services are not needed." Recovery would not come until 1916, when the number of men employed in mining jumped to 1,622. And it surely was not a coincidence that the next strike on the Cuyuna Range did not take place until after economic conditions had improved.[24]

In June 1916, a strike began on the Mesabi Iron Range. At first, strikers appealed to the American Federation of Labor, but the "AFL had no intention of organizing the miners."[25] The IWW answered the Mesabi miners' call. The financiers and the local business community of the Cuyuna Range grew worried that the strike would spread to their area, but two months after the Mesabi strike began, the mines on the Cuyuna Range were running at full capacity. But on August 3, the IWW declared a strike on the Cuyuna Range.

Striking miners distributed bills demanding an eight hour day, abolition of the contract system, a minimum of $3.50 per day for wet underground work and $2.75 for surface work, that journeys down and up the mine shaft occur on the company's time, and that men be paid immediately upon quitting. Though the radical rhetoric of this strike would be more fervent than in 1913, miners, as in 1913, were interested in getting an increase in pay because they knew that the financiers' profits were increasing due to the war. In many respects, their grievances echoed those from the Cuyuna strike of 1913.[26]

It is important to note that miners on the Cuyuna Range went out on strike two months after the Mesabi Range miners. This despite appeals for immediate action and personal appearances on the Cuyuna by IWW organizers, including Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, shortly after the Mesabi strike began. If the miners of the Cuyuna Range had joined the IWW for its radical ideology, it would be fair to conclude that they would have struck in solidarity with their brothers and sisters on the Mesabi picket lines much sooner.[27]

As had occurred in 1913, local merchants cut off Cuyuna miners' credit and conducted business on a cash-only basis, which would once again cripple resistance. Striking miners pooled their meager resources and established the Crosby Workers Store in an effort to mitigate the effects of the strike, but miners could not survive without some source of income, and many returned to work only a few days after the strike on the Cuyuna Range began. Within two weeks most mines were operating, albeit with a slightly lower output. At a meeting held on September 15, the remaining strikers decided to return to work. Citing the same reasons the Mesabi strikers had a week earlier when they ended resistance, striking miners claimed their families were "on the brink of starvation." They were left with little choice but to capitulate, as a cold Minnesota winter lay around the corner.[28]

On September 23, 1916, the *Crosby Crucible* deemed it necessary to run a headline proclaiming "Increase in Wage Scales Announced." It is true that miners received higher wages. However, this does not tell the whole story. Wages increased slightly, but the cost of living had shot up far beyond the pay rise. In April 1914, a bushel of potatoes cost between fifty and sixty cents. By February 1917, the cost of a bushel of potatoes had risen to $1.75, and the price of eggs had tripled. Prices continued to rise after the United States declared war in April. In May 1917, a bushel of potatoes

cost $3.20, over six times its cost three years before. Thus the wage increase never compensated for wartime price increases.[29]

The United States' entry into the First World War gave mining companies a potent weapon to use against any collective action miners might bring before the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety. The Minnesota state legislature created this wartime agency to mobilize resources during the First World War. But as historian Carl Chrislock notes, the MCPS was more concerned with "defending the existing socioeconomic order" against trade unionism and the Nonpartisan League than it was with "cooperating with the federal mobilization effort." In effect, the mining companies would now have the power of the state behind them if miners sought to improve their conditions by striking.[30]

The commission assigned undercover agent "DJG" to keep surveillance on the Cuyuna Range, and DJG choose Crosby as his "headquarters." Arriving in Crosby on June 3, the former Pinkerton agent's first task was to determine if there would be resistance to the nationwide draft day scheduled for June 5. Canvassing Crosby "under a pretext," DJG fell upon a circular "presumed to have been done by the IWW" that listed five reasons "Why We Do Not Register for the Draft." The circular stated that the draft was "unconstitutional," and that "involuntary military service is militarism, and in flagrant opposition to the free and democratic institutions of this county." It also argued that to be conscripted was to be treated like "slaves of some king or emperor," and that "hundreds of thousands" of men would rather go to jail "for the cause of freedom and democracy" in the United States, instead of dying in Europe "for the interests of the master class." [31]

Miners gave many reasons for not registering, ranging from rational to radical, but the vast majority of immigrant miners who failed to register did not do so because they believed they were ineligible for service because they were not naturalized. However, DJG and the local press noted that the Cuyuna Range had an uneventful, huge turnout for registration on June 5. Nearly 99 percent of eligible Cuyuna Range residents registered.[32]

In August 1917, miners of the Cuyuna Range made one last, short-lived attempt to better their situation. News had reached the Cuyuna that the Gogebic Range, located on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, had gone on strike at the end of July. Soon circulars appeared proclaiming that miners "know that if the masters are entitled to the enormous profits they make," miners were "entitled" to higher wages. Mining officials began to hear rumors that the strike would spread to the Cuyuna Range.

