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# *John R. Palandech (1874–1956): The Many Faces of a Chicago Transatlantic Immigrant Media Man*

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**Abstract** | *John R. Palandech was a well-known immigrant publisher, politician, and entrepreneur in Chicago from the Gilded Age to the post-World War II era. This article retraces his biography and crosses it with the transatlantic political, cultural, and economic world Palandech was a part of and actor in. At the core of this study is a collection of letters sent by Palandech to his brother Joko in the Bocca di Cattaro region (today Montenegro). Complemented with archival and newspaper material, this article discusses the social personae JR Palandech took on as an immigrant entrepreneur and leader, an eminent citizen of Chicago, and as a son, brother, husband, and father.*

**Keywords:** | *Austro-Hungarian migrants, South Slav migrants, Serbian Americans, Chicago, trans-ethnic collaboration and conflict, migrant identity, ethnic, transatlantic families, politics, business*

Anyone who engages with Chicago's immigrant history since the late nineteenth century will at some point come across the name John R. Palandech. The same goes for historians of South Slav migration to the United States in general. The Serbian historian Krinka Vidaković-Petrov has described how important this major Serb publisher was in a paper on Chicago Serbs and

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in her book *Serbian Americans: History—Culture—Press*.<sup>1</sup> Yet, apart from this, there remain few detailed accounts on this obviously eminent ethnic entrepreneur of the past. This is all the more astonishing, as not only was he indeed a media celebrity in his time, but also his papers are available at the Immigration History Research Center Archives (IHRCA) in Minneapolis. An abundance of small traces of his activities can be found scattered across the historical record as well. These paper trails have caught up in several niches of the memory machines called physical and digital repositories.<sup>2</sup>

By piecing together these paper trails, a new and more intricate narrative of the life of a transatlantic ethnic entrepreneur emerges. John Palandech was a transatlantic figure. Apart from royal overseas contacts, a ticket agency, a travel bureau, and his nostalgia management, the letters collection at the IHRCA proves how Palandech and the Palandechs at some times did (and at some times did not) keep in contact.

This article is an account of migrants, city politics, and the U.S. party system in Chicago, of trans-ethnic collaboration and conflict, of migrant identity strategies, ethnic newspaper and book publishing and radio broadcasting, transatlantic migrant politics and business, the world wars, and migrant generations and their homecomings. The following account features family, friends and foes, and groups and networks acting in connection with John R. Palandech, whom we will for most of the article simply call “John.”

### A Young Migrant (1874–1888)

Most accounts of his life claim that John was born in Rose, Montenegro. But he was not born in Rose, and his name was not John. His most probable birth name was Ivan Palandačić, and his probable date of birth was September 23, 1874, though some sources say 1873. His place of birth is certain—a little town at the mouth of the Danube in the Black Sea called Sulina. It was not situated in Montenegro or Romania, as some sources have said, but in the Ottoman Empire, as Romania did not extend this far east at that time. Sulina, “composed of a double row of one-storied wooden houses, straggling along the river-side, with a dreary marsh behind them,” was a place with a

1. Krinka Vidaković-Petrov, “An Outline of the Cultural History of the Serbian Community in Chicago,” *Serbian Studies: Journal of the North American Society for Serbian Studies* 20, no. 1 (2006): 33–55; Vidaković-Petrov, *Serbian Americans: History—Culture—Press* (Los Angeles: Sebastian Press, 2015).

2. Next to the IHRCA these include most prominently archive.org, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>, and familysearch.com.



**Figure 1** | *Southeastern Europe in Ivan's birth year, 1874.* Data provided by HistoGIS, Austrian Academy of Sciences.

special function. Ocean steamers could unload their cargo there for transfer to smaller boats able to travel on the Danube, via the inland river ports Brăila and Galați.<sup>3</sup>

Ivan began the process of migrating early in life. In 1875 Ivan's brother Gjuro was born, also in Sulina, but by then Ivan's first migration move must have happened. We know that because the papers of the third brother, Samo, tell us that he first opened his eyes on an island many miles to the south of Sulina, specifically in the so-called Cisleithanian part of the Hapsburg Empire, commonly known as Austria, yet officially known as "The Kingdoms and Lands Represented in the Reichsrat." It was on Luštica Island in the Bay of Cattaro where little Samo was born in 1879. Today Cattaro is called Kotor and lies in Montenegro. Hence the confusion. The family made a big change between 1875 and 1879: from the Black Sea port of Sulina, which had become part of Romania in the meantime, to the Cisleithanian Adriatic port of Cattaro. Basically, Ivan had moved from one port to another.

Both locations, Sulina and Bocca di Cattaro, are important to uncovering the story of John Palandech in three respects. The last name Palandačić is not typically Serbian or Slavic. Ivan's mother was born in the Russian/Romanov Empire to a man with a Russian first name. Her first name was Paraskeva, a name of an orthodox saint more common with Greeks than Serbs. Hence, his parents'

3. Constantin Ardeleanu, *International Trade and Diplomacy at the Lower Danube: The Sulina Question* (Braila, Romania: Editura Istros, 2014), 59, 217.



**Figure 2** | *Cattaro around 1870: harbor basin with sailing boats and a steam frigate.* Photograph by Francesco Laforest, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek/Bildarchiv Austria.

ethnic affiliation is unclear. Sulina suggests some clues: it was a place with highly mobile and transient inhabitants, mostly Greeks; as the seat of the newly founded Danube European Committee, it accommodated personnel from all signatory states, sailors, and other typical actors ranging from pirates and prostitutes to boat pilots. The latter were especially important in a transfer port.<sup>4</sup> This again means that the ethnic background of Ivan is not at all clear. What is certain is that the denomination was Orthodox (though uncertain which patriarchate, Istanbul or Beograd or Sremski Karlovci) and it is highly probable that there were both Serb and Greek aspects in Ivan's family at that time.

Sulina was in the Ottoman Empire when Ivan was born, but this territory became part of Romania only four years later, due to the outcome of the Russo-Turkish War and the Berlin Treaty of 1878. When the family moved to the Bay of Cattaro, according to U.S. documents, they must have become Cisleithanian citizens, if they were not already; perhaps, for example, Ivan's father, Rade Palandačić, was a Cisleithanian or Hungarian Serb expat in the Ottoman Empire/Romania and already a citizen. This is also the reason why we cannot be certain whether his birth name really was Ivan Palandačić or maybe a Greek or Romanian version. Ivan was born in one empire and moved to another, but these empires would last only some forty more years.

4. Ibid.



**Figure 3** | By 1880, the political map of Europe had changed significantly. Note: as in fig. 1, autonomous entities of the Ottoman empire are not shown. Data provided by HistoGIS, Austrian Academy of Sciences.

It is striking that Ivan's family lived in a place of maritime and land mobility and that when they moved, they settled down in a similar place, the Bay of Cattaro. They had probably gotten there utilizing a traffic route such as a steamship on the Danube and then likely by train, or had taken the sea route (cf. fig. 3). When members of the family started to migrate to America, they first settled in similar places around San Francisco and Monterey Bay. Chicago, it could be argued, also bears some similarities as a major place of traffic and commerce at the crossroads of land and water-bound mobility. However, we do not know what the Palandačićes' professional background was either in the Danube delta region or the Bay of Cattaro.

Ivan went to school most likely in the region but it is unclear what kind of schooling he had. He liked to call his degree "high school." The closest school of that type was a gymnasium in Cattaro. The nearest *Realschule*, which was more business oriented, would have been in Spalato (Split), far away. This was in a region where only 40 to 50 percent of the population could read and write, a number far better than in the surrounding districts.<sup>5</sup>

5. Helmut Rumpler and Martin Seger, eds., *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918*, vol. 9, *Soziale Strukturen, Teilbd. 2: Die Gesellschaft der Habsburgermonarchie im Kartenbild: Verwaltungs-Sozial-und Infrastrukturen; nach dem Zensus von 1910* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010), 224–28.

The Palandačić family grew quickly. Ivan's first little sister, Ivana, was born in 1881 and the second sister, Andja, was born two years later, one year before Ivan turned ten. Seven years later Mara was born in February 1890 and one year later the second-youngest brother, Joko, on December 13, 1891. None of the sisters would emigrate; they all stayed in the "homeland," as did Joko.

As Ivan approached young adulthood, his migration decisions were fairly typical for a man from the Bay of Cattaro. Late-nineteenth-century Adriatic coast dwellers had been among the early migrants to the United States, and typically went to New Orleans and San Francisco. This was equally true for Catholic Croats and Italians as it was for Orthodox Serbs and others from Dalmatia, the Austrian Littoral, and from the Veneto, to name only the Austrian regions along the Adriatic shore. They were maritime people from the more southern areas of Europe and gravitated to the port cities of the southern United States.<sup>6</sup> Ivan left in 1888, when migration to the United States from Dalmatia was rising but from Austria-Hungary as a whole had not yet reached its peak.<sup>7</sup> He went to the same places and was in general more like the "first-wave" Adriatic migrants than the "second-wave" ones who also came from the hinterlands.

Second-wave migrants began migrating in greater numbers in the 1890s. Prior to that decade they came from Great Britain, Ireland, Scandinavia, and the German



**Figure 4** | *Ivan's first station in America: Harbor and City of Monterey, California in 1842.* Lithograph by Thomas Oliver Larkin, ca. 1850, Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps, La Jolla, CA.

6. Vidaković-Petrov, "Outline of the Cultural History of the Serbian Community in Chicago," 35.

7. In the 1880s the number of Dalmatians rose to about 14,000; in the following decade it more than doubled. George J. Prpić, *South Slavic Immigration in America*, The Immigrant Heritage of America Series (Boston: Twayne, 1978), 67.

Reich. In the first decade of the twentieth century, when their numbers reached an absolute peak, it was Austria-Hungary that was “sending” most migrants, followed by the Kingdom of Italy and Tsarist Russia. Second-wave migrants went where coal, steel, lumber, and factories were. They went to the factories of New York, Pittsburgh, and Chicago, to the ore and coal mines from Minnesota to Texas, and wherever wood was cut. They did usually not embark on social improvement projects in America but instead saved for remitting their wages to their families. Forty percent returned to their homelands. Those who did not return home integrated into the so-called lower strata of the American working classes in “Hunkietowns” and “Little Italys” on the south sides of the American dream.

Ivan emigrated to America via Liverpool in 1888. He was fourteen years old. Much later he would describe how he first saw the Statue of Liberty, arriving by boat. However, his first station was not New York City or Chicago, where he later settled, but Monterey, California.<sup>8</sup> There he continued his education. He later claimed he had “attended business coll[ege] in America[,] studied law, sociology, municipal gov[ernmen]t and immigration problems.”<sup>9</sup> In staying in America he was like 60 percent of the other migrants, but pursuing higher education made him very different from typical second-wave migrants. He had had formal education before emigrating and he continued it in America. Otherwise, Ivan behaved like in-between first- and second-wave migrants.

South Slav-speaking migrants formed organizations similar to those formed by other, earlier migrants. Many of these organizations were known as fraternities. Members usually spoke the same language (though not necessarily as a first language) and they often came from the same region. In the States, they first developed regionally. There was an organization of Bay of Cattaro Serbs in San Francisco and later other ones in New York, Butte, Montana, and Chicago. The Chicago organization attempted to merge them on a national level and all but the San Franciscans joined the new First Serbian Fraternal Benevolent Federation (FSFB) around 1903. Parallel organizations sprang up when Serbs from other regions settled in different parts of the States, such as in Pittsburgh where the Serbian Orthodox Society Srbobran was founded in 1901.<sup>10</sup>

8. Short biography on “John Palandech Letters,” digital document collection, Digitizing Immigrant Letters, November 8, 2019, <https://ihrc.dash.umn.edu/dil/letters/john-palandech-letters/>.

9. John William Leonard and Albert Nelson Marquis, *Who's Who in Chicago: The Book of Chicagoans, a Biographical Dictionary of Leading Living Men and Women of the City of Chicago and Environs* (Chicago: A. N. Marquis and Company, 1917), [http://archive.org/details/details/whoswhoinchicagooleon\\_1](http://archive.org/details/details/whoswhoinchicagooleon_1).

10. Vidaković-Petrov, “Outline of the Cultural History of the Serbian Community in Chicago,” 35–37.



Basically, these fraternities were mutual insurance organizations designed to make sure that at least the burial of a migrant was covered if he could not make it home alive, a sad fate for many second-wave working-class migrants. The typical plan for second-wave migrants from peasant families in rural areas was to migrate temporarily. The goal was to contribute to some socioeconomic project of the family in the homeland, like improving status or paying back debt, typically toward the landlord. This plan paid off from the moment the migrant had earned their boat fare (which was often fronted initially by relatives or other community members). This plan only worked provided the migrant did not spend more than necessary abroad or died or was impaired. This was where the migrant organizations or fraternities came in.

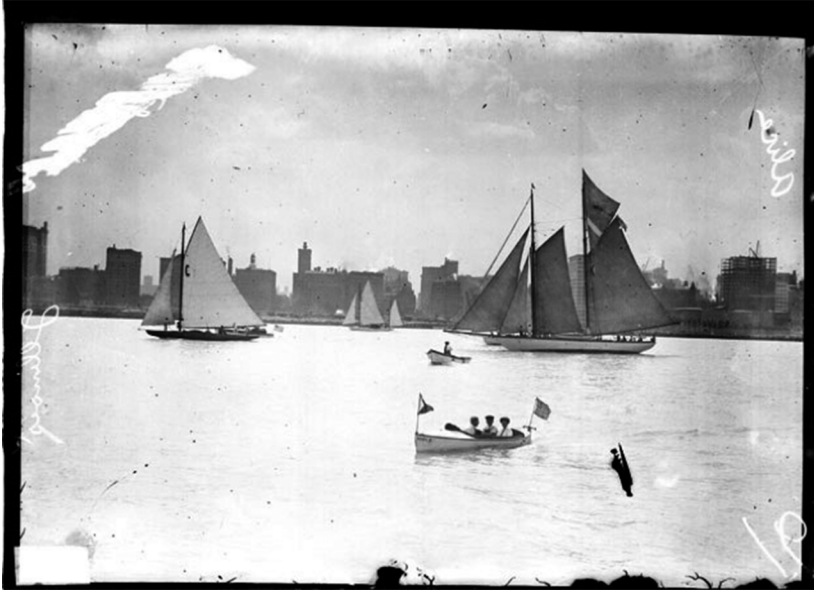
Beyond the sheer socioeconomic function, the fraternities and their “fraternal homes” were places of cultural exchange, information transmission, and identity politics. Some organized along ideological lines, like Czech atheists in Chicago, or separate associations for Slovene Catholics and Slovene Socialists in the Midwest. These social functions were shared with other migrant venues, such as churches, newspapers, political parties, and saloons. Such institutions would prove crucial for Ivan’s (John’s) later career.

Ivan was the oldest Palandačić son and the first to migrate over the Atlantic. He did so not to make money and go home, but to start a new life in the United States. He did not return as so many other Austro-Hungarian and second-wave migrants did. He may not have even written or visited his family in the homeland for thirty years, for we have no records of travels or correspondence of his before World War I. It seemed as if Ivan Palandačić was a lost son.

## Taking Hold in America: The Gilded Age and World War I

Ivan reached the United States in a time that was later called the Gilded Age, after Mark Twain’s eponymous book, roughly from the 1870s to 1900. These decades were marked by the end of post–Civil War Reconstruction, the massacres of the American Indian wars and increased settlement of the West, the ascending of the United States toward world power status, the transportation revolution by railway, increasing concentration of capital, an upsurge of commerce with large department stores and mail order, and industrial expansion in an age of inventions. Ivan first visited in 1893, one year before he turned twenty, the year of the World’s Columbian Exposition. He had already been on the West Coast for five years, but would later remember how impressed he was by the fair and how it inspired him to become a Chicagoan.<sup>11</sup>

11. Ibid.; Leonard and Marquis, *Who’s Who in Chicago*.



**Figure 5** | *Boats on Lake Michigan near Chicago, Illinois, 1909.* Photograph, Chicago History Museum.

Ivan became a U.S. citizen and a Chicago resident four years later. He was “naturalized . . . before the Superior Court of San Francisco, in the 14 day of July, 1897.” The authorities classified him physically as “5 feet 9 inches . . . Eyes Blue, Nose Straight . . . Hair Dark Brown, Complexion Dark, Face Oval.”<sup>12</sup> His official name on his citizenship records was now John R. Palandech. The middle name was Randolph but stood probably also for his father’s first name, Rade. For his family in the homeland, John would remain Ivan. Later that year he moved to the Midwestern metropolis of Chicago. He did not settle on the South Side where the masses of second-wave migrants, including the Serbs, went. Instead, John chose the neighborhood that middle-class Serbs preferred: West Town. His first surviving Chicago address was recorded in 1903: 242 South Francisco Avenue, not in Wicker Park, or West Town but East Garfield Park, southwest of West Town.

