



The
Road to
LIBERATION
for the **NEGRO**
PEOPLE

An Appeal by

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The Road to LIBERATION *for* *the* NEGRO PEOPLE

DURING the last ten years a great change in the outlook of the Negro people in the United States has taken place. The Communist Party has helped to start this rebirth in the life of the Negro people, the like of which has not been seen since the great Abolitionist and emancipation movement prior to the Civil War. The leadership of the Communist Party and its organization of struggles for equal rights and opportunities for cultural advancement are bearing results.

The struggles in behalf of the Scottsboro boys, for the freedom of Angelo Herndon, for equality and advancement in the trade union movement, for civil rights and liberties through the peace and democratic movements, for cultural progress, for advancement in the political life

of the country, have raised the level of struggle and outlook among the Negro people generally, and have brought forth stalwart leaders and rank-and-file fighters among Negro men and women.

These men and women, leaders in the liberation struggle of their people and outstanding Communists, have become recognized by the progressives and the labor movement generally as co-fighters in the cause of American labor.

What does the Communist Party stand for and what has it done in practice to carry out what it believes to be the true desires of the Negro people in the United States? If we analyze the conditions of the Negro people in whose behalf the Communist Party wholeheartedly took up the cudgels, we find the following:

The Negro people have been the most downtrodden, the most poverty stricken and disfranchised. The ruling class has taken extraordinary pains and systematic measures to sow distrust and hate against us; we have been lynched and framed up for demanding our rights. We have been kept unlettered and illiterate. Our backward condition, for which the reactionary ruling class is entirely responsible, has been declared to be due to some "inborn racial characteristic"; "the Negro is an inferior being." We have been maligned and made the butt of all sorts of insults.

We have been discriminated against in the trade unions, and not allowed full and equal participation in

the labor movement; we have been dubbed "scabs" and non-union men. We have been denied equal opportunities in the civil and public life of the country; our liberties and rights guaranteed by the Constitution curtailed. Our culture has been abused and efforts for advancement in these fields held back. Negro women have been mistreated and insulted; our children are degraded and warped.

All this and much more has been the life of the Negro people in a country that is called the most civilized in the world. The Communist Party by its program and uncompromising stand on the problems facing the Negro people in the United States has created a new outlook for the Negro people, both among the Negro people themselves and in the ranks of labor and the progressive population as a whole.

The Communist Party brought the message of hope and showed our people the road to freedom and liberation. The Communist Party fearlessly, against seemingly insurmountable obstacles, began to blast the many lies and slanders against the Negro people. The Communist Party blazed a path of struggle against economic and social inequalities. The Communist Party brought to the Negro people a fundamental understanding of their conditions. It showed us clearly our relation to the economic and social set-up in American life. It taught us to see the real sources of discrimination, segregation, denial of civil rights and liberties, lynching, terror and general exploitation. It taught us to know our enemies and where to find

our allies. It enabled us to take the struggles and aspirations of the Negro people out of narrow confines.

Economic Gains

The great unemployed struggles led by the Communist Party have been of material aid to the Negro people throughout the past years of economic crisis. In crowded, congested and disease-ridden Harlem, Communists have forced the inclusion of thousands of Negro families on the relief rolls. They were also instrumental in opening up the closed doors for Negro relief supervisors, administrators, investigators, etc., in New York, Chicago, and throughout the country. Jobs for Negro workers on the federal projects have also been made possible because of the stubborn fight put up by the Communists. The effective work of the Communist Party, in exposing the conditions which led to the outbreak of Negro workers on March 19, 1935, in Harlem, has forced the city fathers to build a new public school for Negro pupils. The discovery by the Communists of the hidden report of the Mayor's Commission on Conditions in Harlem created a wave of indignant protest that forced the New York City administration to do at least something toward alleviating the awful conditions from which Negroes suffer. The Communist Party has assisted Negro and white workers in winning, through strike struggles, North and South, substantial wage increases and better working conditions.

These are but a few of the many economic victories which the Communist Party has helped to win for the Negro people. Our Party is a party of action on the economic front as well as on the political front.

Scottsboro

The Scottsboro case was led and fought by the Communist Party. Scottsboro was a colossal struggle of the Negro people and their friends and allies, against the reactionaries and bourbons of the South. The Scottsboro frame-up was intended by the reactionary officialdom of Alabama to be a symbol and signal for attack against the entire Negro people. But under the leadership of the Communist Party, the Scottsboro case became a symbol for the whole world of the cause of our oppressed people. It blasted away the "rape" libel of the ruling class against the Negro people, raised the fighting spirit of our people to new heights and brought us, as new allies, millions of oppressed people all over the world. The Supreme Court of the United States was forced to affirm the right of Negroes to serve on juries, although this is still denied overwhelmingly in practice and can only be fully realized by the united struggle of all progressive forces.