On August 7, nearly four hundred miners voted unanimously to strike for higher wages. They agreed with miners on the Gogebic Range that financiers were making huge wartime profits. Since miners took the risks, they felt they should be entitled to a higher share of those profits.[33] Striking miners on the Cuyuna demanded:

> [A] minimum of $5 for eight hours underground and $4 on the surface. Double pay for Sundays and holidays. $7 . . . for seven hours in wet places and new shifts [*sic*]. Better and more sanitary dry houses with shower baths. Abolishing [the] contract and bonus system[s]. No discrimination against strikers. Men to be paid twice a month with no discount. Day shift from 7a.m. to 3p.m., night shift 4p.m. to midnight with thirty[-]minute lunch. Men to be lowered and raised on company time.[34]

The strike on the Cuyuna Range in August 1917 was never universal; some mines operated normally, while many others operated at a slightly reduced capacity. When mining officials began to fill the strikers' positions, many striking miners began to reapply for the jobs. With the ability to stamp out labor unrest under a variety of pretexts, mining companies held all the cards, and the strike

was called off after just two weeks. Only 48 votes were required to end the strike, indicating how few miners had participated. In addition, many of the leaders of the IWW had begun to leave the Cuyuna Range because mining companies refused to rehire them. Those who stayed found it in their best interest to sever all connections with the IWW, as the "blacklist" system made it necessary for workers to renounce membership to get a job. This strike would be the last on the Cuyuna Range under the auspices of any radical organization.[35]

The strikes on the Cuyuna Range from 1913 through 1917 shared common features. All were short-lived; none were able to halt mining operations for more than two weeks. The strikers could not hold out long without a paycheck. Without credit from local merchants, the hardships for striking miners accumulated quickly. In each case, all of the striking miners' demands sought immediate economic improvements and reduced hours. Though certainly a few desired to alter the social and economic foundations of American society, the vast majority struck to improve their lives by earning more money.

The election of a member of the Communist Party as mayor of the town of Crosby in 1932—like the high percentage of votes for Socialist Party candidates and the IWW-led strikes—seemingly demonstrates the radical nature of the Cuyuna Iron Range. The election of 1932 was certainly a break from past electoral practice, but it was far from a revolution. It was unexpected, given the lack of local support in previous years for the Farmer-Labor Party (FLP). Over the previous ten years, Crosby and Ironton had polled far below state and county tallies for the Farmer-Labor Party.

A number of factors played a role in Nygard's successful campaign. His father had worked in the mines, so miners were familiar with him. Furthermore, Nygard took action on behalf of unemployed miners in the early stages of the Great Depression, which, no doubt, endeared him to those citizens struggling through the declining economic fortunes of the Cuyuna Iron Range. The Great Depression itself, which spared no one in Crosby, certainly made residents more willing to listen to alternative solutions from atypical municipal candidates. Also, a scandal involving misuse of funds by municipal officeholders, and Nygard's somewhat disingenuous representation of his politics, factored into his election in December 1932.

Throughout the 1920s, the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party had little support on the Cuyuna Iron Range. The FLP, which had roots both in the Populist and Progressive movements, emerged directly from the Nonpartisan League. The NPL, which advocated state control of farm-related industries in order to reduce the power of corporate interests, spread rapidly after its birth in North Dakota in 1915, soon spilling into Minnesota. After its attempts to influence the Republican Party failed, in 1921 the Minnesota Nonpartisan League united with organized labor to found the Farmer-Labor Party to champion workers' concerns.

The new party chalked up successes at the beginning of the 1920s, but internal bickering over goals and tactics hurt the party throughout most of the decade. The Great Depression breathed new life into the FLP. It gained the governorship in 1930 and became a major party in Minnesota through the mid-1930s. As the economy recovered, the Farmer-Labor Party started to lose its influence in Minnesota, eventually merging with the Democratic Party in 1944 to become today's Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party.[36]

The Farmer-Labor Party might seem the natural home for Minnesota's miners, but surprisingly, it received little support on the Cuyuna Iron Range. In the four biennial elections from 1924 through 1930, Farmer-Labor candidates for governor averaged 31.9 percent of the vote in adjoining Crosby and Ironton, while Republican candidates averaged 57.8 percent. In these same elections for governor, FLP candidates polled an average of 41.5 percent at the county level and 40

percent statewide. The Cuyuna Range's lack of enthusiasm for the FLP is amplified when compared to figures from Eveleth, a mining town on Minnesota's Mesabi Range. In the same 1924 to 1930 interval, Eveleth gave the FLP's candidate for governor 50.5 percent of its votes, compared to the Republican candidate's 37.5 percent.[37]

The Cuyuna Range's state representative during this period was Ed Scallon, a mining superintendent from Crosby. Scallon, declared the "chief spokesmen for ore companies in the state of Minnesota" by the hostile *Minnesota Union Advocate*, was first elected to office in 1922 by the slim margin of 3,169 to 2,869. His victory was due to wide support from Cuyuna Range mining towns.[38] Scallon handily outpolled his opponent 723 to 167 in Crosby and Ironton.