For John, becoming a U.S. citizen in 1897, the beginning of the Progressive Era, could have meant that he was not concerned anymore with the affairs inside the Dual Monarchy. For Austria-Hungary, 1897 was the year of the Badeni crisis, the beginning of a period of ethno-national antagonisms on the

12. “Ivan R Palandacic, 1910,” digital document collection, United States Passport Applications, 1795–1925, March 16, 2018, <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QKNT-J57N>.



**Figure 6** | *John lived in a similar building one block north. This one stands at 149 South Francisco Avenue, photographed in 1963, Chicago – Photographic Images of Change, University of Illinois at Chicago Library, Special Collections Department.*

political stage. It ended when Austria-Hungary started World War I. In his first dozen years as an American citizen, John seems to have been more involved in the social debates and local government problems of the Progressive Era in Chicago than in the political deadlock of Austria-Hungary. Yet it would later be exactly transatlantic concerns that became the motor of his career.

John started an American family when he married Catherine Leonard in 1901, and he went native. Catherine was from Newark, born in 1876 with a Catholic, daughter of John Leonard and Anna Dunn, both from Ireland.<sup>13</sup> Catherine and John Palandech lived in a three-story house in 3215 West Flournoy Street between Garfield Park and Douglas Park, only three blocks away from the Sears, Roebuck and Company complex.<sup>14</sup> The neighborhood was quite affluent at the time.

Their first child, Paraskeva, was born prematurely and died on June 15, 1903. She was buried in a recently established Catholic cemetery, Mount Carmel, generally known as a resting place for Italian Chicagoans and Chicago's bishops. Back “home” in Cisleithanian Dalmatia, the fourth and last Palandačić

13. Ibid. Some sources have the year of their marriage as 1902. “Illinois, Cook County Deaths, 1878–1994,” database, March 17, 2018, <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:Q2M4-YD62>.

14. “Ivan R Palandacic, 1910.”

brother, Luka, was born in 1900 (some sources say 1901), but we do not know whether John learned about his youngest brother at that time.

In 1907 the couple's first surviving child was born. They named her Veronica but she was called Vasiljka among the Serbian-speaking family. In 1912 Catherine-Marie was born, making for three U.S.-born females—Catherine, Veronica, and Catherine-Marie—and one Southeastern European male, John, at the Palandech house. At times, there were also John's brothers George and, later, Sam.<sup>15</sup> How Southeastern European and how American was this household? How native did John go? How did Catherine and her daughters perceive their European connection? Did John try to entrust his daughters with his legacy? What was his strategy to prepare his life's achievements for the future? The first opportunity to approach these questions would arise after the Great War.

In the early twentieth century, the party allegiance (rather than their core politics) of Chicago's mayors changed from time to time. From 1907 to 1911 Republican Fred A. Busse was mayor of Chicago. It was just before Busse's tenure that John Palandech came to community importance. Mayor Busse was certainly not an exponent of progressivism; he was, rather, one of its targets. His tenure is remembered as being tainted by corruption and the rise of organized crime. It was, however, also under his aegis that large-scale planning and infrastructure improvements were initiated, yet only partly implemented afterwards. Busse's successor, Carter Harrison Jr., in office from 1911 to 1915, was a Democrat but he was no progressive reformer. He did close down a brothel district, which made him more popular with middle-class voters than his predecessor. This was when John made his first public appearances as an ethnic leader.

John's background in South Slavic-speaking Central Europe was part of a persona that lent itself to activities in the migrant ethnic sector. He spoke their language, Serbo-Croatian; he was member of one of their denominations, Serb Orthodox; and he had been citizen of their main sending state, Austria-Hungary. South-Slav organizations in the United States had the potential to support and propel John, and John had the potential to connect to and influence them. As a Serb, he also had potential connections to the Serbian kingdom and the Montenegrin tsardom. We do not have any evidence of John's involvement in ethnic community organizations in the eight years between 1897 and 1905, but there must have been some.

The foundation of his activities as a Serb community leader seems to have been primarily through publishing books and, later, periodicals. John started publishing books in 1900. His most durable publications would prove his dictionaries. He also printed literature from the homeland.<sup>16</sup> Already in 1905 John ran a

15. *Ibid.*

16. One of the first was *New Serbo-Croatian-English, and English-Serbo-Croatian Dictionary with Correct Pronunciation and Appendix* (Chicago: Palandech's Pub. House,

title *Yugoslavia*. His next periodical was a so-called calendar, basically a monthly magazine.<sup>17</sup> In 1905 John became leader of the Serb Orthodox community in Wicker Park. In the same year, the weekly *United Serbians* was founded as a mouthpiece of the First Serbian Fraternal Benevolent Federation (FSFB). Like almost all of his publications it was printed completely in Serbian in the Cyrillic script. John became its publisher in 1906, the same year in which he founded two other serial publications, a likewise-named calendar, the *Calender United Serbians* and the almanac *Kralj Petar*, named after the new king of Serbia, Petar Karadjordjević. Finally, in 1907, John started publishing the weekly *Balkanski svijet* (Balkan World), which was intended to address a wider South Slavic-speaking audience, using the Latin script and subtitled “Croatian Weekly.”<sup>18</sup> In the course of these three years, John had set the foundation of his ethnic leader and publisher persona. John was not a fraternity leader for a long time. This role lasted only four years. In 1909 the *United Serbians* stopped being the FSFB mouthpiece. John now had free hand in editing it and would do so for the rest of his life.<sup>19</sup> After the FSFB experiment, John became an ethnic leader outside the classic fraternal migrant organizations, relying heavily on his community esteem



Figure 7 | Title Page of the United Serbians, April 2, 1936.

1900). Literature printed was for instance the folk songs, Lazar Ćurić, *Srpske pjesme* (Chicago: Palandech's Press, 1903).

17. *Yugoslavia: Organ of the Yugoslavs in America = Glasilo Jugoslovena u Americi* (Chicago: Palandech's Publishing House, 1905); *Amerika: srpski narodni kalendar = America: Serbian National Almanac* (Chicago: Palandech and Sons, 1908).

18. *Balkanski svijet = Balkan World* (Chicago: J. R. Palandech, 1912).

19. Vidaković-Petrov, “Outline of the Cultural History of the Serbian Community in Chicago.”

in the Wicker Park church and, most important, on his publishing power and society networks.

John slowly became a public persona beyond his ethnic community. His first claim to (minor) fame, in 1907, was being a restaurant owner. His seven establishments were located in the Loop area of Chicago.<sup>20</sup> The word “restaurant” might have been misleading—usually, in Chicago it meant a one-room street-level fast-food establishment with a proletarian clientele. Probably John’s places were much like these.<sup>21</sup> In 1909 John’s public persona was damaged with an attempted murder charge. A patron of his restaurant at 123 van Buren Street accused John of dangerously injuring him after “bouncing” him out of the place.<sup>22</sup>

John also inserted himself in events outside Chicago. In November 1910 an explosion at the Delagua Mine near Trinidad, Colorado, killed more than seventy miners. More were still missing under the rubble. This was the worst in a series of mining accidents in the region that year. An unspecified number of the victims were South Slav. John attended the burial and a mass meeting “of his fellow countrymen” where he claimed to be the representative (and a personal acquaintance) of the prince of Montenegro and demanded that the bodies not be buried before the cause of their death had been detected beyond doubt.<sup>23</sup> John behaved as though he was an ambassador of a foreign country, a country he did not actually come from. In 1912 John joined a trans-ethnic organization for the first time, the Immigrant’s Protective League.<sup>24</sup> His march through the institutions had begun. In 1913 he made his first documented appearance with a trans-ethnic character, taking part in a banquet of the Lithuanian Society in the Sherman Hotel, where John’s speech made “a great impression.”<sup>25</sup> In the same year, he was a member of a

20. Leonard and Marquis, *Who’s Who in Chicago*. In 1907 he got a permit for a ventilation stack for a restaurant, in the rear of 82 Dearborn St. *Proceedings of City Council of the City of Chicago for the Municipal Year 1906-1907* (Chicago, 1907), 3305.

21. Bruce Kraig, “Restaurants,” in *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. James R. Grossman, Ann Durkin Keating, and Janice L. Reiff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 701–2.

22. “Notatki Reportera,” *Dziennik Chicagoski*, January 23, 1909, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045747/1909-01-23/ed-1/seq-5/>.

23. *Arizona Republican* (Phoenix, AZ), November 13, 1910. The death toll rose to 79 later. Investigations were still conducted in December and Slavic miners including a John Simcish testified that the mine was badly secured against explosion. *The Goldfield News* (Goldfield, NV), December 17, 1910, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85058379/1910-12-17/ed-1/seq-5/>. Delagua is today a ghost town.

24. *Annual Report of the Immigrants’ Protective League* (Chicago: The League, 1912), 13, <https://archive.org/details/annualreportofim1919091917immi/page/n127?q=palandech+league>.

25. “Jugo-Slavs Plan Festival,” *Calumet Evening American*, September 11, 1933, [https://flps.newberry.org/article/5423966\\_0132](https://flps.newberry.org/article/5423966_0132).

foreign-language editors' campaign on immigrant's security at the workplace and elsewhere – again it was a banquet, this time in the La Salle Hotel.<sup>26</sup> This cooperation with editors of newspapers in other non-English languages would become important for his future.

Thus far John had been a member of organizations with an ethnic, multi-ethnic, or immigrant label, but in 1913 he joined his first documented mainstream organization, the Chicago Press Club, which meant jumping from ethnic publishing to general publishing.<sup>27</sup> Founded thirty-three years earlier and modeled after the New York Press Club, this organization furthered the interests of newspapers, and journalism in general, independent of political parties, but also induced newspaper publishers to acknowledge certain social duties. Some ethnic press publications were also involved in the founding years, for example, a representative of the Illinois *Staats-Zeitung* was third vice president in 1886 at one of the first banquets, whose editor-in-chief George Schneider was a life member and founding father of the Press Club. However, this German newspaper was the only non-English publication that was so prominent in the club. In 1913 John's *United Serbians* had a circulation of 13,000.<sup>28</sup> John was working his way from the exclusively Balkan immigrant world into the trans-ethnic world. By this year he seems to have survived the attempted murder charge with no lasting damage and was on his way to a more mainstream Chicago career.

In 1914 John turned forty and global politics became more complicated. On July 28, 1914, the war in Europe commenced with Austro-Hungarian warships shelling Belgrade from the Danube River. The attack was halted by Serb troops and by the fact that Austria-Hungary redirected part of its armed forces from Serbia to the Eastern Front against Russia. Especially in the first months of the war, civilians fell victim to the Austro-Hungarian troops, such as in the infamous massacre of Šabac in the Kingdom of Serbia, which cost around 200 civilian lives.<sup>29</sup> Also John's immediate home region was also affected. In August 1914 Montenegro, with its guns on Mount Lovćen, towering over the Bay of

26. "Editors Give Cash to Protect Lives of U. S. Immigrants," *Chicago Tribune*, September 27, 1913, [https://flps.newberry.org/article/5422062\\_5\\_1517/](https://flps.newberry.org/article/5422062_5_1517/).

27. *Press Club of Chicago Officers and Members* (Chicago, 1913), 21, <http://archive.org/details/pressclubofchica1913pres>.

28. William H. Freeman and Press Club of Chicago, *The Press Club of Chicago: A History, with Sketches of Other Prominent Press Clubs of the United States* (Chicago: Press Club of Chicago, 1894), 10, 17, 54, 72, <http://archive.org/details/pressclubofchicaooifree>; *Nelson Chesman & Co.'s Newspaper Rate Book* (St. Louis, Mo.: Nelson Chesman & Co., 1914), 68, <http://archive.org/details/nelsonchesmancos1914ncls>.

29. Oswald Überegger, "'Verbrannte Erde' und 'baumelnde Gehenkte'. Zur europäischen Dimension militärischer Normübertretungen im Ersten Weltkrieg," in *Kriegsgruel. Die*

Cattaro, threatened the Kotor harbor and city. Austria-Hungary shelled Mount Lovćen from a fortress on the same island the Palandačić family lived on. In September it came under attack by the French marine, which was repelled.<sup>30</sup> War news was on the first pages of the papers, especially news from the Western Front. But for many Chicagoans who were ethnic Poles, Russians, Germans, Austrians, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Hungarians, Slovaks, or South Slavs, the situation on the Eastern and Adriatic fronts became prime news. Their ethnic presses reported accordingly.

The Great War in Europe posed dilemmas for John and many other immigrants in America. As a Serb he spoke up for supporting Serbia against Austria-Hungary. Many Slavic speakers from Austria-Hungary followed their nationalist migrant leaders and wanted support for the Serb and Russian side, too. Jewish immigrants, especially those from Russia, often remained neutral because they did not want to support the tsar who had played a major role in anti-Jewish pogroms. Adding further complexity, immigrant socialists and workers' leaders were often against a war in general. German-speaking immigrants, including German socialists, tended toward supporting Germany and Austria by at least keeping the United States neutral.<sup>31</sup>

This array of contested loyalties became obvious at a patriotic rally of Bohemians and Serbs in Pilsen Park around the beginning of the war, where John spoke.<sup>32</sup> A Lithuanian reporter there noted that the patriotism of John's speech conflicted with the antiwar sentiment of most present. A few days later, on August 3, the Socialist Party held a mass meeting in the same venue with American and Bohemian guests who chanted, "Down with the War!"<sup>33</sup> John tried to resolve the dilemma by on one hand calling for humanitarian aid for the Serbian side, instead of military aid. On the other hand, he sought allies in supporting the war, which he found in a campaign together with a Chicago Greek organization to support Serbia. As a patriotically inclined Serb, he wanted to help Serbia by advocating for U.S. intervention in Europe. However, mainstream politicians were not prepared to do that. This put John into a double dilemma, as the mainstream in the Republican Party was isolationist. John had embarked

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*Entgrenzung der Gewalt in kriegerischen Konflikten vom Mittelalter bis ins 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Sönke Neitzel und Daniel Hohrath (Paderborn/München/Wien/et al., 2008), 241–78.

30. Manfred Rauchensteiner, *Der Erste Weltkrieg und das Ende der Habsburgermonarchie 1914–1918* (Wien: Böhlau, 2013), 226.

31. Joseph P. O'Grady, ed., *The Immigrant's Influence on Wilson's Peace Policies* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1967), 30.

32. *Ibid.*, 30.

33. "Protest Meeting against War," *Naujienos*, August 3, 1914, [http://flps.newberry.org/article/5423970\\_1\\_1292/](http://flps.newberry.org/article/5423970_1_1292/).



on a political career as a local politician on a Republican ticket. His first public office was in the Department of Public Welfare in 1914.<sup>34</sup> The next would be when he and his brother George Palandech were on the transport committee.<sup>35</sup>

In late 1914 news from the Serbian and Bosnian fronts brought relief to John and his family. The Austro-Hungarian army had retreated and evacuated Belgrade by mid-December.<sup>36</sup> The Bay of Cattaro was Austro-Hungarian territory and would remain so. It was the fleet's most important harbor for surface combat ships and was used to keep Montenegro from advancing in the south. But the shelling did not recommence here.<sup>37</sup> That year the circulation of *United Serbians* climbed to 16,500, probably also because of the beginning of the war in August.<sup>38</sup>

In April 1915 John's name appeared under an antiwar ad in the *Cincinnati Volksblatt* and other foreign-language migrant newspapers. It belonged to a

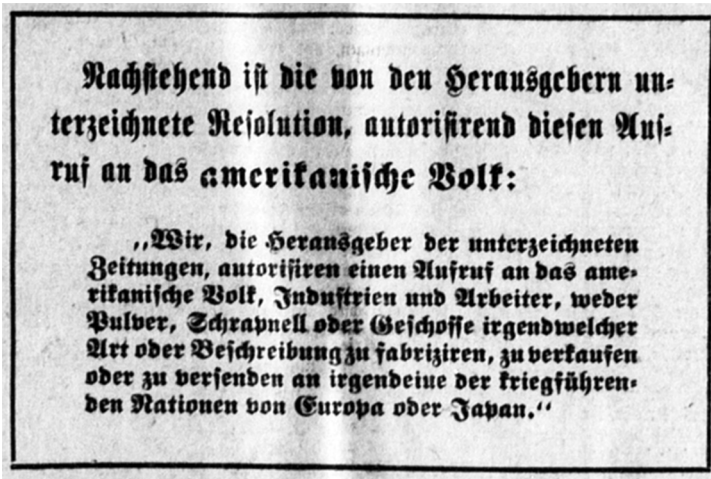


Figure 8 | An “Appeal to the American People” in awkward German, one section of the full-page anti-war ad. It was printed in German gothic script, just like the rest of this newspaper. *Tägliches Cincinnati Volksblatt*, April 5, 1915.