After six and a half years of struggle, four of the nine Scottsboro boys have been set free. This achievement, although partial, is a distinct victory for the entire Negro people. This victory and the achievements in the Scotts-

boro case were won through the fighting united front tactics and methods of the Communist Party, arousing millions of people throughout the world to join in the fight to liberate the nine innocent Scottsboro boys. Scottsboro aroused such worldwide interest because the destiny of a people was involved. This the Communist Party understood and triumph proved the profound correctness of the Communist position and tactics.

The Herndon Case

One of the most brilliant, outstanding and complete victories won in recent labor history is that of the successful struggle to free Angelo Herndon. How much this means to the Negro people can only be understood in its fullest light by scanning the forces that sympathetically joined the fight for Herndon's freedom, as well as for civil and democratic rights for the Negro people as a whole. Literally millions of people were brought into united struggle to gain Herndon's freedom. **It was this campaign which forced the United States Supreme Court to free Angelo Herndon, and nullify the Georgia slave insurrection law under which he had been sentenced to eighteen to twenty years on the Georgia chain-gang.**

The national tour of the chain-gang cage; the circulation of Herndon petitions which were signed by two million people through the agency of scores and hundreds of organizations, involving the Socialist Party, the Young

People's Socialist League, the Young Communist League, the American Federation of Labor, the National Negro Congress, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, all unemployed organizations, church groups, the Y.W.C.A., the monster meetings held for Herndon in every part of the country—are highlights in the Herndon campaign which illustrate in the most graphic form the power and force of the Communist Party's struggle in behalf of the Negro people.

For Political Equality and Rights

In the struggle for democratic rights and political equality the Communist Party stands out in sharpest contrast to any other party in American political life. In the national election campaigns of 1932 and 1936 the Communist Party startled America by putting forth a Negro as its vice-presidential candidate. The Communist Party did not do this as any vote-catching scheme; it went up against a hard and bitter tradition of hatred for the Negro people. In these election campaigns the Communist Party called upon the entire American people to guarantee complete equality for colored men and women; equal right to jobs, equal pay for equal work, the full right to organize, vote, serve on juries and hold the highest public offices, and the enforcement of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution.

Clarence A. Hathaway, editor-in-chief of the **Daily**

Worker, official organ of the Communist Party, in nominating James W. Ford for vice-president on the Communist ticket in 1932 stated:

"The Communist Party stands squarely for the Negro people. We do not say that the Negro is all right 'in his place.' We say that any place open to whites must be opened for the Negroes."

In 1936 at the National Nominating Convention of the Communist Party at Madison Square Garden before an audience of twenty thousand people, Mother Ella Reeve Bloor, 75-year-old woman labor leader and member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, in placing the name of the Negro candidate for vice-president, said:

"We are proud to be known as the party of the Negro people. We will never rest until the Negro and white workers, shoulder to shoulder, win final emancipation of the Negro people as a part of the freedom of enslaved humanity."

James W. Ford, in accepting the nomination, said:

"It is indeed an honor that the Communist Party has tendered me. But I do not take it as an individual tribute to myself. It is a tribute to the entire Negro people; it is another proof that the Communist Party is the outstanding fighter for their freedom from segregation and oppression of every kind."

For Trade Union Equality and Rights

The Communist Party has played an outstanding role in the fight for the rights of Negro workers in the trade

union field. It is no accident, but rather the result of a consistent policy fought for over many years, that we see the progressive labor leaders in the trade unions and particularly in the C.I.O. fighting for the rights of Negro workers and organizing them on the basis of the fullest participation in the trade unions.

The movement to organize the steel industry, the auto industry, and the tobacco workers in the South by the C.I.O. has great significance for the Negro people as a whole. In the steel industry there are 100,000 Negroes fighting to win economic advancement and security for themselves and their families. These great organizing campaigns in basic industries employing large numbers of Negroes will help to break down the barriers of Jim-Crowism generally.

The declared policy of the C.I.O. to establish the principles and right of collective bargaining for the purpose of improving economic conditions through all-embracing trade unions has great value for the Negro people as well as for their white brothers. The unity of Negro and white workers in this monumental organizing campaign has opened up new, tremendous possibilities to the struggle for Negro liberation. It has brought new millions of white toilers as allies of our great struggle in this crucial period of American labor and gives us the greatest promise of success in combatting the employers who in the past, by dividing the forces of labor, have been able to lower the standard of living of all. The Communist Party has fought

for these principles for Negroes in the labor movement for nearly two decades.