In 1928, Albert Bosel, Crosby dentist and local Farmer-Labor leader, challenged Scallon. Bosel had clear anti-mining company sympathies and enjoyed calling George Crosby "Old King George" and "czar of the Iron Range." Nonetheless, Scallon easily beat back the challenge, receiving 10,804 votes to Bosel's 4,739. In Crosby and Ironton, the margin was much closer; Scallon receiving 790 votes to Bosel's 584. Nonetheless, Scallon would run unopposed in 1930, and in November 1932, one month before Nygard's victory, was reelected once again, with Crosby giving him an 818 to 280 margin.[39]

The typical make-up of the village council of Crosby consisted of mining company officials and local merchants. No miner or other working-class resident had run for any office on the village council until Nygard attempted it in 1930. This perhaps demonstrates that the working class of Crosby understood the strictures of the power structure placed upon them. Due to circumstances and his place in the community, Emil Nygard was uniquely positioned to break through that barrier.

Surely, the fact that Nygard was born and raised in Crosby helped miner-voters identify with him. His parents had migrated from Finland in the early twentieth century. John Nygard, Emil's father, was a "Finland-Swede;" someone from Finland who spoke Swedish, the official language of Finland before 1805. John Nygard had studied civil engineering, but not having enough money to continue his education, came to the United States. Although the 1920 census lists John Nygard as a miner, Emil remembered that for "most of his life, my father was what they called a shift boss, or captain."[40]

Emil Nygard briefly attended the University of Minnesota, studying chemistry, but also was forced to leave school because of costs. He then worked in various mining positions throughout the Midwest before coming back to Crosby in 1929. After he returned to Crosby, Emil Nygard was unable to find work as a miner on the Cuyuna Iron Range. He was not alone. Beginning in 1930, the number of men employed in mining dropped perceptibly, from 1,010 miners to 594 by the time of Nygard's victory at the end of 1932.[41]

But employment figures do not tell the whole story. By the mid-1920s, most mines on the Cuyuna Range had become open-pit mines, and this affected miners' earnings. Wages for surface work were lower than for underground mining, and, given that surface mining was not conducted in the winter, it became increasing difficult even for miners fortunate enough to have employment to provide for their families as the Depression worsened.[42]

Nygard ran unsuccessfully for mayor twice before his victory in 1932. In 1930 and 1931 he did not run as a communist, rather, he declared that he was "unhampered by political alliances and free from partisanship," and therefore could devote his full energies to giving Crosby residents an "intelligent, efficient, and economical administration."[43] By 1932, the economic situation in Crosby had only worsened. With unemployment rampant and underemployment common, most Crosby residents relied on some form of assistance for survival.

The Village Council reacted to the crisis in

ways that did nothing to win favor with voters. Typical was an action take in June 1932, when the council considered the advisability of requiring that all residents who applied for "poor aid" be "required to surrender to the village" any license plates for any automobile they owned. The village would hold the plates "so long as poor aid was being received from the village."[44]

In the last week of August, the council gave notice "that the village of Crosby will not hereinafter grant poor relief to any persons owning [an] automobile . . . until the license plates of said automobile are first surrendered to the village clerk." Unemployed Crosby residents who looked for work outside of Crosby thus could only find employment within walking distance, a difficult proposition with most of the area's mines being closed.[45]

In contrast to village officials, Nygard addressed the community's needs with sympathy and action. He organized "mass meetings" of miners beginning in March, 1932. One such meeting was entitled "How to Solve the Unemployment Problem, Today and Tomorrow." The "mass meeting committee" adopted various resolutions under the title "The Right to Work and Live." The committee declared that "because of the present day depression," which was due to the "growth of machine technique," workers needed to focus on "shortening the work day." The committee believed that the "owning classes" were in a position to end "the unemployment problem," but were unwilling to do so. Attendance at the meetings was restricted to "wage workers," and, according to Nygard, about two hundred from the Cuyuna Range area did.[46]

Times were so dire that apparently even some version of communism no longer seemed too radical to folks suffering on the Range. Unemployment councils began to appear. As historian Lizabeth Cohen points out, these unemployment groups, developed by the Communist Party and devoted to promoting communist alternatives to the political order, were often, in practice, more committed to "putting pressure on the existing system than to overthrowing it."[47]

On June 26, a large, "Proletarian Picnic," featuring the Communist candidate for governor and Emil Nygard, was held under the "leadership of the Communist Party," with four hundred people reported attending. A "contributed" article in the *Crosby Courier* thanked all of those who attended and added that "the only party for the workers and farmers is the Communist [P]arty[,] whose purpose is to overthrow the capitalist system and establish a worker's and farmer's government." The event, repeated during the last week of August in front of the J. C. Penney store, found "comrades" exposing "the Republican, Democrat, Socialist, and Farmer-Labor parties and the conditions we are now in."[48]