34. *The Chicago Blue Book of Selected Names of Chicago and Suburban Towns* (Chicago: Chicago Directory Company, 1915), 49, <http://archive.org/details/chicagobluebook01915chic>.

35. *Dziennik Chicagoski*, January 25, 1917.

36. “Zeittafel der Feldzüge und der wichtigsten Schlachten des Kriegsjahres 1914,” in *Das Kriegsjahr 1914, Beilagen*, Österreich-Ungarns letzter Krieg 1914–1918, 1 Beil (Wien: Verlag der Militärwissenschaftlichen Mitteilungen, 1932), <https://digi.landesbibliothek.at/viewer/image/AC01350733/31/>.

37. Rauchensteiner, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 269–70.

38. *Nelson Chesman & Co.'s Newspaper Rate Book*, 68.

campaign by the Axis powers to steer public opinion in the United States further toward abstinence from the war than it already was. The American Association of Foreign Language Newspapers (AAFLN), founded by Louis Nicholas Hammerling in 1908, had been used as a platform to spread this kind of sentiment.<sup>39</sup> However, John and other ethnic leaders had earlier spoken out in favor of the United States engaging on the Allied side. Therefore, his statements and those of his fellow publishers that they had been tricked into signing the petition seem credible.<sup>40</sup> This was the second time (the first being his Pilsen Park speech) that his name appeared in a negative affair in the news. It made him look like a foreigner lobbying in the United States for a foreign power. Fortunately for him, his name was one of many and not published prominently.

Thus, we see how John had made his way from publishing into commerce and the fraternal world and into local politics—a not illogical move, but impossible without a certain skill in using the advantages of synergies not obvious to everyone. His start was a shaky one, perhaps due to the volatile situation among Chicago immigrants, politics, and inner-city business.

John's political roles would only continue to expand. In September 1915 he acted like a Serbian/Montenegrin consul for the second time in the documentary record. In Hartford, Kentucky, he appeared in person to testify in favor of Serbs accused of having conspired to murder a local priest in the service of the German secret service.<sup>41</sup> In October John launched a campaign that might well have been designed to make sure his involvement in the "Anti-war ad" was not the way the public saw him. John had given a speech in which he declared that Serbian women were fighting in the trenches on the soil of Europe to defend their country against the German-Austrian aggressor. This claim was happily reported by dozens of newspapers from New York to Chicago and even resulted in an illustrated one-page story being published in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*.<sup>42</sup> The claim was a typical propaganda stunt. It focused attention on a readily available concept, femininity, and paired it with reports of war cruelties in order to point out the desperate fight of the Serbs and the uncivilized conduct of the enemy. The origin of the claims might have been

39. "Tenth Anniversary of the American Association of Foreign Language Newspapers, Inc.," *Printers' Ink* (New York), June 6, 1918; see also Berkley Hudson and Karen Boyajy, "The Rise and Fall of an Ethnic Advocate and American Huckster: Louis N. Hammerling and the Immigrant Press," *Media History* 15, no. 3 (n.d.): 287–302.

40. "Mr. Palandech and Serbia," *New York Times*, October 30, 1915, <https://tinyurl.com/PalandechReply>.

41. *Hartford Herald*, September 1, 1915, 1.

42. *New York Times*, October 19, 1915, 1, <https://tinyurl.com/SerbWomen>. Other coverage, e.g., in *Evening Star*, October 19, 1915, 2; *Zgoda* (Chicago), December 9, 1915; *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 21, 1915.

the image published in the *Dispatch* featuring a woman with a pistol that had been published in the German and Austrian *Illustrirte Zeitung*. The context of the image had been to depict the Serbs as using irregular combatants deceiving and ambushing the Austrian troops who had hence all the right to retaliate. John turned that message around. If it was an attempt to divert attention from the antiwar ad, it backfired badly. The “women fighters” speech alerted a powerful public figure to attack him heavily for being a German supporter because of John’s signature on a petition against U.S. weapons to be sent to the Allies and calling him “a bogus Serbian leader” on the pages of the *New York Times*. The attacker was Mihajlo Pupin, a doctor, inventor, and one of the two most prominent American Serbs of the time.<sup>43</sup> John responded to Pupin’s attacks in the same newspaper by accusing Pupin of actually being Hungarian,



**Figure 9** | *The fully illustrated version of John’s account featured a fake photograph; the girl has machine-gun ammunition slung around her shoulder, which would have been useless with the rifle: “Women’s Bayoneted Bodies in the Servian Trenches.” Richmond Times-Dispatch. November 21, 1915.*

43. *New York Times*, October 23, 1915, 10, <https://tinyurl.com/PupinLetter>.

by claiming that he had withdrawn his “signature at the time when my appeal was published,” and with a Wilson quote, saying “I am an unhyphenated American citizen.” John also pointed out that he had never “claimed the title of Serbian leader in America. That, however, is repeatedly annexed to my name by the Serbian public and by the American press.”<sup>44</sup>

William Hale Thompson, better known as “Big Bill,” was mayor when John Palandech was most active politically. Thompson was in office twice, from 1915 to 1923 and from 1927 to 1931, and his tenure is the most controversial of a Chicago mayor. On one hand, Thompson openly collaborated with organized crime; his administration has been described as most corrupt. On the other hand, some social works and reforms were initiated under him, such as the city’s public library system. Thompson was one of the most well-known and most efficient “machine politicians.” And his public relations style was extreme. This may have also influenced John Palandech. Thompson took a special stance concerning the news from the European war. He proposed a “neutral” policy, referring to Chicago as the third-largest German city in the world. Obviously, he feared for votes from immigrants from the Central Powers countries. This enraged many immigrant leaders from these countries who favored U.S. engagement on their side.<sup>45</sup>

In May 1915 three European war events put Central and Eastern European immigrants in the United States on alert. On May 3, 1915, Italy officially dissolved its Triple Alliance with Austria-Hungary and Germany; it declared war twenty days later. This shifted the military balance in favor of the Allies, news that was warmly greeted by many Slavic immigrants in America. But it also meant that Italy now was more likely than ever before to occupy and swallow Dalmatia, including the Cattaro Bay. On May 7, 1915, a German U-boat torpedoed and sank the British ocean liner *Lusitania*, killing 1,198 passengers and crew. This event massively influenced U.S. public opinion in favor of the Allies and caused President Wilson to address three notes to the German leadership, the last of which included the warning that the United States would regard any subsequent sinkings as “deliberately unfriendly.”<sup>46</sup> During May and June the Austro-Hungarian troops, aided by their German ally, achieved a major victory

44. “Mr. Palandech and Serbia.” Another propaganda activity John mentioned in a letter in passing. At several points before, seven-year-old Vasiljka must have presented some sort of songs or maybe poems with a patriotic, probably pro-Serb content, which John called her “declamations.” Letter, May 31, 1919, The Palandech, John R. Papers, Immigration History Research Center Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis (henceforth cited as Palandech Papers).

45. Cf. Douglas Bukowski, *Big Bill Thompson, Chicago, and the Politics of Image* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1998).

46. *Hartford Herald*, August 8, 1915, 1.

on the Eastern Front. The so-called Gorlice–Tarnów breakthrough not only returned Galicia to Austria but also brought large Russian territories under the Central Powers' occupation. It was also a warning for Romania not to follow Italy's example and it remained neutral. This made the situation for Serbia more volatile again.<sup>47</sup>

The diplomatic situation escalated alongside the military situation. On September 5, 1915, the Austro-Hungarian ambassador Konstantin Dumba admitted to having conspired in a letter to hamper U.S. weapons and ammunition supply for the Allies. On September 9 the U.S. government demanded his recall to Austria-Hungary.<sup>48</sup> Dumba had also confided his sentiments against the monarchy's Slavic population in the same letter. John spoke "on behalf of the Serbs" at a meeting held in the Pilsen Auditorium, September 12, 1915, where Chicago Slavs, mostly Czechs and Slovaks, protested the insults the Austro-Hungarian ambassador to Washington had made against them. He said:

Dr. Dumba inflicted upon the Bohemian and Slavic people when he claimed that they are uneducated, read nothing, and may be enlisted for Austria's ends with mere promises, while the German people are intelligent, discuss all current events, and are therefore also friendly toward Austria's objectives. . . . The historic truth is that the Austrian government, . . . is the one to inaugurate this world-wide slaughter of humanity.<sup>49</sup>

Two weeks later, Dumba, recalled to Vienna, sailed home.<sup>50</sup>

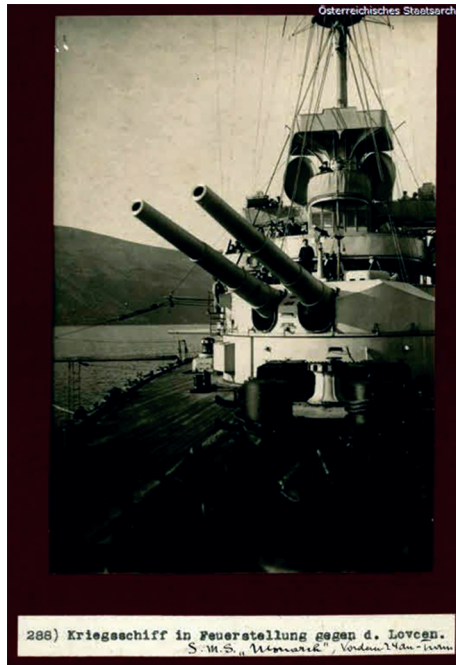
The war on European battlefields raged on. The Balkan front was reactivated in fall 1915. Bulgaria had reached a secret pact with Germany in September. In October the Central Powers attacked and occupied Serbia. The king, the government, the administration, and the remaining troops went on a long and suicidal flight over the Albanian mountains. The civilian population was stricken by a tuberculosis epidemic. Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria installed military governments and divided Serbia's territory. Potential opponents were interned in camps, which affected most Serb males of military age. Many died

47. On the other hand, this development made the plans developed in Vienna for a military dictatorship superfluous. Rauchensteiner, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 323–24.

48. *New York Times*, September 6, 1915; "American Note to Austria-Hungary Requesting Recall of Ambassador Dumba," *New York Times*, September 10, 1915.

49. "Chicago Slavs Protest Reject Dumba's Insult," *Denní Hlasatel*, September 13, 1915, [http://flps.newberry.org/article/5418478\\_8\\_0499/](http://flps.newberry.org/article/5418478_8_0499/).

50. *New York Times*, September 28 and October 6, 1915. See also William D. Godsey, *Aristocratic Redoubt: The Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office on the Eve of the First World War* (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 1999), 86.



**Figure 10** | *The SMS Monarch in firing position against Mount Lovćen, 1916–1918.* Photograph, Bildersammlung 1. Weltkrieg, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Kriegsarchiv.

there of diseases. Serbia was the country with the greatest population losses during World War I.<sup>51</sup> In January 1916 Austria-Hungary launched a campaign against Montenegro. Mount Lovćen was taken, then the Montenegrin capital of Cetinje, and later Albania (from where the remainders of the Serb government and army had embarked for the isle of Corfu in the last moment). An Austrian military government reigned there from March 1916 on.

In 1916 John was busy intensifying ethnic and interethnic campaigning for supporting the Allied side in the European war. He organized so-called Serbian walks, evenings with VIPs, for instance, a Slavic society meeting in March under the aegis of the Serbian Committee presided over by Palandech, with international celebrity and suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst and diplomats, publishers, and bankers, finishing with the Polish national anthem.<sup>52</sup> There was

51. Andrej Mitrović, *Serbia's Great War, 1914–1918* (London: Hurst and Company, 2007).

52. The attendants were Samuel John Duncan Clark (*Chicago Evening Post*); N. L. Piotrowsky (*Chicago Herald*); Ceda Ilijatowicz, former ambassador of Serbia to Great Britain; Czech banker Jakób Stepina; and Edgar Léon. *Dziennik Chicagoski*, March 27, 1916,

a big Independence Day celebration together with several celebrities in praise of President Wilson, where Theodore Roosevelt spoke and Edmund J. James gave a speech on “Bury the Hyphen,” echoing a debate by Wilson (and Roosevelt) on immigrant identity and loyalty to the American nation.<sup>53</sup> This aroused the antipathy of the Swedish immigrant newspaper *Svenska Kuriren*, which displayed a sense of ethnocultural supremacism over the second-wave immigrants whom the author deemed inferior. He called the Committee for the Promotion of Loyalty to the United States, which had organized the event, “a mystic association” and exclaimed that “those nationalities as represented by these gentlemen, . . . with their Bohemian and Polish names, . . . we recognize no solidarity or common ties.”<sup>54</sup> John also campaigned on social issues in 1916, proposing a network of support for immigrant workers.<sup>55</sup>

John engaged in various charity programs, also without ethnic label, and increased his visibility to a wider audience that included “old-stock” Chicagoans. An especially prominent one was the Christmas ship campaign in December. This involved a ship on the Chicago River with Christmas decorations that brought presents in exchange for donations for the needy, allegedly a tradition based on the work of timber rafters, made popular by captain Herman Schueneman who sold the trees directly from his schooner by the Clark Street Bridge, and by book author Lilian Bell. Palandech was quoted as having promised full support by his newspapers because it was “the greatest thing a newspaper has ever organized.”<sup>56</sup> John recurrently appeared in a “non-hyphenated” public and continued doing so for his whole life. Banquets, receptions, and charity events were part of his professional life. By reporting on them, John multiplied the reverberation of these appearances.<sup>57</sup>

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<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045747/1916-03-27/ed-1/seq-8/>. All references to *Dziennik Chicagoski* come from Chronicling America.

53. *Dziennik Chicagoski*, June 13, 1916, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045747/1916-06-13/ed-1/seq-5/>.

54. “The New Americanism (Editorial),” *Svenska Kuriren*, June 22, 1916, [https://flps.newberry.org/article/5423404\\_2\\_0244](https://flps.newberry.org/article/5423404_2_0244).

55. “Notatki Reportera,” *Dziennik Chicagoski*, July 26, 1916, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045747/1916-07-26/ed-1/seq-2/>.

56. Lilian Bell, *The Story of the Christmas Ship* (Chicago: Rand, McNally, 1915), 211, <http://archive.org/details/storyofchristmasoobell>.

57. There were, for instance, the banquet with Lithuanian Societies at the Sherman Hotel on August 30, 1913, a banquet of the Bohemian-American “Jan Hus” Masonic lodge at the La Salle Hotel on October 11, 1915, or a luncheon organized by the Chicago Association of Commerce for representatives of the foreign language press at the Palmer House Hotel on July 25, 1916, and so forth: untitled article, *Lietuva*, September 5, 1913, [https://flps.newberry.org/article/4223970\\_4\\_0616/](https://flps.newberry.org/article/4223970_4_0616/); “A Masonic Banquet,” *Denni Hlasatel*, October 12, 1915, [https://flps.newberry.org/article/5418478\\_7\\_0342/](https://flps.newberry.org/article/5418478_7_0342/); “Notatki Reportera,” July 26, 1916. Another



**Figure 11** | *Elsie Schuenemann, the original captain's daughter, standing on the Christmas Ship, near Clark Street Bridge on the Chicago River, December 6, 1915. Photograph. Chicago History Museum.*

In April 1917 the United States entered the European war but initially did not declare war on Austria-Hungary. In order to finance the war, the first Liberty Loan was issued in April 1917. John was on the Liberty Loan committee, part of an immigrant section of the committee with other foreign-language groups' representatives, including future mayor Anton J. Cermak. John's involvement in this body signals once more that he had achieved status as a U.S. stakeholder for the general public.<sup>58</sup> On December 7, 1917, the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister, Count Ottokar Czernin, remarked that the declaration of war "will be bad for Austro-Hungarians in America, but will not influence the results of the war."<sup>59</sup> He would be proven wrong. After three years of World War I, the entry of the United States solved John's political dilemma. Now his homeland patriotism and his U.S. patriotism aligned well. In this situation, John launched his political career, maybe in a golden moment. He accompanied this new engagement with an intensified effort to "dehyphenate" himself.

With the formal entry of the United States in the Great War, the immigrant organizations in favor of the European allies gained the upper hand. The AAFLN published newspaper ads calling on "Americans of foreign birth"

example was from 1919: "Banket Dywizyi Obcojęzycznej w Hotelu La Salle," May 29, 1919, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045747/1919-05-29/ed-1/seq-8/>.

58. *Saloniki-Greek Press*, March 16, 1918.