The Communist Party in the South

We quote from the report of Robert Hall to the Alabama District Committee of the Communist Party of Alabama:

"I do not think anyone here would deny that there is a breaking down in the Jim-Crow lynch spirit, that among the masses of people there is growing tolerance on the Negro question on the part of Southern workers and intellectuals. This new attitude is a result of those factors which have in themselves made for the extension of democratic rights and the relative legality of our Party. The organizing drive of the C.I.O. is one of the most important of these factors. It is highly significant that the C.I.O., in organizing the Negro workers, is putting into practice a policy long advocated by our Party, of abolishing Jim-Crow locals and organizing the Negro workers on a basis of trade union equality.

"At the same time, this new attitude on the Negro question is to a great extent responsible for the new attitude toward our Party. Inasmuch as our Party has been the first to come forward for complete equality and has led the struggle for Negro liberation, it could not be otherwise. A trade union worker, who after years of prejudice learns that he must organize together with the Negro worker and struggle shoulder to shoulder with him for better conditions, naturally remembers that it was the Communist Party who first told him that great truth. The white middle classes who are beginning to learn that the Southern differential which lowers their standards of living is due to the fact that Negro and white are divided knows very well that this is the position the Communists have always held.

The best elements among the Southern intellectuals are carrying this a step further. They begin to see the Negro as a great and noble people. John Brown is becoming a great hero to many Southerners nurtured in the traditions of Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis.

"Out of the logic of this situation has come the tremendous victory in the Scottsboro case, the complete freedom of Olen Montgomery, Eugene Williams, Willie Roberson and Roy Wright. I am sure that our District Committee will hail this as the great victory that it is, pointing out the role of our Party in this fight and instructing our Party in this district to redouble its efforts for the freedom of the five boys facing a living death in prison."

In Virginia the Communist Party is fighting to make real the rights granted by the State Constitution but frequently denied in practice:

"That all men are by nature equally free and independent, and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety." (**Bill of Rights, Constitution of Virginia, Article I, Sec. 1.**)

We quote from the platform of the Communist Party of Virginia:

"The oppression of the Negro people is the shame of the South. It is a hangover from slavery, which all progressive-minded people now deplore, and is used consciously by the rulers of the South, whether they be Northern bankers and manufacturers, who own the controlling interest in most of the wealth of the South, or the bankers, capitalists and landlords of the South, to keep the South as their feudal colony.

"We fully understand that great masses of Southern white workers and farmers are under the illusions of race prejudice, and have been led to believe that race oppression is in their interests. But we know that a great change is taking place in the minds of the Southern white people who are beginning to understand that Jim Crow laws and discrimination against the Negro have made it possible for the white people of the South also to be kept in a state of poverty and cultural backwardness and thus provide the rich with extra large profits out of the labor of both Negro and white working people.

"Our position on the Negro people is stated throughout this platform. The Negro people must share in all advances made by the people of Virginia. In addition we add special emphasis to the following points:

"The passage of a federal anti-lynching law, and the amendment of the present Virginia Anti-Lynching law to prevent its distortion and misuse against labor, as is now being done in the Covington strike.

"We advocate full civil liberties for Negroes, the right to serve in office, to serve on juries, to free speech and assemblies, the right to organize.

"We support the right of Negroes to practice any profession and to work at any job for which they are qualified.

"We support the right of Negroes to be treated in any hospital, to equal hospital facilities, and the right of Negro doctors to practice in every hospital. We oppose any discrimination in unemployment relief against Negroes.

"We advocate the alliance of the whole Negro people with the white workers, farmers, small business people and professionals for the establishment of a common program for the wiping out of machine control of Virginia, and for the democratization of the government of the state and of the country."

Join the Communist Party

The Communist Party has been a beacon light to our people. A stronger Communist Party is the surest guarantee that our aspirations and our struggles will be crowned with success. We say to our Negro brothers and sisters: Take your place beside us in the common cause of our liberation. Join the Communist Party for the cause of all labor and oppressed humanity.

Communist Party, U.S.A.

35 East 12th Street

New York, N. Y.

I want to join the Communist Party.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

6 Years of Struggle

BEHIND the six long years of the struggle that wrested four of the nine Scottsboro boys from the lynch courts of Alabama stands the Daily Worker . . . the one American newspaper that fought without rest from the very first to rouse progressive men and women against this most shameful frameup. Nor has the Daily Worker relaxed its efforts in behalf of the five still languishing in Kilby Prison. Here is but one of thousands of instances where the Daily Worker was the first voice raised against injustice . . . against the bigotry and prejudice that have been used to divide the working class.

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