Another important development that aided Nygard's election to the mayor's office was an alleged embezzlement of funds by the village clerk, Pauline Sheets. Crosby residents petitioned the county auditor, asking for an examination of the village records by the state public examiner. An investigation indicated some wrongdoing, but when nothing came of it, Nygard led the formation of the "Crosby Taxpayers' Progressive Club."[49]

The club claimed that the examination showed a shortage of three thousand dollars, despite assertions by Sheets that this was not the case. The club demanded that "public authorities" take action and "perform the things required of them by law" by investigating the matter. The club's resolution, published in the *Crosby Crucible* on October 13, 1932, was signed by Emil Nygard, president, and Frank Plut, secretary-treasurer. Nygard later stated that the turmoil over the alleged embezzlement was the key to his victory. With many families struggling to survive, the possible misuse of village funds certainly had an impact on the outcome.[50]

The worsening economic situation in Crosby, coupled with the Crosby Village Council's unwillingness, or perhaps inability, to provide relief to unemployed miners, along with the possible

embezzlement of funds, helped Nygard to win the Crosby mayor's office in 1932. The December 6 village election did not list party affiliations, but featured a "Workers'" slate of candidates running against the traditional middle-class contenders. Emil Nygard challenged incumbent Mayor Fred H. Kraus yet again, and mining chemist Ernest Erickson joined the fray. Miner Frank Plut ran for trustee against the incumbent, Mahlum Lumber manager Harry Benson, and miner Wallace Mattson and sintering plant laborer Clarence Montpas were among six candidates trying to depose Pauline Sheets. Another miner, Richard Johnson, ran for tax assessor.[51]

Noticeably absent from any statement made by Nygard or accusation made against him was that he was either a member of the Communist Party or a communist sympathizer. In a 1973 interview Nygard said: "Well yes, I was a Communist, but I did not run as a Communist. I ran as an individual. . . . So I filed for mayor. Not as a Communist, no. I don't suppose some people ever dreamt I was a Communist." Nygard believed that many knew, "because in a small town you can't hide under a bushel basket. So the election came off, and I was elected, as mayor. Not as a Communist, as an individual."[52]

During the 1973 interview, Nygard consistently brought up his commitment to the communist cause, yet insisted that he did not run as a Communist and allowed that many who voted for him were unaware of his political affiliation. Though it is likely most knew of Nygard's Marxist leanings, it is probable that a significant percentage of Crosby citizens who voted for him between 1930 and 1932 had no idea he was a Communist. During the 1932 campaign, Nygard reiterated how his previous two campaigns "were splendid demonstrations of the unswerving loyalty [of] the workers and sympathetic businessmen of Crosby" to Nygard.[53]

Even those Crosby residents who knew of Nygard's ideology and voted for him likely did so not because they shared his radical prescriptions for altering the economic and political foundations of the United States. Rather, they most likely discounted his communist sympathies in favor of the solutions Nygard proposed. During the Great Depression, it was not uncommon for radical organizers to assume leadership positions in working-class struggles. What historian Philip Korth wrote about the Minneapolis Teamsters' strike of 1934 is apropos of Crosby. The Trotskyite organizers of that 1934 strike found "receptive audiences in workers who experienced daily the failure of the free market economy, and who readily discounted a speaker's affiliation" with radical organizations, which had far less importance "than the program and experience the speaker brought to the problem of the Depression."[54]

Nygard won the three-way race for mayor, receiving 529 votes to Kraus's 359 and Erickson's 301. In all likelihood he would have lost had it been a two-way race, but even in that event, the election certainly would have been close. A total of 1,189 votes were cast in the village, 216 more than were cast in the 1931 election. Nygard received 161 more votes than he had in 1931, and it is plausible that he mobilized many voters who had not voted in 1931 to vote in the 1932 village election. In addition, Frank Plut won a seat on the village council, receiving 504 votes, 217 more than his nearest competitor and a total almost identical to Nygard's.[55]

The *Brainerd Dispatch* announced that the village of Crosby had garnered "nationwide recognition" with Nygard's election, which brought him the "distinction of being the only Communist mayor-elect in the United States." But Nygard's so-called radicalism leaves many questions. First, when asked what his personal plans were, Nygard responded: "While I'm in politics now, I still have the hopes of continuing my study of chemistry sometime in the future." In March 1933 the *Crosby Courier* ran a story with the headline "Crosby Citizens! How Do You Like This?", showing Nygard's Communist Party ties by printing a speech which highlighted his radical ideology. One week

later, at the next Village Council meeting, Nygard issued a "general denial that he had made the statements attributed to him." Although a communist, Nygard felt it necessary to be viewed in a non-radical light, conceivably indicating the non-radical preferences of the citizens of Crosby.[56]

Nygard's communism seemed to be an on-again, off-again affair. Soon after his election, he tried to use the unemployment councils to pressure non-miner municipal officials and state and federal agencies to release more aid. The unemployment council of Crosby held weekly meetings every Friday night at the Fire Hall, at one of which declaring that it was engaged in "an unrelenting struggle to get the necessities of life for the needy masses on the Cuyuna Range." But Nygard soon found there were no village funds to release. The town was broke. He also led a May Day celebration, with a few hundred unemployed miners marching to the Workers' Hall to hear Nygard speak about how the "struggle of the working class" was international.[57]