59. James Brown Scott, "War Between Austria-Hungary and the United States," *American Journal of International Law* 12, no. 1 (1918): 165, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2187624>.



to sign up for Liberty Bonds.<sup>60</sup> The prowar organizations launched a kind of urban transnational politics by officially inviting representatives of France, Belgium, and Serbia to Chicago and giving them a political reception of city officials. The invitation of Belgians had a special symbolical weight as Belgium and Serbia were the two countries that had first been attacked by the Axis and images of war atrocities and popular resistance there had gone around the world. On April 26, in a special city hall session, an invitation was extended to French visitors in 1918, and John was on the committee again. The background of this invitation was that Mayor Thompson had questioned the relevance of a French delegation by calling Chicago “the sixth largest German city in the world . . . the second largest Bohemian, the second largest Swedish, the second largest Norwegian and the second largest Polish.” The remark on the German inhabitants had been taken up by newspapers across the States and the loyalty of the city’s inhabitants (and of its mayor) had been questioned. Therefore, the city council wanted to correct this impression, “proving” Chicago’s loyalty by expressly inviting a French delegation to the city.<sup>61</sup>

John continued to campaign on the Serbian issue across ethnic organizations, working together with Czech and Ukrainian organizations and using the foreign-language editors’ connection.<sup>62</sup> Judging from these efforts and his public appearances John was very prowar, but he did not go to the European battlegrounds. In 1919 he claimed that he had enlisted at the beginning, by which he probably meant the beginning of the U.S. engagement in 1917 and not the actual beginning of the war. A draft registration card dated September 1918 is the only official documentation, casting doubt that John enlisted as a volunteer in 1917. When the Army shifted the upper age range of draftees from 31 to 45, John was forty-five, which explains the registration, but he was not drafted, either because of his importance as a publisher or because the war was nearly

60. See the section “Whose War Bonds to Buy in WWI?” in Annemarie Steidl, Wladimir Fischer, and James Oberly, *From a Multiethnic Empire to a Nation of Nations: Austro-Hungarian Migrants in the US, 1870–1940*, *Transatlantica* 11 (Innsbruck: Studien-Verlag, 2017), 100–105.

61. *Proceedings of the City Council of the City of Chicago*, 1918, *Chicago Daily News National Almanac for 1918*, 570.

62. “Conference of Foreign Language Representatives for the Sale of Liberty Loan Bonds,” *Saloniki-Greek Press*, March 16, 1918, [https://flps.newberry.org/article/5422062\\_2\\_0764](https://flps.newberry.org/article/5422062_2_0764); “For Liberty Bond Sales Big Meeting of the Czech Campaign Division,” *Denní Hlasatel*, March 14, 1918, [https://flps.newberry.org/article/5418478\\_2\\_0620](https://flps.newberry.org/article/5418478_2_0620); “Thousands at Ukrainian Mass Meeting for Union of Slavs J. F. Smulski Speaks for Poles,” *Dziennik Związkowy*, May 31, 1918, [https://flps.newberry.org/article/5423968\\_4\\_0246/](https://flps.newberry.org/article/5423968_4_0246/).



Ask for a Republican Ballot on  
Sept. 11th, and  
**Vote for**  
**John R. Palandech**

---

Regular Republican Candidate  
on  
LOYALIST PLATFORM  
For a Member of the Board of  
**County**  
**Commissioners**

Primary Day, Wednesday,  
Sept. 11th, 1918.

Figure 12 | Advertisement in the Slovene Chicago newspaper Glas svobode, September 6, 1918.

over in September.<sup>63</sup> Unlike for other men, the war did not pose a serious threat to John's health or life. From August to September 1918, John launched his first documented campaign for public office, as one of the Republican candidates for the Cook County board.<sup>64</sup> This was the beginning of a many years long involvement with the Republican Party, and of an even longer participation in Cook County and Illinois politics.

In late 1917 and 1918 the European war took several new dramatic shifts. In November the Bolsheviks took over power in Russia's capital, Petrograd, and brought large parts of the country and the army under their control. On January 8, 1918, Wilson made his Fourteen Points public, making the self-determination of nations a prerequisite for peace. A mass strike movement in Austria-Hungary gained momentum and became increasingly political. They wanted bread, more democracy, and peace. The monarchy was at a breaking point. Only the retreat of the strike leaders prevented an open coup by the military.<sup>65</sup> In March, the peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Russia, promised to free large grain reserves for the starved Austrian population. It was an illusion; the strike movements sprang up again in June and the Army started dissolving in October.

63. John Whiteclay Chambers, *The Oxford Companion to American Military History* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 181, 237.

64. In this Lithuanian publication, John's candidacy was announced especially emphasizing his (alleged) being a "darbininkas," a workman or laborer. "John R. Palandech," *Draugas*, September 11, 1918, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045087/1918-09-11/ed-1/seq-4/>.

65. Arnold Suppan, Horst Haselsteiner, and Richard G. Plaschka, *Innere Front: Militärassistenten, Widerstand und Umsturz in der Donaumonarchie 1918* (Wien: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1974), 1: 159–66.

The unbearable situation of the empire's inhabitants and soldiers also showed in John's homeland. On February 1, 1918, a mutiny had broken out among the Austro-Hungarian battle fleet in the Bay of Cattaro. They demanded immediate peace talks as proposed by the Bolshevik government, no annexations, a true response to President Wilson's Fourteen Points, more democracy, and better work conditions and food supply plus no censorship of letters. The mutiny was crushed, 800 seamen were transferred elsewhere, and four men—three South-Slavs and one Czech—were executed.<sup>66</sup>

It appears that John did not contact his family during the entire war. In early March of 1919 a request of the Palandech family was telegraphed to the Paris station of the *Chicago Tribune*, "to locate and assist the Palandech family in Dalmatia." Thomas Stuart Ryan, the reporter who was sent out, found them in May 1919 in a remote village dubbed "Bablunci" in the Bay of Cattaro after "a long hike over the hills." He left them with food as they refused to accept money. *Tribune* journalist Spearman Lewis reported that "Mr. Palandech was overjoyed when told of the above cable at 3 o'clock this morning. 'That's fine,' he said." This was front page news.<sup>67</sup> John went down in the maybe short-lived history of the time as the Yugoslav who had lost and found his family through the tragic war. He knew how to stage himself as a main character in such a human-interest story. He could count on parts of the public already being aware of him, because he had been building up a reputation as Serb and Croat foreign-language publisher for several years and used this role as an "immigrant leader" or "chief," as the contemporary expressions were, building upon his "expertise" as a migrant from the respective European region, to pose as a consul of Serbia, which he was not and never would be. John would carry on this tactic after the war and expand it, yet in a radically different international constellation.

After the war, the AAFLN came under investigation by a House committee, heightening the rivalry between Palandech and Croatian-American immigrant leader Frank Zotti. The committee's main target was the founder of the AAFLN, Louis Hammerling. Greek newspaper editor Peter Lambros was the AAFLN president in 1918. Investigators suspected that alcohol dealers and producers had politically influenced the readers of foreign-language newspapers toward their business interests and that possibly there were German interests behind the alcohol interests.<sup>68</sup> The investigation conflated a patriotic argument with

66. Rauchensteiner, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 923–24.

67. Spearman Lewis, "Find Family of Palandech in Dalmatia," *Chicago Tribune*, May 15, 1919, 1.

68. *A Menace to Americanization* (New York: Narodni List, 1919), <https://ia600502.us.archive.org/2/items/menacetoamericanoohamm/menacetoamericanoohamm.pdf>; Hudson and Boyajy, "The Rise and Fall of an Ethnic Advocate and American Huckster."

the prohibition issue and anti-immigrant sentiment. Although Palandech was not likely a supporter of Germany, one of his major competitors, Frank Zotti, publisher of immigrant newspapers and also a native of the Bay of Cattaro, tried to attach such a negative label to him. Zotti's newspaper published a book with the transcripts of the House hearing concerning especially his competitors, including the Palandech papers. Zotti had much in common with Palandech, but there was a series of important differences, too. They were from the same region, but Zotti was Catholic and operated in the Croatian-speaking U.S. migrant networks. Both sold steam tickets, but Zotti owned a steamship for some time and ran a bank. Both used a fraternal society for their purposes for a time but while Palandech abandoned it, Zotti was ousted. Both were newspaper publishers, but Zotti's papers were more influential and appeared daily. Zotti was called "King of the Croats," but he disappeared after his bankruptcy in 1908.<sup>69</sup> Palandech persevered.

Interethnic cooperation came easy to John Palandech and it developed into one of his prime business strategies. This paid off especially during and after the war. The outcome of the war was very favorable to John's interests and he would exploit that.

### Establishment (After World War I)

In the years after the Great War, the world John Palandech had come from was changing profoundly. The two empires he had lived in, Ottoman and Habsburg, dissolved. The Dual Monarchy was divided into six mostly new and mostly republican states. Cattaro was now Kotor. It became part of Montenegro, which in turn became part of the newly founded Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes under the Serbian king Petar Karadjordjević. The time around World War I was also a watershed for U.S. immigrants. Increasing political pressure in discourse and legislation was put from the 1870s on Asians, then from the 1890s on Southern and Eastern European migrants, mixed with racist elements. In the early 1920s the gates began to close for migrants from former Austria-Hungary with the Emergency Quota Act of 1921. It limited the number of immigrants per year from any country to 3 percent of those already in the United States from that country in 1910. The National Origins formula of the Immigration Act of 1924 made it even harder for Eastern and Southern Europeans. Between 1925 and 1927 the quota for Czechoslovakia was 3,073 and for Hungary it was as low as 473, as compared to, for example, 28,567 for the Irish Free State. From

69. Frances Kralic Curran, "Ethnic Entrepreneur: Frank Zotti (1872-1947): A Croatian Immigrant Success Story," *Migracijske Teme* 5, no. 1 (1989): 59-66, <https://hrcaj.srce.hr/file/189000>.

Yugoslavia, the country John's relatives now belonged to, 671 persons were to be admitted annually.<sup>70</sup>

In this situation, it was getting harder for immigrants to reunite with their families, to find a partner of the same language, and to keep ethnic national projects going. Especially for immigrant working class and left-wing organizations, the Red Scare policies during and after World War I were intimidating. During the war, a network of undercover investigators had been established to monitor immigrants and labor activists, accompanied by Americanization propaganda.<sup>71</sup> During the Palmer Raids of 1920, Italian, Eastern European, and other labor activists were targeted, including in Chicago.<sup>72</sup> Despite all the migrants' support for the U.S. war effort, it was a hard time for them in the 1920s.

In the Prohibition era from 1919 to 1933, Chicago's immigrant communities again played a special role. Even before World War I, they had organized large demonstrations against prohibition. After the amendment passed, Anton Cermak, who had sat on the Liberty Loan Committee with John and had spoken at prowar rallies, and who was both an ethnic leader from Austria-Hungary and the leader of the Chicago Democrats, continued to lead a campaign started before the war to legalize lighter alcoholic beverages. In the election of 1922, the same in which John was re-elected as a Republican representative, Cermak became Cook County commissioner after a campaign specifically mobilizing immigrants to participate in the elections.<sup>73</sup> Non-Protestant immigrants were especially opposed to the Prohibition. Austro-Hungarian immigrants were prominent in alcohol production and distribution.

Although they belonged to competing political parties at that time, John and Cermak were jointly seen on many public occasions as ethnic leaders. Cermak had formed a power base among the Chicago Democrats based on immigrant support. He did not try to hide his accent or deny his roots as a "Bohunk" and former mine worker. He exhibited a consistent willingness to cooperate across ethnic boundaries, which he often underlined by acknowledging leaders of other ethnicities, as when he backed county judge Edmund K. Jarecki in 1926 and supported Henry Horner's run for governor. Such gestures made Cermak

70. *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1929), 100. See also: Jon Gjerde, *Major Problems in American Immigration and Ethnic History: Documents and Essays*, Major Problems in American History Series (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), 307–41.

71. Carl H. Chrislock, *Watchdog of Loyalty: The Minnesota Commission of Public Safety During World War I* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1991).

72. See Nick Shepley, *The Palmer Raids and the Red Scare, 1918–1920: Justice and Liberty for All* (Andrews UK Limited, 2015).

73. Alex Gottfried, *Boss Cermak of Chicago: A Study of Political Leadership* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962), 111–17.

popular with the large immigrant electorate of Chicago. This was especially true for migrants from the former Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>74</sup>

John put renewed interest in transatlantic connections after the war. He mentioned later in his life that he had crossed the Atlantic “some forty or more times.”<sup>75</sup> We don’t know when John re-established contact with the homeland family for the first time after his migration to the United States. We can speculate that he likely visited Europe before 1914, though few details are available. We can also speculate that he had written at least some short letters. From other migrant letter collections, we know that many migrants corresponded with greater frequency in the earlier years of their migration. If John wrote home or received replies, he failed to keep the letters. Maybe he started collecting them in 1919 because in the four-year communication and information quarantine he had learned to appreciate them more. Or maybe he had concentrated on his own life in the states and his postwar letters, triggered by the war experience, were the first he had ever sent to his family. What is for certain is that the 1919 letter that is kept at the IHRC Archives was the first after a long time during which John must have feared the worst for his parents and siblings. With his letters of 1919/1920, John established a new persona: the homeland-oriented family man. From then on there is documented interest of his in the well-being of the Bay of Kotor Palandechs, providing them with help and advice and in crafting positive images of himself in the minds of the rediscovered family members. John’s homeland family management had begun (or at least its documented part).

The letter of May 1, 1919, was special, the first after a long time. John had to establish a renewed relationship. First he expressed his relief to his family members that he had found them again. But amid this joy he also learned from his youngest brother that their father had died during the war after long suffering. Otherwise the letter is very similar to the ones that followed as the families resumed their correspondence across the Atlantic. It established a pattern of topics that over time varied, and was added to, but mainly stayed the same. The pattern was that John (1) apologized for not having written, (2) managed the mail communication by writing about which letters he had received when and which he had sent himself and when, (3) boasted his achievements in the United States, (4) gave a report on the health of the U.S. family members and

74. Edward R. Kantowicz, *Polish-American Politics in Chicago, 1880–1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 198; Bukowski, *Big Bill Thompson*, 232–34.

75. It was at a 1939 public speech that John Palandech made this claim. *Palandech’s Newspapers and American Yugoslav Radio. 35th Anniversary Booklet. Sunday, October 8th, 1939. Croatian National Hall* ([Chicago]: [Palandech’s Pub. House], 1939), 3 (hereafter 35th Anniversary Booklet).

himself, and (5) asked for a financial report and offered help. One thing he did in this 1919 letter but did not repeat very often was to ask for one brother to migrate to the United States, too. Louis (Luka) immigrated in 1921.<sup>76</sup>

Judging by the IHRC collection (assuming that it contains all letters John sent from 1919 on), his enthusiasm for correspondence rather quickly cooled, with another dry spell of three years. His letter of February 20, 1920, was John's last direct communication with his mother, Paraskevi. Aside from the usual topics, John made a special yet classic family management move: he proposed that his youngest brother marry as soon as possible. This was not (or not only) meant to enrich Joko's love life, but to ensure familial support work for their mother. John explicitly pointed out that a daughter-in-law would be valuable household and healthcare support for Paraskevi.<sup>77</sup> But if John's letter-writing lapsed again, he seems to have compensated for it in personal visits.

It was also in 1920 that John for the first time brought his family to the homeland, which was now called Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. It may or may not have been his first time back. Either way, after the hiatus of the war, the lost son had returned, with wife and children as well, if only for a limited time. The ship manifesto of the SS *Argentina*, which returned to America from Trieste on September 21, 1921, had registered next to the names John R. Palandech and his wife, Catherine, also "Katerina" and "Veronika," then aged thirteen and nine. For John's wife and daughters it must have been an unusual experience. Raised in "the most modern town in the world," they came to the birthplace of their husband/father, which was then still a place of hand-worked agriculture and rural Balkan customs. The contrast between Chicago, with its metropolitan slums and Hunkietowns next to high-rise buildings, and the Bay of Kotor could not have been greater.

We do not know how Catherine reacted and whether the beauties of the coastal landscapes of the Adriatic Sea and the Dinaric Mountains overwhelmed any of the alienation. From later communications we know that she grew tired of the social obligations that were involved when her husband paraded through his homeland family's realms.<sup>78</sup> This kind of homeland tourism made John a pioneer again, as it was not yet a wider-spread practice for migrants from former Austria-Hungary to visit their homeland frequently.

John had not been entirely without family contacts before returning to Kotor. Djuro, known in America as George, John's younger brother, had immigrated to the United States in 1903. In 1910 he lived in John's house. He married Rose

76. "Louis Palandech, United States Census, 1930," FamilySearch, /ark:/61903/1:1:XSLY-29H.

77. Letter, February 20, 1920, Palandech Papers.

78. Letter, July 5, 1939, Palandech Papers; 35th Anniversary Booklet.

Kalugjerovich, who had immigrated from Serbia in 1912. He spent some time helping John with editing the *United Serbians*. He was drafted in 1917, when he was a truck driver in New Mexico. George and Rose had a son, George Jr., in 1922 and a daughter, Xenia, in 1916.<sup>79</sup> In June 1920 George wrote a letter that contains some information otherwise unattainable. He reported vividly to his family on his bad health. George also depicted his desolate finances but boldly sent money anyway. This might have been an excuse for not sending more. But it might also have to be seen in context of the 1920/1921 recession.<sup>80</sup> John, on the other hand, did not report such problems in the same period and later decided to help his younger brother.