He spent most of his term dealing with mundane matters, however, such as how to administer the sale of liquor in Crosby. Crosby resident Karen Kiva remembered that "about the only change that I can recall was that nobody paid their water bill that year. . . . But I didn't see any other radical changes in Crosby."[58]

After his speech at Webster Hall in New York in October 1933, Nygard's communism, if it was not already, became common knowledge. Perhaps the young man got carried away with the national attention. Many of the claims he made in front of a national audience were either gross exaggerations or outright lies. For example, Nygard claimed that "I had the workers organize an advisory council to assist me in running the town, and we abolished the police force and substituted workers patrols to keep order." This was far from the truth. The only action Nygard took against the police was to vote against a ten dollar gas allowance for a police officer. However, the rest of the council voted for the allowance.[59]

Nygard also stated that he organized unemployed workers to demonstrate in front of a bank which had claimed bankruptcy yet held twenty-three thousand dollars in city funds. Nygard recounted that the bank offered a settlement that would give the city six thousand dollars, "but because the organized workers of Crosby told them they would make it impossible for that bank to function," the bankers handed over the full amount "and the unemployed were fed." In reality, this event never took place. Nygard called for the release of the city's funds, but the bank never actually had Crosby's reserves. It was a case of what one critic called "big talk and small accomplishments. In Crosby he told what he intended to do, and when speaking in other places he told his listeners what he had done."[60]

Crosby voters rejected Nygard in December 1933, after only one year in office. Many voters were certainly not enthusiasts for communism, but many probably had become weary of their boastful mayor. Former mayor and prominent local businessman N. Wladimiroff crushed Nygard, 735 to 277. Nygard would run for mayor one last time, in 1934 against John Hawkinson, but would be defeated soundly, 769 to 163.[61] Later, after helping a Farmer-Labor candidate gain some miners' votes, Nygard received a job with the state highway department, where he worked until he retired.[62]

This study of miners on the Cuyuna Range serves as a warning for scholars inclined to attach labels to the working class. When we interrogate the evidence more closely, it becomes clear that labeling a person or a group "radical" or "conservative" masks contingent factors and pragmatic decisions made by workers whose quest for economic security on the margins of society outweighed any ideological considerations.

This was certainly the case on the Cuyuna Iron Range, where discontented miners turned to collective action to better their socio-economic conditions within the capitalist system, not to abolish the system. Cuyuna miners' connections with the

Socialist Party and IWW have misled both contemporaries and scholars to view this particular group of miners as more radical than they were. The Socialist Party and the IWW were a means to an end rather than an ideological home. Since only these organizations were willing to work with Minnesota's miners, they became the organizational tools used to achieve essentially non-radical goals.

By taking the demands striking miners made as expressions of their collective will and as an opportunity to hear the voices of those who often leave little record, we find that the majority of Cuyuna miners did not want overthrow capitalism. Rather, when they took collective action they sought to increase their wages so that they could participate more fully within the capitalist system.

Cuyuna miners struck only when they believed conditions favored success—periods of high employment, labor scarcity, and increased company profits. They fully realized that given the boom and bust cycles inherent in the mining industry, they had to strike for better pay while the iron was hot. Although the social and economic conditions of iron mining bred discontent amongst miners, that dissatisfaction did not turn into widespread radicalism. What made the Socialist Party and the IWW attractive to Cuyuna miners was not the radical ideologies that they professed, but rather their focus on immediate economic improvements.

The election of Emil Nygard also calls into question the degree of radicalism among miners on the Cuyuna Iron Range. If his election was truly the culmination of working-class radicalism amongst Cuyuna miners, then why did the Farmer-Labor Party receive such meager support amongst the mining communities on the range? The election of the communist Emil Nygard did not mean that the Cuyuna Range was a hotbed of radical activity. In the context of the Great Depression, workers often sought leadership from those who were far more radical than they. Thus, Nygard's election is less the zenith of radical activity on the range than it is a rational response to the lack of understanding Crosby's municipal officials had of the dire situation miners and their families were experiencing in December 1932.

This article argues for the use of a more definitive definition of the word radical. Aileen Kraditor offers one that maintains the term should only pertain to "those who would change society at its roots rather than reform it to make it conform more faithfully to its professed values and ideals," the concept only applying "to those who wanted a basic change in the social order."[63]

On the Cuyuna Iron Range, class struggle was personal for miners and their families. For them, class experience was waking up trembling from nightmares that the mine they were working in had collapsed, or hoping that the mine would not close, or being forced to work in unsafe conditions to support their families. Class-consciousness was the knowledge that any challenge to the mining companies' power, either at work or in the community, came with the risk of losing your job and positioning yourself and your family on the wrong side of subsistence. Class struggle was less about ideologies and more about struggling to pay the rent and provide food when the impersonal dictates of the market took a downturn.