In the early 1920s John more and more took on the role of the eldest son of the family in both homeland and U.S. family affairs in his interactions with his brothers and their families. They had established themselves in several American cities. The recovered homeland family connection was a challenge for John's wife and daughters. There were probably not many U.S. women who traveled to Yugoslavia at that time.

Even as John deepened his connections abroad, he continued to become more deeply implanted in Chicago politics, society, and business circles. On April 11, 1921, the primaries for the county commissioner elections began. In this election, two otherwise competing Republican formations, the Deneen ticket and the Brundage ticket, worked together in order to have a strong candidacy for the upcoming elections which were predicted to be a tight race.<sup>81</sup> John ran a robust advertising campaign for his candidacy. He also used his own newspapers.

79. "New York, New York Passenger and Crew Lists, 1909, 1925-1957," FamilySearch, /ark:/61903/1:1:2H4H-MX1.

80. George Palandech, letter, June 1920, Palandech Papers.

81. Brundage, Deneen, and Crowe were Republican factions in Chicago named after their respective leaders; see, e.g., John M. Allswang, *A House for All Peoples: Ethnic Politics in Chicago 1890-1936* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 150. John Palandech was featured in these coverages of the Deneen and Brundage campaigns in the black Chicago newspaper *The Broad Ax*: "The Crowe-Brundage Combination Won Out at the Primaries Tuesday," *The Broad Ax*, August 10, 1918, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024055/1918-08-10/ed-1/seq-1/>; "The Big Democratic Politicians Are Still Fighting for Who Lasts the Longest," February 18, 1922, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024055/1922-02-18/ed-1/seq-1/>. See also "Republican Joint Leadership Beats Thompson and Deneen Men in Primary Fight for Nomination of County Ticket," *Chicago Eagle*, April 15, 1922, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84025828/1922-04-15/ed-1/seq-1/>; "Deneen Men Endorse Republican Ticket," *Chicago Eagle*, May 27, 1922, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84025828/1922-05-27/ed-1/seq-1/>.



*Jugoslavia* appeared with an ad that read “Vote for Mr. Palandech.”<sup>82</sup> *Ujedinjeno Srbstvo* carried an ad that read “Among candidates in coming primaries April 11th, on the Republican ticket for County Commissioner, of whom will be ten elected, you will find our editor Mr. Ivan R. Palandech. Vote for him if you vote the Republican Ticket.”<sup>83</sup>



**Figure 13** | *The La Salle Hotel in 1910*. Photograph: chicagology.com.

In February 1922 John ran again for a Cook County commissioner’s seat for the Brundage list. The candidates in the elections were made public in the ethnic press, too.<sup>84</sup> The elections for county commission, took place November 7–6, 1922. On the same republican ticket was a candidate born in Southern Italy (probably Naples) with a similar profile as John: he had some

82. “1921 Local Elections Mr. Palandech a Candidate,” *Jugoslavia*, March 25, 1921, Croatian FLPS, [http://flps.newberry.org/article/5420779\\_2\\_0084/](http://flps.newberry.org/article/5420779_2_0084/).

83. “Candidate in Primaries,” *Ujedinjeno Srbstvo*, n.d., FLPS, [http://flps.newberry.org/article/5423966\\_0056/](http://flps.newberry.org/article/5423966_0056/).

84. *The Broad Ax* (Salt Lake City, UT), February 18, 1922, *Chronicling America*, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024055/1922-02-18/ed-1/seq-1/>; *Dziennik Chicagoski*, February 9, 1922, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045747/1922-02-09/ed-1/seq-1/>.

education and ran restaurants in Chicago. The Democrats had a florist from Bohemia on their list, who had already run for the sheriff's office. Both tickets included women, the Democratic one two prominent suffragettes as the Woman's City Club pointed out in its bulletin. It also noted that John was "operating a number of lunch rooms in the loop district."<sup>85</sup> Apparently, John was still running his restaurants or lunch rooms. They might have been convenient when campaigning. This was the same election, in which the "wet" Democrat Anton Cermak mobilized thus far inactive immigrant voters and prevailed. He seems to have appealed to more immigrants than John.<sup>86</sup>

With higher social standing and public office came ever more public exposure. A special honor was bestowed upon John when he was invited to speak at the Medill School, a high-profile school of journalism in Chicago, in his function as AAFLN president, which he must have become between 1918 and 1922.<sup>87</sup> In his function as county commissioner, John attended the 62nd anniversary of the first Republican national convention in Chicago, celebrated with a banquet at the La Salle Hotel with the editors and the publishers of foreign-language newspapers. Peter Lambros, editor of the *Greek Star*, was toastmaster; Charles S. Peterson, Republican candidate for president of the county board, was the guest of honor. Others present were former governor Deneen, State's Attorney Crowe, County Judge Righeimer, Attorney General Brundage, Miss Harriet Vittum, and Mrs. O. Myrhman.<sup>88</sup> The La Salle Hotel, at the corner of La Salle and Madison, called itself "Chicago's Finest Hotel" and was one of the most extravagant in early twentieth-century Chicago. It was twenty-two stories high and had grand ballrooms and luxury restaurants, resembling the Hotel Astor in New York City. For a long time, the Republican Party used the hotel as a headquarters including the luxurious Blue Fountain Room.<sup>89</sup> John attended many meetings and banquets there.

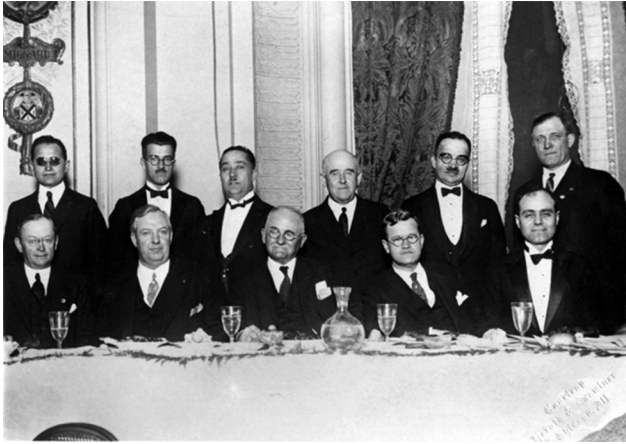
85. *Woman's City Club Bulletin*, vol. 12 (Chicago, 1922), 152, <http://archive.org/details/womancityclubbu11219221923woma>.

86. Cermak advertised in some ethnic newspapers that also carried John's ads: "[Election Ad for Anton Cermak]," *Draugas*, November 4, 1922, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045087/1922-11-04/ed-1/seq-4/>.

87. "Z Otwarcia Wydziału Dziennikarskiego w Uniwersytecie N. W.," *Dziennik Chicagoski*, October 2, 1922, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045747/1922-10-02/ed-1/seq-2/>.

88. "Editors Observe G. O. P. Anniversary," *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, May 18, 1922, [https://flps.newberry.org/article/5422062\\_2\\_0508/](https://flps.newberry.org/article/5422062_2_0508/).

89. "La Salle Hotel," in *Wikipedia*, September 24, 2019, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=La\\_Salle\\_Hotel&oldid=917634067](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=La_Salle_Hotel&oldid=917634067).



**Figure 14** | *Greek Republican Club of Chicago Dinner, La Salle Hotel, 1922. Standing last to the right: Peter S. Lambros. Seated to the left: Cook County court judge Edmund Jarecki and John R. Palandech.*  
Image Courtesy of the National Hellenic Museum, Chicago, Illinois.



**Figure 15** | *The room where the Republicans usually convened was named after this fountain, adorned with the “Three Graces.” Blue Fountain Room, La Salle Hotel. Post card. Special Collections. Postcard Collection of the Harvard Fine Arts Library.*

In 1923 John was again elected county commissioner; although he won with 53,915 votes, it was not a robust outcome for him. In comparison, the top result was 105,920 votes for Charles Simeon Peterson, editor of the Swedish-American newspaper *Hemlandet*, also a Republican, former city treasurer from 1927 to

1931, and future vice-president of the 1933 Chicago World's Fair.<sup>90</sup> Around that time, John brought out a motion with other foreign-language leaders against the closing of schools. The wording was much in the vein of the Progressive Era, arguing for public investment for the good and progress of the entire city or county community.<sup>91</sup> Coming from ethnic leaders, this was a demonstration of interethnic cooperation and reciprocal social-political integration at the same time.

John depended heavily on interethnic solidarity of Chicago immigrants in his political campaigns. He not only used his own South Slavic newspapers, but also advertised in other foreign-language newspapers. Most prominent among these was the Polish-American *Dziennik Chicagoski* (Chicago Daily). This medium regularly reported on events at which Palandech appeared and also carried his election ads.<sup>92</sup> The Polish voters were possibly easy to address, as many were former Habsburg subjects and Slavic language-speakers who remembered the common issues ethnic leaders had invoked during war times. More surprising might be the broad coverage, including election ads, in the Lithuanian-American Chicago newspaper *Draugas* (The Friend). The Lithuanians in Chicago were, like many of the Poles, former Romanov (Russian) subjects. The reason for supporting John despite these different backgrounds might have been shared grievances, such as that all migrants from Eastern European countries were facing since the introduction of the quota laws. Coming from the southeastern European Bocca di Cattaro/

90. *Chicago Daily News National Almanac for 1923* ([Chicago]: Chicago Daily News, 1923), 741; Henry Bengston, *On the Left in America: Memoirs of the Scandinavian-American Labor Movement* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999), 198; Cheryl R. Ganz, *The 1933 Chicago World's Fair: A Century of Progress* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 38, 49. The other nine elected commissioners were Joseph Esposito, Charles Goodnow, Tom Murray, Charles Peterson, Thomas Boyer, Myrtle Blackledge, Helen Bennett, Borger Borgerson, and Emily Dean.

91. "Against the Menace of Closing the Public Schools," *Vita Nuova*, n.d., FLPS, [http://flps.newberry.org/article/5423966\\_0041/](http://flps.newberry.org/article/5423966_0041/).

92. In this article, the *Dziennik* appealed to "all" Chicago Poles "in an important matter," to vote for Palandech: "W WAŻNEJ SPRAWIE. Do Wszystkich Polaków i Polek w Mieście Chicago," *Dziennik Chicagoski*, November 6, 1922, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045747/1922-11-06/ed-1/seq-11/>. See also the various instances in the notes above where *Dziennik Chicagoski* reported on events John Palandech was involved in, describing his role. See also similar ads in "Jan K. Palandech, Kandydat Na Komisarza Powiatowego," *Dziennik Chicagoski*, October 28, 1922, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045747/1922-10-28/ed-1/seq-16/>; "Notatki Reportera," *Dziennik Chicagoski*, September 28, 1922, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045747/1922-09-28/ed-1/seq-3/>; election ad, *Glas svobode*, October 27, 1922, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045203/1922-10-27/ed-1/seq-13/>.



**Figure 16** | *John's candidacy was advertised in several languages, including Lithuanian: "Balsuokite ir išrinkite [Vote and Elect!]." Draugas, November 6, 1922.*

Boka Kotorska, John seemed to come from and appeal to both Eastern and Southern European migrants. Some of the other candidates on his ticket were from southern Europe, another sign of his cooperative relationships. John would later work closely with the Greek publisher Peter Lambros, with whom he not only shared the regional origin in the European South but also the Orthodox religious denomination. John worked tirelessly together not only with Eastern and Southern European immigrant leaders and groups but also with Irish political actors and integrated into mainstream white, often German-American-dominated influential organizations. Problems arose, in contrast, with nativists and ethnic leaders who bought into a white-Germanic supremacist discourse, like the Swedish paper *Svenska Kuriren* that had antagonized him in 1916.

As John's political roles continued, his publishing work did, too. At the end of the war, the *United Serbians* had a circulation of 19,000. It had increased during the war by 2,500 copies or more than 13 percent. At that time, John's brother George was taking care of the *United Serbians* "next to" John. In 1919 they launched the newspaper *Jugoslavia*. The office was at 318 Canal Street.<sup>93</sup> This was at the brink of the Loop area, at the corner of West Jackson Boulevard, opposite the old Chicago Union Station, one block off the river, directly linked to their previous home address along Jackson Boulevard, and some blocks north of where the bus from their new address, 3215 Flournoy Street, ended.

The Palandechs had achieved a good standing in foreign-language publishing. After World War I, Palandech Publishing Inc. increasingly printed books

93. George Palandech, letter, August 29, 1957, Palandech Papers; Leonard and Marquis, *Who's Who in Chicago*.



**Figure 17** | Another ethnic media enterprise, *The Polish National Alliance* printshop, publishers of the “*Dziennik Zwiazkowy*” and “*Zgoda*” newspapers in the 1920s. Photograph. The Polish Museum of America.

of patriotic Serb propaganda.<sup>94</sup> John continued his series of books published in Serbo-Croatian for immigrant readers. This series featured mostly classics of South Slav literature with an emphasis on patriotic writings, such as “The Mountain Wreath,” an anti-Turkish dramatic poem by the prince-bishop of Montenegro, Petar II Petrović-Njegoš, written in 1846. This work perfectly modeled John’s new identification as a Montenegrin from Yugoslavia. By 1924 the John R. Palandech Agency, Foreign Language Newspaper Representatives had added the designation “Advertising and Publicity Service.”<sup>95</sup> It would become successful in combination with John’s political office and instrumental in obtaining financial support for his newspapers.

Meanwhile, John nurtured his transatlantic relations work. As a special stunt, John’s printing press published an English translation of the constitution of the new Serb-Croat-Slovene state.<sup>96</sup> John thereby once again posed as a natural publicist support service to the Serb-Croat-Slovene diplomatic service. He made himself a middle man between the new royal Serb-Croat-Slovene government and U.S. dignitaries. In 1922 John created a similar effect by facilitating the decoration of James F. Stepina, the American State Bank president, Czechoslovak national activist and ethnic political colleague, with an order

94. See, for instance, *Ratne pri če iz ratova 1912–1918 godine* [War tales from the wars in the years 1912–1918] (Chicago: Palandech’s Publ. House, 1919).

95. Letter, February 1920, Palandech Papers.

96. Palandech’s translation was used for instance in a book that saw fourteen editions between 1922 and 1929 in three languages by Howard Lee McBain and Lindsay Rogers, *The New Constitutions of Europe* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1922), <http://archive.org/details/newconstitutionirogegoog>.

commissioned by King Petar.<sup>97</sup> Stepina had been tough on Austria's Serbia policies in 1914 and a leader in the anti-Austrian Czech-America camp.<sup>98</sup> By and large, in the establishing phase after the Great War, John, as a public persona in Chicago, seems to have concentrated on his role as a U.S. citizen and politician but with a growing eye to his status as a man "from" and with contacts to the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom.

Republican politics for John were often at the same time ethnic politics. This was to be expected in a multi-ethnic city and in a party that vied for the votes of the immigrants. Migrants from Europe, at least, were recognized as legitimate political actors. The way the leverage of the ethnic leaders was employed, however, was patronizing and undemocratic. Immigrant leaders catered their members' votes in blocks to the two competing parties. In March 1926 the Greek-American Republican Club of Cook County gave a banquet in favor of Senator McKinley's renomination in support of President Coolidge. Peter Lambros, the previously mentioned long-standing colleague of John Palandech, was reported to have said that "there were 20,000 Greek stores in Illinois and upward of 50,000 Greek votes. Most of the Greek leaders are behind Senator McKinley, and they predict he will get the votes of practically all the Greeks in Illinois." The practices of the Democratic Party were probably not much different.<sup>99</sup>



**Figure 18** | *New City Hall building during construction, 1910.* Photograph. Chicago History Museum.

97. *Chicago Eagle*, March 25, 1922, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84025828/1922-03-25/ed-1/seq-1/>.

98. "James F. Stepina," *Czechoslovak Review*, 1923, [https://flps.newberry.org/article/5418478\\_8\\_0838](https://flps.newberry.org/article/5418478_8_0838).

99. *Chicago Daily News*, March 25, 1926; cf. Arthur Walter Thurner, "The Impact of Ethnic Groups on the Democratic Party in Chicago, 1920–1928" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1966); O'Grady, *Immigrants' Influence on Wilson's Peace Policies*.

Interethnic politics also had its limitations. John did not explicitly work together with German ethnic organizations, though he did sit together with German Americans on several committees, such as that of the Chicago Press Club. Such bows toward the German Americans did not, however, him from speaking at a Czech ceremony, where speakers rejoiced at a report from a previously bilingual Czech town that was now allegedly de-Germanized. Many of the racial-ideological and nationalist dividing lines that had existed before had intensified during the war, and were persisting. Complications aside, John managed his several personae, especially his Yugoslavian persona, the inter-ethnic manager persona, and the eminent U.S. citizen persona. Slavic-speaking inhabitants of Chicago were on the winning side and the German Americans on the retreat. This aided John in consolidating his inter-ethnic connections.

In 1923 John started new homeland projects that continued well into his later years, to erect monuments in the Boka Kotorska and to otherwise manage migrant memorial efforts. This was related to building for himself a wider scheme of self-representation at home as a remote benefactor, a remedy to the lost-eldest-son stigma. First, and perhaps most personal, John had the local priest hold a memorial service for their father.<sup>100</sup> This was a common practice of remote control in emigration. Several new relations were the result of John's new or renewed homeland activities: correspondence, frequent visits to relatives across the ocean, and an obligation to keep alive the memory of his father. John was not the lost son but the prodigal son, reconnected again. Could he consistently live up to his status as the first-born son, so many miles away from the "homeland"?

### Expansion (1920s–1930s)

John was a master in recognizing the potential of resources; where others saw just poor immigrant economic conditions, he saw ten business ideas. For many others, their immigrant background seemed like a stigma but John saw it instead as an asset as a publisher and politician. He connected his roles as family man, publisher, and politician by putting himself, and his wife and daughters, in the limelight for publicity stunts. When he or his brother returned from a visit to the homeland, he made it the headline of a public speech and of a newspaper article.<sup>101</sup> His private letters, too, served to cement the growing social role he was crafting for himself in his transatlantic family. John Palandech understood social connection better than many a sociologist. He understood cultural capital better than many a culturologist.

100. Letter, February 22, 1923, December 1925, and January 2, 1926, Palandech Papers.

101. Letters, September and November 1924, Palandech Papers.



John's letters across the Atlantic took on greater importance. They were also part of overseas travel management. Letters assured that everyone knew when and where to expect a relative. This would prove helpful in the future when something did go wrong with the ship. Meanwhile, John increasingly managed the delivery of goods to the homeland, with both his managing and the actual shipping happening by mail. The goods were not extravagant, though. John explained that he had no time except for parsimonious gifts like his old, worn morning gown, which he dedicated to his mother and commented that it would keep her warm. John also found time to remotely take care of amenities of the family home in the homeland: he suggested fixing the cistern for health reasons. He sounded very knowledgeable, maybe due to his new engagement as the water education expert on the Cook County council. Also in 1924, for the first time, we have a proof that John regulated transatlantic legal affairs concerning his family in the homeland, something he would do more and more in the future.<sup>102</sup>

In 1924 the Palandech children's native language command was a topic of transatlantic conversation for the first time. John reported that the kids spoke and understood Serbian poorly.<sup>103</sup> The fact that he mentioned this shows his interest in the upholding of cultural practices of the homeland and he emphasized its significance by reporting on it to relatives. It also shows that John, at least his homeland family man persona, resisted complete sociocultural integration, even while he enthusiastically embraced the socioeconomic aspects of his U.S. citizen persona. The phenomenon of language loss was both real for many, and contested. It was a recurrent topic in migrant identification management. Authors of migrant newspapers addressed it and reacted with English-language sections for the youth.<sup>104</sup> Mainstream sociologists of the time saw it as a sign of assimilation, which they deemed a positive development for U.S. society. The process of language loss in immigrants has been described in detail by the then-nascent disciplines of sociolinguistics and urban ethnography, for instance for Hungarian-speaking immigrants in New York City.<sup>105</sup>

102. Letters, July and November 1924, Palandech Papers.

103. Letter July 31, 1924, Palandech Papers.

104. Wladimir Fischer-Nebmaier and Annemarie Steidl, "Transatlantischer Heiratsmarkt Und Heiratspolitik von MigrantInnen Aus Österreich-Ungarn in Den USA, 1870–1930," *L'Homme. Zeitschrift Für Feministische Geschichtswissenschaft* 25, no. 1 (2014): 51–68, <http://dx.doi.org/10.25595/1176>.

105. Joshua A. Fishman, "Language Maintenance and Language Shift as Fields of Inquiry," *Linguistics* 9 (1964): 32–70; Fishman, *Hungarian Language Maintenance in the United States*, Uralic and Altaic Series 62 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966). On urban ethnography and sociolinguistics, see Harvey Jassem, Susan J. Drucker, and Gene

It even appeared in a feature film of 1941, *Ball of Fire*, with Barbara Stanwyck and Gary Cooper.

In 1925 John's homeland family management reached a new level. When he sent Christmas money in that year, he—by mail—managed its distribution like a village boss. He sent three checks of \$15 for his sisters Andja, Mara, and Ivana, and gave a detailed list of payments in dinar, 6,910 dinar altogether:

Strina Sara, Sofija, each 300	600
Tetka Joka and Mendegaj	300
Andrija Pal. "At your will"	300
Danica and child	1000
Servant Joka	500
SUM	<u>2700</u>
Christmas help for the village poor in our village or where you deem necessary as you did last year	1000
	<u>3700</u>
Wardrobe of Marina's children	1000
Aga's Anka and Neda for new clothing each 500	1000
	<u>5700</u>
For you	1210
	<u>6910</u> <sup>106</sup>

Whether this behavior was a reflex of Montenegrin customs or a pattern of a Chicago ethnic boss is hard to tell. Most probably, it was a phenomenon of both, involving also experiences of Chicago immigrants from other parts of the world.

Mail and letter writing itself was one of the most regularly addressed issues in John's correspondence, a self-referential communication act. This was not unusual, because letter writers, transatlantic ones especially, could not be sure that their last message had arrived. Therefore, the assurance "I received your letter of X.Y.19ZZ" was a handy introduction that signaled to the reader what level of information the sender had (having or not having read the previous message). In January 1926 John reported to his Babunce brother that he received Joko's letter burnt and half-destroyed.<sup>107</sup> His letters, like others, were littered with apologies for not writing more frequently.

Migrant cultural practice was again a topic in 1926 when John reported how the U.S. family was celebrating Christmas. As a confessionally mixed family, they

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Burd, eds., *Urban Communication Reader*, The Hampton Press Communication Series. Urban Communication (Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press, 2010).

106. Letter, December 14, 1925, Palandech Papers.

107. Letter, January 2, 1926, Palandech Papers.

observed it twice, once according to the Gregorian calendar for Catherine's Catholic faith, and once again according to the Julian (or Orthodox) calendar, on January 6 for his. Such a pragmatic approach can of course be found in many multiconfessional or even minority confession families, not only in North America but also in Southeastern Europe and around the world. So it was not the novelty that made John mention it but probably rather he wanted to reassure Joko that he had not forgotten the customs of the homeland. Unwittingly he had documented what might be called creolization or integration. Family news also included reports of visits paid to relatives in the United States, such as in 1926 when John described how, "in the midst of municipal elections" he could not stay with brother Sima and family in California but "we are all good and healthy. On Christmas we had gathered all together at my place, and for our [i.e. Orthodox] Christmas we are going to be together at Gjura's."<sup>108</sup>

A good deal of John's letters consisted in impression management; John wanted to let his relatives in the homeland know how important and famous he was in the United States. He did this by quite openly boasting in his letters about his celebrity, sometimes by combining an excuse for not writing with a report about his bad health and his indispensability in business and politics, with which he rationalized the former two. Sometimes he just wrote how important the people were he knew. However, John was anxious not to impress his family too much; he did not want to raise their expectations for money and presents too high. This kind of zig-zag strategy had happened for instance, when he only sent used stuff in 1924, just after boasting how important a politician he was. Sometimes, he bragged and relativized in the same paragraph of a letter.<sup>109</sup>

The Great War and anti-immigrant quotas had put an end to the easy transatlantic migration projects like the ones of John, George, and Sam Palandech, but it was not too late to have hopes, especially if one was related to a middle-class well-connected man of means like John. In January 1926 John announced his impending visit to Europe and explained the itinerary and means of transport, in this case a "slow boat directly to the Adriatic."<sup>110</sup> The visit must have taken place in summer of 1927, because on September 25, 1927, John returned from Europe arriving in Quebec with the SS *Ausonia* (Cherbourg), crossing the U.S. border at St. Albans, Vermont.<sup>111</sup> The frequency of his postwar visits shows that these

108. Letters, January 2 and 10, 1926, Palandech Papers.

109. Letters, November 29, 1924 and January 10, 1926, Palandech Papers.

110. Letters 10, January 1926, Palandech Papers.

111. "John Palandech, Immigration, September 25, 1927, United States Border Crossings from Canada to United States, 1895–1956," Database, FamilySearch, /ark:/61903/1:1:X2YJ-K3K; "John Palandech, Immigration, 1927, Vermont, St. Albans Canadian Border Crossings, 1895-1954," Database, FamilySearch, /ark:/61903/1:1:QK3B-M373.

renewed family ties seem to have been strong. In 1924 John laid out plans for family member Vasa's future, and proposed he could migrate to the United States, too, trying to manage continued chain migration management despite the caps. "I think it would be best Gjuro took [Vasa] with him," he wrote. But Vasa ended up in Germany in 1945, and by 1958 he seems to have been in Italy.<sup>112</sup> Even John could not bend the will of every relative or overcome all nativist U.S. laws.

There is not much information available on John R. Palandech in the years between 1923 and 1926. The letters from John to Joko are the best source for a view into this time of his life. In one of these letters, John wrote around Christmas 1923 that politics were "draining [his] health." This was one year before John turned fifty. It was in this year that John was again elected to the Cook County Commission. The candidate who came in first, was C. S. Petersen, a politician John would have an important project with ten years onward. In the same year, the first mayordom of "Big Bill" Thompson ended. He was followed by William E. Dever. Curiously, this is how John described the elections in a letter of 1923: "After the fail at the elections, with all other Republican candidates, about which I don't know whether I wrote you, I was offered the directorship of the foreign language press, which I took over for limited time, because I don't know whether I can physically bear such a work."<sup>113</sup>



**Figure 19** | *Clark Street, looking North from Harrison Street, 1928.*  
Photograph. Chicago History Museum.

112. Letters, 6 and June 18, 1958, Palandech Papers.

113. Letters, February 22 and 24, 1923, and September 12, 1924, Palandech Papers.

In the capital of advertising, Chicago, John expanded his business to form the Palandech Advertising Agency. By 1924 his letterhead said “John R. Palandech Agency. Foreign Language Newspaper Representatives. Advertising and Publicity Service.” The letterhead also reveals that John’s headquarters had moved from 318 Canal Street to the prestigious Rand McNally Building, a high-rise at 536 South Clark Street. Now John’s office was at the end of Harrison, which linked directly to his home address at 3215 Flournoy Street. This was in the South Loop Printing House District, where a large part of the midwestern printing industry concentrated until the 1930s and the building was designed for the heavy machinery of printshops. It was well connected through Dearborn Station and, as always with John, was close to a waterway (see figs. 22 and 23). Some years later, John was also listed in the *Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois* as a member of the Advertising Council of Chicago.<sup>114</sup> John knew how to maximize his impact by conjoining publishing, advertising, and political office.

Curiously absent from his correspondence, in 1925 John became involved in the previously mentioned water education program both politically and



Figure 20 | *The Rand McNally South Clark Street Facilities, 1930.* Newberry Library, Chicago.

114. Newton Bateman, Paul Selby, and J. Seymour Currey, *Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois: With Commemorative Biographies*, vol. 2 (Chicago: Munsell, 1929), 746–47.



**Figure 21** | *Printshop in the Rand McNally South Clark Street Facilities, 1930.* Newberry Library, Chicago.

economically. Thousands of dollars were allocated to advertise an “educational campaign Regarding Distribution of Water Consumption” in Chicago through translated ads in in twenty daily and twenty-three weekly ethnic Chicago newspapers, specifically by way of John’s advertising agency. The deal was worth \$4,800 and John was still acounty commissioner. It was passed with no ‘Nays.’<sup>115</sup> Adjusted for inflation, \$4,800.00 in 1925 is equal to \$69,706.27 in 2019.<sup>116</sup> In 1926 a similar campaign was approved by the mayor’s committee of finance in order to relay “information relating to installation of water meters in forty-five (45) foreign language publications, covering seventeen (17) different nationalities, in articles of ten (10) inches each for four (4) weeks, at a total cost not to exceed twenty-five hundred ninety-four and eighty one-hundredths (\$2,594.80) dollars,” which equals \$36,418.96 today.<sup>117</sup> Through his double involvement John was able to direct public money toward his business.

When Big Bill Thompson won reelection in 1927, he had promised to drive out the criminals from Chicago. He was defeated in 1931 by Democrat Anton Cermak. Thompson had won the 1927 elections with the often-violent support of organized crime, and in 1931 Cermak fought back. During that campaign Thompson had slurred Cermak as an immigrant, to which Cermak retorted, “I

115. *Proceedings of the City Council of the City of Chicago*, 1925, 4066.

116. Inflation calculated at <https://www.dollartimes.com/inflation/>.

117. *Journal and Proceedings of the City Council of the City of Chicago for the Council Year of 1925–1926* ([Chicago], 1926), 4728–29.



Figure 22 | *Anton J. Cermak, President of the Cook County Board of Commissioners, standing on a city street, 1926.* Photograph. Chicago History Museum.

didn't come over on the *Mayflower*, but I came over as soon as I could."<sup>118</sup> For the first time Chicago had an immigrant mayor, and one from former Austria-Hungary at that. The change to the Democrats was a historical one. When politics in Chicago turned toward the Democratic Party, John Palandech was in his mid-sixties. Would he make a turn, too?

Despite his increasing age, John did not stop at his community work or media and publishing work. In 1927 John's parish erected the first permanent Serb church in Chicago. John expanded his publishing and trading activities to break the sound barrier: John's bookshop started selling records with music from the homeland. This was mentioned in his letterhead; "Palandech's Publishing House. America's Leading Yugoslav Newspapers and Book Publishers. Phonograph Records and Book Dealers—Printers." Radio was the next logical step in John's expansion. Radio broadcasting had developed rather anarchically before the 1927 radio act. In 1923 mobsters had founded the 100-watt WWAE radio station in Joliet in the southwestern vicinity of Chicago. It later moved to Chicago's South. It was bought in 1927 by George F. Courrier, associate minister of St. James Methodist Church of Chicago, and Doris Keane

118. Bukowski, *Big Bill Thompson*, 232.

Irving, managing director of the Radio Institute of Chicago, both owners of the Hammond-Calumet broadcasting Corporation.<sup>119</sup>

In winter 1927 another Foreign Language Press banquet took place, this time together with Italian Chicagoans, and Illinois's Republican candidate for the House of Representatives, Ruth Hanna McCormick, won in 1928, later to become the first female Senate candidate for a major party. McCormick's biographer mentions the ethnic-newspaper men as a relevant factor in the election.<sup>120</sup> The Italian speakers at the banquet assured Mrs. McCormick of Italian voters' "unqualified support." McCormick was surrounded by a group in the folk costumes of "the leading racial groups of Chicago," and two Italian ladies were dressed in a gown adorned with the Italian tricolor and the royal emblem and a Roman peasant dress respectively. John, "dean of foreign journalists in our city," officiated as toastmaster.<sup>121</sup>

John had now expanded his network of memberships in mainstream society organization to a point well beyond the boundaries of the "ethnic" world. In 1929 he could report to the *Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois*, that he was an affiliate of the Chamber of Commerce and Americanization Committee member and held membership in several charitable society clubs including the YMCA, Masons, Shriners, Hamilton Club, and Advertising Club.<sup>122</sup> But the pull of homeland politics still mattered. In 1929 profound changes took place there. In the years before, parliamentary politics had been overshadowed by conflicts over the imbalance of power between the three constituent nationalities. On January 6, the new King Alexander abolished the Constitution, closed the Parliament, and introduced a personal dictatorship. He changed the name of the country to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and rearranged administrative divisions in favor of the Serb nationality.

At this time, John's offspring also entered the limelight. In 1930 Catherine Marie enrolled at the University of Illinois in Urbana, receiving a BA in liberal arts and sciences in 1934. In the next year she appeared in the student theater.

119. Peter T. Alter, "Serbs," in *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. Grossman, Keating, and Reiff, 746. Letter, February 1947, Palandech Papers; WWAE advertisement, in 35th Anniversary Booklet. "WJOB (AM)," in *Wikipedia*, November 11, 2019, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=WJOB\\_\(AM\)&oldid=925607479](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=WJOB_(AM)&oldid=925607479); *Calumet Broadcasting Corp. v. Federal Communications Commission*, 160 F.2d 285 (D.C. Cir. 1947), U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Transcript of Records 9294, 1946, [http://archive.org/details/dc\\_circ\\_1946\\_9294\\_calumet\\_broad\\_corp\\_v\\_fcc](http://archive.org/details/dc_circ_1946_9294_calumet_broad_corp_v_fcc).