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Notes:

1. Emil Nygard, *The First Red Mayor in America in Action* (New York: Workers Library Publishers, Nov. 1933).
2. Pamela A. Brundfelt, "Karl Emil Nygard: Minnesota's Communist Mayor," *Minnesota History* 53, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 168-9.
3. Neil Betten, "The Origins of Ethnic Radicalism in Northern Minnesota, 1900-1920," *International Migration Review* 4, no. 2 (Spr. 1970): 44-56; Michael G. Karni, "Finnish Immigrant Leftists in America: The Golden Years, 1900-1918," in: Dirk Hoerder (ed.), *"Struggle a Hard Battle": Essays on Working-Class Immigrants* (DeKalb: Univ. of Northern Illinois Pr., 1986), 200. See also: Peter Kivisto, *Immigrant Socialists in the United States: The Case of Finns and the Left* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press, 1984).
4. These percentages were taken from a sample of the 1920 *United States Federal Census* (on-line database, Provo, UT: Ancestry.com). One out of four persons was chosen randomly based upon their occupations. "Other" includes Poland, Italy, Germany, Ireland, and England.
5. Melvyn Dubofsky, "The Origins of Western Working-Class Radicalism, 1890-1905," in his *Hard Work: The Making of Labor History* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Pr., 2000), 41-2.
6. Carl Ross, *The Finn Factor in American Labor, Culture and Society* (New York Mills, MN: Parta Printers Inc., 1977), viii. For another treatment of Finnish religion, particular to mining towns, see: Arthur Edwin Puotinen, *Finnish Radicals and Religion in Midwestern Mining Towns, 1865-1914* (New York: Arno Press, 1979). For personal recollections of Finnish religious life, see: Ralph J. Jalkanen (ed.), *The Way It Was: Memories of the Suomi Synod* (Hancock, MI: Suomi College, 1990).
7. Douglas J. Ollila, Jr., "The Suomi Synod as an Ethnic Community," in: Ralph J. Jalkanen (ed.), *The Faith of the Finns: Historical Perspectives on the Finnish Lutheran Church in America* (Lansing: Michigan State Univ. Pr., 1972), 250-1.
8. Dirk Hoerder, "From Migrants to Ethnics: Acculturation in a Societal Framework," in: Dirk Hoerder and Leslie Page Moch (eds.), *European Migrants: Global and Local Perspectives* (Boston: Northeastern Univ. Pr., 1996), 216.
9. Frank Ruzich, transcript, Cuyuna Range Heritage Preservation Society, Crosby, Minnesota (hereafter CRHPS), n.d.; Dean Andrews, transcript of interview by Richard S. Sheldon, Sep. 1995, CRHPS; Elsie Lowder, transcript, CRHPS; Matti Hallila Pelto, *Ready to Descend: A Minnesota Iron Ore Miner in The Underground, 1908-1913* [Vienna C. Saari Maki, trans.] (New Brighton, MN: Sampo Publishing, Inc., 2000), 7-8.
10. *Department of Labor and Industries of the State of Minnesota, Fourteenth Biennial Report, 1913-14* (St. Paul: Department of Labor and Industries, 1914), 103. For a description of the dangers of mining on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, see: Larry Lankton, *Cradle to Grave: Life, Work, and Death at the Lake Superior Copper Mines* (New York: Oxford Univ. Pr., 1991), especially chapter seven: "The Cost of Copper: One Man Per Week."
11. *Cuyuna Range Miner* (Cuyuna, MN), 20 June 1913.
12. Marv Palmer, transcript of interview by Kathy Wiedell, 21 April 1993, CRHPS.
13. Neil Betten, "Riot, Revolution, Repression in the Iron Range Strike of 1916," *Minnesota History* 42, no. 2 (Sum. 1968): 82-3; Donald Sofchalk, "Organized Labor and the Iron Miners of Northern Minnesota, 1907-1936," *Labor History* 12 no. 2 (Spr. 1971): 214-42.
14. Paul Buhle, *Marxism in the United States: Remapping the History of the American Left* (New York: Verso, 1991), 86; David Paul Nord, "Minneapolis and the Pragmatic Socialism of Thomas Van Lear," *Minnesota History* 45, no. 1 (Spr. 1976): 2-10. For a look at the "sewer socialism" prevalent in the Midwest, see: Donald T. Critchlow (ed.), *Socialism in the Heartland: The Midwestern Experience, 1900-1925* (Notre Dame, IN: Univ. of Notre Dame Pr., 1986).
15. The standard treatment of the IWW remains Melvyn Dubofsky's *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969). Also useful, especially for the Mesabi Iron Range, is: Philip Foner, *The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917*: *History of the Labor Movement in the United States, vol. 4* (New York: International Press, 1965). For examples of new scholarship on the IWW, see: Tobias Frank Higbie, *Indispensable Outcasts: Hobo Workers and Community in the American Midwest, 1880-1930* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Pr., 2003); and Peter Cole, *Wobblies on the Waterfront: Interracial Unionism in Progressive-Era Philadelphia* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Pr., 2007).
16. Election results taken from: *Legislative Manual of the State of Minnesota,* 1913, 1915, 1917. The towns included for the Cuyuna Range vote are Crosby, Ironton, Cuyuna, and Manganese.
17. *Cuyuna Range Miner*, 12 Apr. 1913; *Crosby [MN] Crucible*, 13 Apr. 1913.
18. *Crosby Crucible*, 12 Apr. 1913.
19. The "take home anywhere from one to three dollars more per paycheck" figure is based on the payroll of the Adams Mine. This payroll can be found in: "Ledger, Adams Mine, 1911-1915," Adams Family Mining Company, Box 75, Minnesota Historical Society, St Paul, Minnesota (hereafter MHS).

20. *Crosby Crucible*, 12 Apr. 1913; *Industrial Worker* (Chicago, Industrial Workers of the World) 13 May 1913; Minnesota Dept. of Labor and Industries, *Fourteenth Biennial Report*, 208.
21. Paul Lekatz, "Crosby Cooperatives" and "Finns in Minnesota," 29 Nov. 1938, WPA Writers' Project Files, MHS; *Crosby Crucible*, 19 Apr. 1913; *Brainerd [MN] Journal Press*, 18 May 1913; *Cuyuna Range Miner*, 18 Apr. 1913; Chester Tripp to W. F. Houk, 13 Apr. 1913, Labor and Industry Dept., WCC hearing Transcripts, MHS (hereafter WCC Transcripts).
22. William Wearne to Charles S. Albright, 20 May 1913, WCC Transcripts; Charles S. Albright to William Wearne, 19 May 1913, WCC Transcripts; Charles S. Albright to H. J. Kruse, 19 May 1913, WCC Transcripts; H.J. Kruse to Charles S. Albright, 11 June 1913, WCC Transcripts; *Crosby Crucible*, 26 Apr. 1913.
23. Minnesota Department of Labor and Industries, *Fourteenth Biennial Report*, 167; *Department of Labor and Industries of the State of Minnesota, Fifteenth Biennial Report, 1915-16* (St. Paul: Dept. of Labor and Industries, 1916), 163.
24. *Brainerd Journal Press*, 23 May 1913.
25. Robert Schultz Troger, "Beyond the Fall: Class Conflict and Social, Cultural, and Political Change, Minnesota, 1916-1935" (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1991), 41-2. Also see: Donald G. Sofchalk, "Organized Labor and the Iron Ore Miners of Northern Minnesota, 1907-1936," *Labor History* 12, no. 2 (1971): 214-42, for AFL activity (or lack thereof), on the Iron Range.
26. *Crosby Crucible*, 5 Aug. 1916; The Labor Commission's report was reprinted in full in the *Industrial Worker*, 26 Aug. 1916.
27. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, *The Rebel Girl: An Autobiography, My First Life, 1906-1926* (New York: International Publishers, 1955), 211; Helen C. Camp, *Iron in Her Soul: Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and the American Left* (Pullman, WA: Univ. of Washington Pr., 1995), 71; *Crosby Crucible*, 29 July 1916.
28. *Crosby Crucible*, 16 Sep. 1916; Paul Lekatz, "Crosby Cooperatives." For more on the 1916 strike on the Cuyuna Iron Range, see: John Byczynski, "Claiming the Mines" (master's thesis, St. Cloud State Univ., 2011), 44-54.
29. *Crosby Crucible*, 23 Sep., 11 Nov., and 16 Dec. 1916, 25 Apr. 1914; *Ironton News*, 10 Feb. and 19 May 1917.
30. Carl Chrislock, *Watchdog of Loyalty: The Minnesota Commission of Public Safety during World War I* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1991), x-xi. Also see: Mary Wingerd, *Claiming the City: Politics, Faith, and the Power of Place in St. Paul* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Pr., 2003).
31. *Crosby Crucible*, 12 May 1917; DJG reports, 3 June 1917, Minnesota Commission of Public Safety files, MHS (hereafter MCPS files); *Crosby Crucible*, 30 May 1917; DJG reports, 4 June 1917; "Copy of Circular Distributed At Crosby," MCPS files.
32. DJR reports, 5, 10, 11, and 12 June 1917, MCPS files; *Crosby Crucible*, 6 June 1917; David Carter List ("'We Never Forget': I.W.W. Support for Finnish Draft Resisters on the Minnesota Iron Range during World War I" (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 1988), 15) notes that many Finnish miners failed to register because they believed they did not have to since they were not citizens.
33. *Ironton News*, 11 Aug. 1917.
34. *Crosby Crucible*, 8 Aug. 1917. The newspaper printed the word as "shifts," but perhaps it should be "shafts." Miners excavating shafts were sometimes paid extra because of the difficulties and hazards of that work.
35. *Crosby Crucible*, 15 Aug. 1917; Paul Lekatz, "Crosby Cooperatives;" Paul Lekatz, "Socialist Party," "Finns in Minnesota," 29 Nov. 1938, MHS.
36. For more on the Farmer-Labor Party in Minnesota, see: Millard L. Gieske, *Minnesota Farmer-Laborism: The Third Party Alternative* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Pr., 1979); Richard M. Vallely, *Radicalism in the States: The Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party and the American Political Economy* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Pr., 1989); Mary Wingerd, *Claiming the City*.
37. All election results taken from: "Election Returns," Minnesota Election Division, MHS.
38. (St. Paul) *Minnesota Union Advocate*, 24 Jan. 1929.
39. "Election Returns," Minnesota Election Division, 1922, 1928, 1930, 1932; *Farmer-Labor Record* (monthly, Brainerd, MN), May 1924.
40. Timo Riippa ("Finns and Swede Finns," in: June Drenning Holmquist (ed.), *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981), 314-6) provides a brief description of differences between Finns and Swede-Finns. Karl Emil Nygard, transcript of interview by Timothy Madigan, 13 Sep. 1973, University Archives, Minnesota State University-Moorhead, Moorhead, MN.
41. Nygard, Madigan interview; data taken from: Anna Himrod, *The Cuyuna Range: A History of a Minnesota Iron Mining District* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Records Survey Project, 1940), 111.
42. Dean Andrews, transcript of interview by Maryon Aulie, 20 Nov. 1994, CRHPS.
43. *Crosby Courier*, 3 and 10 Dec. 1931, 7 and 14 Jan. 1932.
44. *Crosby Courier*, 30 June 1932.
45. *Crosby Courier*, 25 Aug. 1932; Dorothy (Blanich) Tomovich, manuscript, CRHPS; Karen Kivi, transcript of interview by Mary Swanson, 20 July 1973, Northwest Minnesota Historical Center, Moorhead State University, Moorhead, MN; John Novak, transcript of interview by Marion Aulie, CRHPS, n.d.; Eleanor Hill Koski, manuscript, CRHPS.