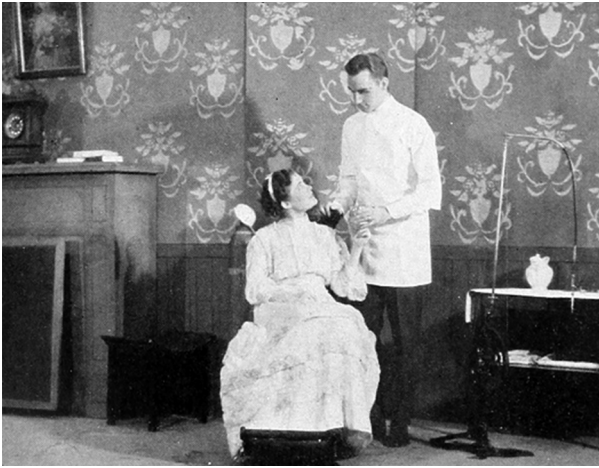
120. Kristie Miller, *Ruth Hanna McCormick* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 190.

121. "Banquet in Honor of Congresswoman Ruth Hanna McCormick," *Vita Nuova*, 1927, [https://flps.newberry.org/article/5425702\\_1\\_1308/](https://flps.newberry.org/article/5425702_1_1308/).

122. Bateman, Selby, and Currey, *Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois*, 746–47.



She performed as Gloria in a play by George Bernard Shaw, “You Never Can Tell,” about the war of the sexes.<sup>123</sup>



**Figure 23** | Catherine in G.B. Shaw’s “You Never Can Tell.” *The Illio*, v. 42, p. 282. Urbana, IL, 1935.



**Figure 24** | Catherine in 1933 as “one of the two most popular co-eds at the University of Illinois.” *Evening Star*, January 1, 1933.

Catherine Marie, we see, had become an American teenager with interests and experiences very different from her Yugoslav relatives. Her father would enforce this image in the imaginary he created with his own

123. Annual register, University of Illinois (Urbana–Champaign campus), 521; 1934 commencement program, University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign, 14; *The Illio*, 1935, 282–83.

newspapers.<sup>124</sup> The other members of the second-generation Palandechs seem to have gone in a similar direction.

The year 1933 was perhaps when John's eminent U.S. citizen persona reached the zenith of renown. This was one year before John's sixtieth birthday. His daughter Catherine had been voted one of the "most popular co-eds" at the University of Illinois and won a trip to Cuba. This was soon reported in the Sunday issue of the influential *Washington Evening Star*, with a photograph of Catherine Marie, who from now on would go by the title "popularity queen" in the press products of Palandech Publishing. John likely considered this simultaneously a family triumph and a fitting reflection of his own public persona.<sup>125</sup>

Most significantly, perhaps, John took a leading role in the 1933 Chicago World's Fair, "A Century of Progress." It counted 39 million visitors. One of the four red stars in the Chicago flag stands for this world exhibition. Maybe it was the title that inspired him to point out in his short bio that it had been the 1893 exhibition that had enamored him with the city of Chicago. John was chairman of the Yugoslav division of the committee, reaching the peak of his Yugoslav



**Figure 25** | "Yugoslav Winners in the Miss Century of Progress Contest, 1933." Kaufmann & Fabry Co., photographers. COP\_17\_0002\_00057\_001, Century of Progress World's Fair, 1933–1934 digital image collection, Special Collections, University of Illinois at Chicago.

124. "Popularity Queen Weds. Catherine Palandech-Walsh," *Ujedinjeno Srpstvo*, April 2, 1936.

125. *Evening Star Washington D.C.* January 1, 1933, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1933-01-01/ed-1/seq-60/>.



**Figure 26** | John amid a delegation from Yugoslavia visiting the future premises of the “Century of Progress” Fair, 1932.

COP\_17\_0010\_00300\_015, Century of Progress World’s Fair, 1933–1934 digital image collection, Special Collections, University of Illinois at Chicago.

persona development. He organized a Yugoslav Day with a colorful program with shows and displays of folklore and high-brow culture alike, including most prominently the sculptor Ivan Meštrović, a student of Auguste Rodin. Other Yugoslav-American celebrities on the committee included John’s former adversary Michael Pupin and, most notably, the venerated media wizard of Austro-Serb descent, Nikola Tesla, with about 3,000 Yugoslavs among 20,000 to 50,000 participants.<sup>126</sup> In September that year John organized Yugoslav Unity Day, riding on the wave of visibility.<sup>127</sup>

In 1933 Hitler came to power in Germany, a bleak development for countries in the reach of Germany like Yugoslavia. The United States did not interfere in the progressing fascism and authoritarianism in Europe. In 1935 the first U.S. neutrality law embargoed warring states and forbade U.S. citizens’ travel on ships of such states. Aggressors in Europe thus did not have to fear that the states they might attack would receive support from the United States.

In the summer of 1934 John Palandech visited the homeland again and, as was his custom, launched a series of articles in his own newspapers and in the

126. Chicago World’s Fair brochure, Palandech Papers; Peter Alter, “Serbs, Sports, and Whiteness,” in *Sports in Chicago*, ed. Elliott J. Gorn (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 122–23.

127. John presided over the Yugoslav Unity Day committee as its chairman. The committee organized a celebration with church services, a banquet at the Hamilton Club, a dance, and a concert with “artists of world-wide operatic fame,” in the presence of the “Yugoslav minister to the United States, Dr. Leonid Pitamic.”

*Chicago Daily*.<sup>128</sup> John was moving toward another expansion of his portfolio, this time to become a travel agent. In the 1930s the Palandech travel bureau advertised travel to the soon to be Yugoslav Kingdom, as an antifascist alternative to Italy.<sup>129</sup> One year earlier, a book by Louis Adamic, also a migrant from Austria-Hungary, had marked the establishment of a new migrant trend, the visiting of the homeland and its commercial organization. *The Native's Return* was an extraordinarily successful book, reflective of the nostalgic needs of many migrants from Europe in the United States. Its political message, however, was that traveling to southern Europe had become problematic because not only was Italy a fascist regime but Yugoslavia, too, a dictatorship. Adamic was a prominent figure of the American Left. His argument, the continuing effects of economic depression, and fascist activities all went counter to John's business interests.

When John turned sixty on September 23, 1934, his entire migrant generation, or cohort, as demographers would say, reached well into age. The majority of the second-wave migrants who had stayed in America were now between thirty-five and fifty-five years old. For instance, Andrew Devich, a mineworker in Buhl, Minnesota, was now thirty-seven.<sup>130</sup> Louis Adamic was now thirty-five. Both had immigrated in 1913, shortly before mass immigration had ceased. The mid-1930s were the decade when the second wavers were clearly not the young and restless anymore. Many had families and children and tried to settle their affairs. John was about ten years older than most of them. He was better off than most, and this put him in a much better position to continue sending remittances to the homeland and keep contact, both because someone who is sending money is more welcome and because someone who can pay a ticket out of his pocket will visit more often.

The *Yugoslavia* weekly still appeared in 1934. In 1935 John was involved in a water-pipe scheme. He and others claimed a refund "of special assessments for water supply pipes" and, four years later, in June 1939, a rebate of water rates. Still, he was not immune to the problems of the Depression. In May 1934 John and other Chicagoans paid \$100,000 bail for a bankrupt entrepreneur Samuel Insull, whose Midwest holding company empire had collapsed. Insull was acquitted of all charges but because more than half a million of his

128. Vidaković-Petrov, "Outline of the Cultural History of the Serbian Community in Chicago."

129. "The Dalmatian Riviera," in 35th Anniversary Booklet, 20.

130. "Collection: Andrew Devich Papers," accessed November 8, 2019, <https://archives.lib.umn.edu/repositories/6/resources/5068>. See also: Wladimir Fischer, "A Worker Writes His Life: Narrative Strategies of an Austro-Hungarian Migrant to the United States," in *Migrations: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Renée Schröder and Ruth Wodak (Wien: Springer, 2012), 187–201, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-7091-0950-2>.

shareholders had lost all their savings he fled the country. Palandech was the only one the suspect knew personally. In a letter in 1933 John granted Joko power of attorney to withdraw money from his bank accounts in Yugoslavia, by mail. Another similar mandate was given in a letter from 1935.<sup>131</sup>

On July 11, 1936, Catherine Marie Palandech married Robert Edward Walsh in the Saint Bride Catholic Church on Chicago's South Shore in the presence of a thousand guests. The article in the *United Serbians* was titled "Popularity Queen Weds." A reception with several hundred guests followed in the tower room at the Drake Hotel. Catherine wore an "ivory satin gown, medici cap of tulle, sleeves of lace, face veil, long tulle." A report on the wedding appeared also in the *Evening Examiner*.<sup>132</sup>

In the summer of 1935 John Palandech visited the homeland again. Afterwards in September, he gave a public lecture about his trip, of course at the usual banquet venue; "those wishing to make reservations should address their correspondence to the Yugoslav Square Club at the La Salle Hotel, or phone its secretary."<sup>133</sup> This is representative of John's strategy of creating synergy between private and public affairs wherever possible. But global events would soon get in the way. The second Neutrality Laws of 1936 were even more explicit than the first, ruling out weapon delivery to warring states, including a later provision extending to civil wars. On October 5, 1937, President Franklin Roosevelt held his Quarantine Speech in Chicago, advocating for economic pressure on aggressive nations. From 1938 the United States started building up its navy.

Palandech's third batch of letters ended in 1935. For the years before 1938, we have no sources on him whatsoever, except for one letter (below). This letter was written in the holiday resort of French Lick, Indiana, on December 30, 1938.<sup>134</sup> The letterhead showed the vast compound of the resort in neat blue-on-yellow stencils. Indulging in further self-aggrandizement, John also reported that "On Sunday I have to leave for Chicago by plane in order to present my radio program at one p.m. and I will return at night." This was impressive indeed, not only to Kotorians but also to Chicagoans. Chicago is 280 miles away from French Lick and a plane ticket at that time was a luxury few Americans

131. Alter, "Serbs." *Proceedings of the City Council of the City of Chicago* (1935): 385; (1939), 393; (1940). "Insull Out," *Time*, May 21, 1934; letters, February 5, 1933, and April 6, 1935, Palandech Papers.

132. "Popularity Queen Weds."

133. "Back after Yugoslav Tour," *Znanje*, September 28, 1935, [https://flps.newberry.org/article/5420779\\_2\\_0885/](https://flps.newberry.org/article/5420779_2_0885/).

134. Letter, December 30, 1938, Palandech Papers.

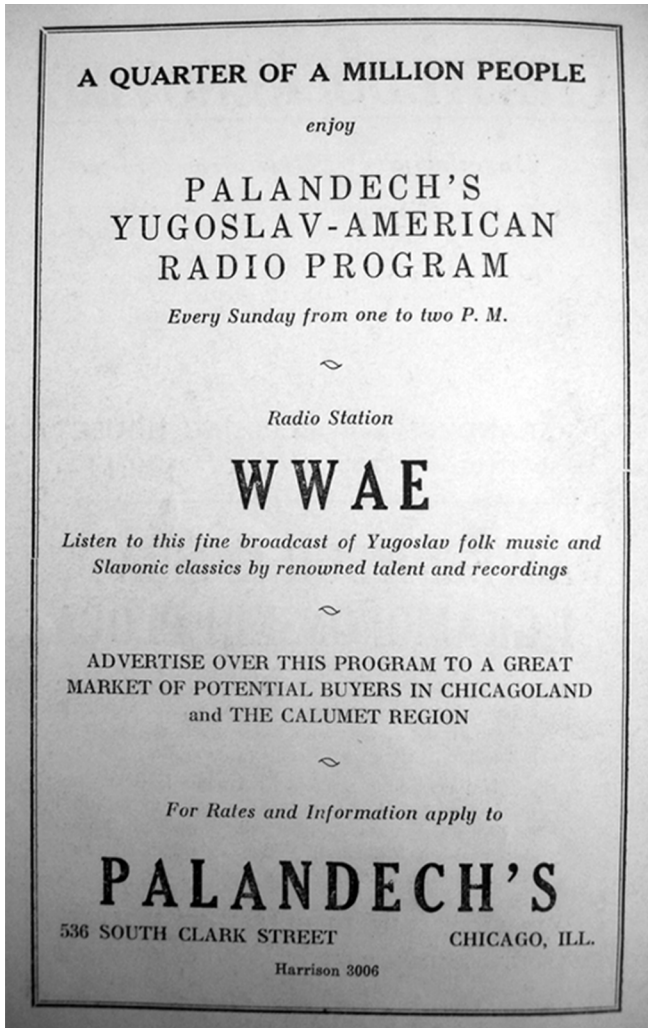


Figure 27 | WWAE radio advertisement in Palandech's 35th Anniversary Booklet, 1939. Palandech collection, IHRCA.

would afford. This one cost \$31.20 round-trip, equivalent of \$559.89 today.<sup>135</sup> Extravagant, indeed.

135. Jean-Paul Rodrigue, Claude Comtois, and Brian Slack, *The Geography of Transport Systems*, 4th ed. (New York: Routledge, 2017), 147, [https://transportgeography.org/?page\\_id=1765](https://transportgeography.org/?page_id=1765); American Airlines Inc., *System Time Table Effective Jan. 10, 1937, 1937*, <http://www.timetableimages.com/ttimages/complete/aa37/aa37-3.jpg>. Inflation calculated at <https://www.dollartimes.com/inflation/>.

In 1934 John had launched a Yugoslav radio program on the WWAE frequency. It was on Sundays from one to two p.m. The fact that John flew in from French Lick for “my radio show,” the New Year show in 1938, just for one day, is a hint not only that John took the radio project very seriously but also that it must have been quite popular. John’s own press claimed it was “enjoyed . . . by a quarter of a million people” and was “a fine broadcast of Yugoslav folk music and Slavonic classics by renowned talent and recordings.” Businesspeople were invited to “advertise over this program to a great market of potential buyers in Chicagoland and the Calumet region.”<sup>136</sup> The station as a whole was profitable; in 1939 it “installed the most modern transmitting facilities and expensive directional antenna.” Then WWAE was sold to Marshall Field III, investment banker and owner of the *Chicago Sun*. It is not known which ethnic programs were the first on that frequency, but the Yugoslav hour was certainly among them. In the 1940s the station, now named WJOB, featured programs in “five foreign languages, including Eddie Oskierko of the Polish Musical Varieties Program, Cornelius Szakatis, of the Hungarian Hour, John Babinec of the Slovak Hour, Stella Lutefisk directing the Greek Hour, and Gilbert Vasquez as the director of the Spanish Program.”<sup>137</sup>

John and Catherine prepared to visit Europe in the summer of 1939. They had previously reported to Joko that they wanted to arrive from New York aboard the steamer *Vulkanian*, which would not enter the Boka but lay anchor in Dubrovnik, where they would stay in the Hotel Imperial and visit the family in Rose afterwards. Shortly before their departure, John worriedly wrote that they would depart on July 28 with the *Saturnia* instead “if the war does not hinder” them “I am coming only for vacation on the boat, except Dubrovnik and the Boka we will not [go] further. Katerina does not want to come this time, because she is afraid of the war, but she is always afraid for me to travel alone.”<sup>138</sup>

Despite all worries, John and Catherine made the trip, but when they wanted to reach their booked return ship, all had been canceled due to the unclear situation concerning the war in the East and a possible involvement of Fascist Italy, as the booked ocean liners were from Italy.<sup>139</sup> John Palandech publicly reported on his and Catherine’s turbulent return from their Europe trip in a speech published in an anniversary booklet of his company: after the *Saturnia* did not come, they had to travel to Paris and book another, improvised passage on the *SS Arandora Star*, actually a South Sea cruiser, not meant for transatlantic travel.

136. *United Serbians*, April 2, 1936, newspaper clipping, Palandech Papers.

137. *Calumet Broadcasting Corp.*, 3–5. “WJOB (AM).”

138. Letters, July 21, 1938, and July 5, 1939, Palandech Papers.

139. Letter, early September, 1939, Palandech Papers.



**Figure 28** | *The SS Saturnia at the maritime station of Trieste on the 20th September 1927, the day before the start of her maiden voyage.* Photograph. Italian Liners Historical Society.