46. *Crosby Courier*, 24 and 31 Mar. 1932; Nygard, Madigan interview.
47. Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Pr., 1990), 262-6.
48. *Crosby Courier*, 25 Aug. and 1 Sep. 1932.
49. *Crosby Courier*, 24 Mar. 1932.
50. *Crosby Courier*, 6 and 13 Oct. 1932; Nygard, Madigan interview. Frank Plut ran for county commissioner in the November 1932 general election. He was defeated by local lumberyard manager Ed Burns, 674 to 476 in Crosby, and 962 to 678 overall. Pauline Sheets was later cleared of any wrongdoing. See: Arthur Lester Sheets, "Our Dad Anita Sheets Moore [*sic*]," manuscript, CRHPS, for a defense of Pauline Sheets.
51. *Crosby Crucible*, 1 Dec. 1932.
52. Nygard, Madigan interview.
53. Nygard, Madigan interview; *Crosby Courier*, 1 Dec. 1932. It is likely that most Crosby residents knew of Nygard's Communist affiliation because in November 1932 he garnered 148 votes for railroad commissioner running as a Communist.
54. Philip Korth, *Minneapolis Teamsters' Strike of 1934* (East Lansing: Michigan State Univ. Pr., 1995), 7. The standard account of the Teamsters' strike remains Charles Rumford Walker's *American City: A Rank and File History of Minneapolis* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Pr., 2005), but also see: Robert T. Schultz, *Conflict and Change: Minneapolis Truck Drivers Make a Dent in the New Deal* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 2000).
55. *Crosby Courier*, 8 Dec. 1932.
56. *Brainerd Dispatch*, 13 Dec. 1932; *Crosby Courier*, 2 and 9 Mar. 1933.
57. *Crosby Courier*, 4 May 1932, 6 Apr. 1933, 30 Mar. 1933, 11 May 1932, 31 Aug. 1932.
58. *Crosby Courier*, 4 May 1932; Kivi, Swanson interview. It is worth noting that of the nearly one hundred oral interviews held at the Cuyuna Range Heritage Preservation Society, nearly all touch on some aspect of the Great Depression, but only a few mention Nygard, and of those, only a passing reference to Nygard is given. Though this may be because of the questions asked or other factors, it could very well be that most saw nothing worthy of discussion in Nygard.
59. *Duluth [MN] Evening Herald*, 27 Feb. 1933; *Crosby Courier*, 18 June 1933.
60. Nygard, *First Red Mayor*; *Duluth [MN] News-Tribune*, 1 Dec. 1933.
61. *Crosby Courier*, 6 Dec. 1934.
62. Nygard, Madigan interview. Nygard's oldest son, Jerry, joined the Air Force and served in the Vietnam War.
63. Aileen S. Kraditor, *The Radical Persuasion: Aspects of the Intellectual History and the Historiography of Three American Radical Organizations* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Pr., 1981), 8-9.