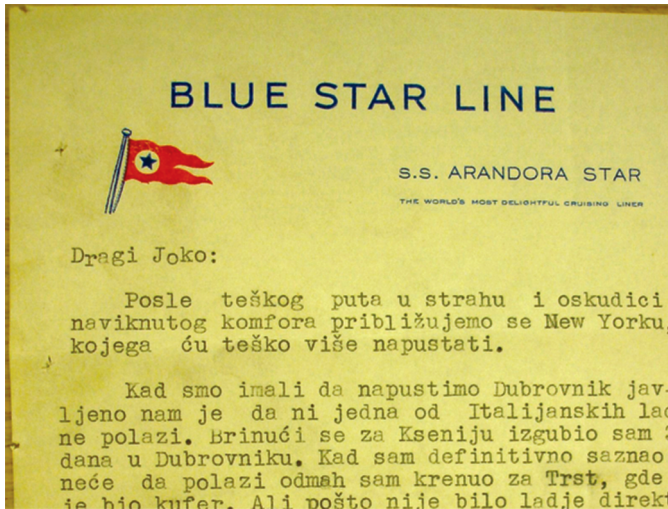
Catherine suffered an injury when they went to the Cherbourg port by train. The ocean passage occurred under war-like precautions—no outside lights, no smoking on deck. John mentioned the refined company they kept during the passage, and the amount of luggage Catherine had brought. John Palandech emphasized that he had felt very sorry for the other passengers who were not as lucky as him to secure passage home and had to stay in Paris. He paid the \$1000 fare in cash he carried with him. The reason for Catherine's leg injury was a crowd panic when leaving the train and embarking the boat. During the trip they were afraid of German submarines and the sea was rough.<sup>140</sup>

Germany had invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, but the United States remained neutral. For South Slav immigrants, it was a question of time when the war would come to their homeland. A 1939 brochure advertised the services of John's travel agency; it was not much needed at the time. After the events of August 1939, John quit travel to Europe himself for the time being.<sup>141</sup> The trend of homeland tourism was abruptly ended by the war. All too soon, the potential tourists were turned into soldiers and home-front workers. They had good reasons to be afraid. On July 2, 1940, the *Arandora Star* was sunk by a German U-boat northwest of Ireland and 865 died, mostly Italian migrants the British government was deporting to Canadian internment camps as enemy aliens. Many of them had been living in Britain for decades.

140. Ibid.

141. 35th Anniversary Booklet.





**Figure 29** | Letterhead of the SS Arandora Star with John Palandech's letter. n.d. Photograph. IHRCA.

When John's newspaper celebrated its thirty-fifth anniversary in October 1939, Czech and Polish contributions were a "must." This kind of interethnic support was now standard. At the occasion of the anniversary, politicians, both from Yugoslavia and especially local Democrats, and prominent ones at that, praised him and his organizations.<sup>142</sup> John had now managed to connect all the synergies he had created earlier. Through the years, John became a member of several ethnic organizations, be it migrant organizations or organizations based in the homeland: the Serbian Orphan Society, the Danilo Order, the Mercy Order, the Serb Orthodox church community, the Serb National Club, and the Dobrovsky Club. In the anniversary album, John praised the second generation of immigrants, both for their efforts to integrate and for their migrant contributions. But if he had dreamed that the next generation would carry on the projects of the "first second-wave" migrants, he would be proven naive. Nevertheless, Palandech's own star continued to rise: in June 1939 John was in New York for the opening of the Yugoslav pavilion at the New York World Fair whose motto was "The World of Tomorrow."<sup>143</sup>

Unlike in World War I, action in support of the homeland started before it was actually invaded. From 1939 on, George headed the Yugoslav-American Relief Committee. In 1941 Germany expanded the war toward southern Europe. In

142. Anniversary articles, two sections, *Ujedinjeno Srpstvo*, April 2, 1936.

143. Leonard and Marquis, *Who's Who in Chicago*, [http://archive.org/details/whoswho-inchicagooleon\\_1](http://archive.org/details/whoswho-inchicagooleon_1); Letter, July 5, 1939, Palandech Papers.

April German troops invaded Yugoslavia and Greece. The region was divided among German, Italian, Hungarian, and Bulgarian occupiers and a Croat puppet state was installed. Again people were locked up in camps; this time some of them were death camps. The Kotor region, where most of the European Palandačić relatives lived, was annexed by fascist Italy. In June Germany invaded the Soviet Union. Finally, in December 1941, the United States entered the war. For many immigrants this was a very popular move but not so for those of German and Italian descent. On September 8, 1943, the Italians concluded an armistice with the Allies, but the Bay of Kotor came under German military administration. In November 1944 the bay was liberated and integrated into the territories controlled by the Antifascist Council for the Liberation of Yugoslavia, AVNOJ, partisans.

During the 1930s John had transformed his business model, originally based on his southeastern European origins, to one of more generalized prosperity, despite the economic consequences of the Depression and growing political turmoil in Europe. He had moved away from his beginnings in the fraternal movement and expanded into new areas of audio and transatlantic tourism. However, the clientele of his radio programs and travel agency were an aging community. Would the next generation appreciate John's offerings as much as the second-wavers? This would become clear after World War II had changed everything, once again.

### Conservation (1940s–1950s)

In November 1945, when the mail connection to Yugoslavia was open again, the Palandechs organized to send Christmas parcels to the homeland through a Slovene businessman. This postwar solidarity went across ethno-confessional boundaries. Just days before, on October 29, 1945, John and family received the first sign of life of family overseas after World War II. John had false information and had feared for the worst for the Yugoslav relatives but “now hope[s] that you are all alive.” He had heard nothing from the homeland except for a letter from a Dr. Filip Lazarović and indirect information about Gilgor. John wondered why Joko had not managed to send a message while others did receive letters. He sent packages with goods to seven families and instructed Joko “the packages of late have to be emptied at once, because the material inside will get bad once it is open. Especially the meat and the milk. . . . That soup powder . . . you have to pour into 4 cups of boiling water and cook or simmer for 7 minutes and then it is ready.” Although he had heard it was not worth to send money he sent \$50 dollars anyway for stamps.<sup>144</sup>

144. National Endowment for the Humanities, “Sokolov Naročeni Parcel Post Za Jugoslavijo,” *Enakopravnost*, November 24, 1945, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83035527/1945-11-24/ed-1/seq-4/>; letter, October 29, 1945, Palandech Papers.

In the first years after the war, the victorious communists more or less tolerated the old Yugoslav elites and their parties but in 1946 a People's Republic of Yugoslavia was proclaimed. This meant not only political but social revolution, collectivization, and nationalization. The old elites were not only removed from their political and economic positions but also prosecuted and sometimes physically eliminated or driven into exile. The leader of the Serb royalist Chetnik fighters, Draža Mihajlović, was tried and executed. All of this was bad news for John Palandech. He had built part of his career on a good relationship with the Yugoslav royal family, however virtual it was. He was known in Yugoslavia to be a leader of Serb and other Yugoslav migrants in the United States. But he was known as an entrepreneur and Orthodox church type of immigrant leader, rather than as one of the labor and mutual benefit societies leaders. For many years, this had been a comfortable position in the transatlantic exchange. Now he was on the wrong side of the power divide in his homeland.

The revolution in Yugoslavia also caused a deep split among the Chicago Serb community, reflected in the waning status of John's publications. People had to choose a side. Authorities in the United States were suspicious of working-class Eastern European immigrants especially. The situation worsened when right-wing refugees from Yugoslavia and other regions arrived in the United States and started agitating among immigrants, who would rather have remained neutral, for their anti-communist cause. John had brochures of such groups in his possession, including pamphlets of the Serbian Chetnik nationalists. The *Srpski narodni kalendar* still appeared in 1944. During World War II, Palandech Publishing Inc. printed documents on atrocities committed against Serbs in Yugoslavia, published by the Serbian Orthodox Church of the United States. In 1947 the *Jugoslavia* publication was renamed *Yugoslavia* and probably no longer printed in Serbian Cyrillic. In 1948 *United Serbians* ceased publication. For maybe another two years, Palandech Publishing Inc. kept printing English translations of Serbo-Croatian literature. A handbook *How to Become an American Citizen* was printed in 1954 in Serbian and English.<sup>145</sup>

These publications of the fifties were meant for a changing community. The English translations were for the newer generations who wanted to read Serbo-Croatian literature but did not know the language well enough. The naturalization

145. Palandech Papers; *Srpski narodni kalendar Amerika, 1944*; *Srpska pravoslavna crkva*. Serbian Eastern Orthodox Diocese for the United States of America and Canada, *Martyrdom of the Serbs: Persecutions of the Serbian Orthodox Church and Massacre of the Serbian People*, Documents and Reports of the Trustworthy United Nations and of Eyewitnesses ([Chicago]: [Palandech's Press], 1943); Oto Bihalji-Merin, *Diocletian's Return* ([Chicago]: [J. R. Palandech], 1950); *Kako se postaje američki građanin. How to Become an American Citizen*. (Chicago: Palandech's Pub. House, 1954).

handbook was meant for post–World War II refugees who had no expectation of returning to Yugoslavia soon, but did not know English well enough. In the late fifties, John’s almanac *America* was still being printed. His publications, he mentioned in 1957, had become interesting for people in Yugoslavia, trying to offer their written work, often looking for a salary.<sup>146</sup> However, the publications would not last very long anymore.

In 1949 Yugoslavia ended its close alliance with the U.S.S.R. The respective leaderships accused each other of treason to the socialist cause. John Palandech’s newspapers followed the developments with a neutral-sympathetic coverage toward the Yugoslav regime.<sup>147</sup> The relations between Yugoslavia and the rest of the socialist states were strained to a degree that a Soviet invasion into Yugoslavia appeared possible until 1955 when Stalin died. In 1954 Milovan Djilas, one of the leading partisan and postwar government members who had grown critical and vocal about tendencies of a new class society, was arrested. Ironically, at the same time relations between the United States and Yugoslavia improved. The United States started sending money outside of the Marshall Plan in the early fifties.<sup>148</sup>

John turned his attention more and more to memorialization and picking up the pieces amid new political challenges. In February 1947 he wrote Joko that they had held the *parastos* over the grave of brother Sima in California, the traditional memorial service on the fortieth day after death. He sent the death notice by registered mail.<sup>149</sup> In 1953, after having been an American mason for many years, John decided to establish an ethnic sub-organization, founding the Serb Masons.<sup>150</sup>

John seems to have been tolerated by the new state, such as it tolerated the sending of remittances. John had transformed from an “authorized dealer in nostalgia” into a rich uncle from America visiting his relatives under socialism now and then. In 1951 John established a schooling fund for the Boka.<sup>151</sup>

In much the same way that John’s transatlantic networks and robust publications weakened, so too did the health of his family. On January 8, 1950, Catherine died after a long illness. Many people were at the funeral. Her obituary spoke of 300 wreaths on her grave and recalled how she helped the Serbian people in World War I by organizing a support committee, donated thousands of dollars to the Red Cross and received the Serb Order of Krst Milosrdja, and

146. Letter, August 29, 1957, Palandech Papers.

147. *United Serbians*, n.d., Palandech Papers.

148. Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

149. Letter, February 10, 1947, Palandech Papers.

150. 35th Anniversary Booklet.

151. Vidaković-Petrov, “Outline of the Cultural History of the Serbian Community in Chicago,” 50f.

supported schooling poor Serb schoolchildren in Sarajevo with her husband.<sup>152</sup> In 1953, John's brother George died in Winchester, Illinois.<sup>153</sup>

In 1954 John celebrated his eightieth birthday. That was probably when a photo was taken of him amid top Democrat politicians, some of them also ethnic leaders. It seems the venue was again the La Salle Hotel, only the party color had changed from red to blue. The guests included Illinois State Commissioner Richard J. Daley, who would become mayor of Chicago; Cook County judge Edmund K. Jarecki; U.S. federal judge Otto Kerner; district attorney Otto Kerner, Jr., who would become governor of Illinois; Paul P. Pullen of the Chicago Title and Trust Company, and John's son-in-law, attorney Charles J. Gallagher. Also pictured is John's nephew George Jr., who was born in 1922 to George and Rose Palandech in Calumet, south of Chicago. George Jr. was described in the photograph caption as "general manager of the Palandech's Publications." Had the second generation taken over? Who would carry on the newspapers and how ethnic were they still?

In the late fifties, John's own health deteriorated. After Christmas around 1956, John wrote from San Antonio, Texas, where he was staying hoping the milder climate would be salubrious, but could not leave the Plaza Hotel because of the rain and cold and wound up in the hospital. In August 1958 he wrote that "this latest stroke" had compromised his eyesight, which he might be able to



**Figure 30** | Newspaper clipping from "United Serbians", Palandech collection, IHRCA.

152. "Illinois, Cook County Deaths, 1878–1994," <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:Q2M4-YD62>, Catherine P Walsh in entry for Catherine Leonard Palandech, January 8, 1950. Obituary, *United Serbians*, 1950, IHRCA, Palandech Collection.

153. "George A. Palandech, Burial, Find A Grave Index," <https://FamilySearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVGT-RSLN>.

recover according to the doctors. In 1959 John called himself “physically indisposed.” Late in his life, John started more openly writing about his health and about his true self as a man, not his personae for show.<sup>154</sup>

In the 1950s John began sending goods regularly again, this time more generously than between the wars. In January 1954 John wondered about CARE packages he had sent to Yugoslavia that had not arrived and was planning to complain at the CARE office. He had little hope for sick Ivan in Yugoslavia but sent money anyway for him. John arranged with Joko to send money under a different name in order to keep it apart from another \$100 John had sent Neda for another purpose. He sent \$100 to Joko to divide among the siblings, \$25 for each. He discussed the sending of flour, the customs duties to be paid, and whether it was available more cheaply in Yugoslavia. John sent Andja “elastic socks and medicine” and advised Neda about glasses. He wrote he was doing his best to send a bike.<sup>155</sup> Despite his illnesses and a stroke, John was still thinking about a final trip to the homeland. Being able to take a plane just for a short visit helped, of course. Other Yugoslav Americans could only dream about that.

In his last two decades of homeland management, John had become more approachable in many respects. He was sending help without as many reservations as before. He shared information about common friends and acquaintances with Joko, entrusted him with managing monetary and legal affairs in Yugoslavia, he asked him for advice on potential contacts in Yugoslavia, and reported more freely about himself. John’s last letter ended with the words “We are all fine, greeting, Ivo.”<sup>156</sup> The family had moved far away from the immigrant roots and especially from the other immigrants, in a socioeconomic sense, but John’s homeland ties were among the few things left. In John’s last years, business activities were reduced. In April 1959 the bookstore moved to another address, 343 S. Dearborn, not far from the old address.<sup>157</sup> The future of John’s fortune, built on the foreign-language press, was uncertain.

## Aftermath

In September of 1959, John died. The community council held a session in his memory.<sup>158</sup> His almanac continued publication for five years after John’s

154. Letters, 1954–57; August 28, 1958; August 12, 1959, Palandech Papers.

155. Letters, January 28, 1954, 1954–57, August 12, 1959, August 29, 1957, Palandech Papers.

156. Letter, June 18, 1958, Palandech Papers.

157. “Premještaj knjižare,” *Zajedničar*, April 22, 1959, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024547/1959-04-22/ed-1/seq-5/>.

158. *Proceedings of the City Council of the City of Chicago*, vol. April–November 1959 (Chicago: City Council, 1959), 794, <http://archive.org/details/proceedingsofciti64chic>.

death.<sup>159</sup> After that, there were no more Palandech periodicals. In 1961 John's nephew Michael Palandech graduated from Chicago Teachers College with a thesis on printing in high schools. He became an instructor of graphics at DuPage College in a Chicago suburb.<sup>160</sup> In the 1960s the Palandech Press still existed. It continued printing dictionaries, some literary works in Serbian, and books for the Orthodox community.<sup>161</sup> The last ethnic printing activities under the Palandech name took place in the early 1970s, mostly for the Serbian church community of Chicago.<sup>162</sup> In 2005 a similar title was published by the "Palandech Publication Group" which seems to be specialized in spiritual guides and self-help literature, under the name Pendragon Publications.<sup>163</sup>

John outlived empires and two kingdoms. His life's work as an ethnic publisher did not survive him for much more than a decade. His activities in the several roles described in this article, however, left their traces in the respective fields of local and state politics, business, transatlantic relations and imaginations, southeastern European cultural practices in the United States, and among many Palandechs and Plandačićs around the world.

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159. Vidaković-Petrov, "An Outline of the Cultural History of the Serbian Community in Chicago."

160. Michael Palandech, *A Survey of the Printing Industry to Obtain Opinions on Vocational Printing in the High Schools*, 1961; *The Courier (College of DuPage)*, October 25, 1973, 6, [http://archive.org/details/couriero7coll\\_0](http://archive.org/details/couriero7coll_0).

161. Ljubica Grković-Boljanić, *Pesme labudova* (Chicago: Palandech, 1961); *Our Religious Heritage in America, 1914–1964. St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church Fiftieth Anniversary, November 14, 15, 1964, Gary, Ind.* ([Chicago]: [Palandech Press], 1965).

162. Srpska pravoslavna crkva. Kalendar : Srpske Pravoslavne crkve y Americi i Kanadu, za prestuphu 1971 godinu = Calendar : *The Serbian Orthodox Church in the United States of America and Canada, 1971* (Chicago: Palandech and Sons, 1971).

163. Moriah Rhame-Brock, *How to Be a Happy Medium* (Chicago: Pendragon Pub., 2004); Nancy Gerstein, *Guiding Yoga's Light: Yoga Lessons for Yoga Teachers* (Chicago: Pendragon Pub., 2004).