



“I AM FREE AND I AM HAPPY”

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Photos by ROLAND GALEN

*A Message Marking the Writer's Complete Vindication
by the Supreme Court—Urges Increasing
Vigilance Against Reactionary Forces*



I AM free and I am happy. My complete vindication by the Supreme Court from an unjust frame-up is not a personal victory for me. It is a victory for the down-trodden, oppressed Negro people and all who hate slavery and exploitation.

While I rejoice in the goodness of this victory, I do not do so alone. Those who have worked untiringly throughout the five years of my persecutions have struck a decisive upper-cut at the forces of reaction, and there is reason for them to feel proud. This successful fight proves conclusively that when we are united, we can force our oppressors to listen to our demands.

But we must not be swept away from reality in celebrating this gigantic victory for the working class and the American people. The reactionaries in the South as well as throughout the land are growing stronger and more powerful every day. This should be the beginning

of the fight not only to check fascism, but the occasion for the building of that movement which shall soon bury it in the dark jungle pits of barbarism where it rightfully belongs.

At this historic time, when we of the younger generation are grappling with the many difficult and complex problems that face us, I cannot forget the horrible persecution and enslavement of my brothers in the southland. On the shores of the Mississippi river, where the muddy streams flow quietly in an atmosphere of peace and tranquility—on the deltas and all plantations I can hear the moanful wails of millions of sharecroppers—my blood brothers—who are suffering from the lash and the whip of the slave master. In Mississippi, I can still smell the burning flesh of two innocent black men—victims of a brutal insane mob of lynchers, who, in their convulsions of bestiality, went wild and thrilled to the sight of human flesh

burnt to ashes with blow-torches.

Did I say something about being happy? Yes, I repeat: I am happy to be free—though, as a Negro, I face the same fate as millions of my brothers in common suffering and sorrow. But the freedom I now have shall be utilized to the best of my ability for the complete abolition of this monstrous curse against humanity.

I urge my Negro brothers not to despair. Do not be crestfallen. There are millions of white workers, exploited and oppressed just as you are, who are today fighting your battle as well as the battle of the whole working class. The system which has brutalized you and warped your spirits is headed for its doom. You have not been crushed. The victory in my case should spur you on to real action. Rise up with your white fellow workers, with all of those who stand for progress, and soon our dream of freedom shall be realized. The freedom

of the Scottsboro boys and Tom Mooney must be the next occasion for celebration! We must go even further to preserve democracy and peace the world over. We should do everything in our power to secure and guarantee the victory of the Spanish people against Hitler and Mussolini's barbaric invasion. To the heroes of Spanish and world democracy I pledge that I, together with my Party, my people, and the working class, will work tirelessly till there shall be not one man nor woman oppressed and exploited.

We, young Communists, hail the courage and heroism of Spain's youth. Inspired by their heroic deeds we shall go forward in the fight for a world without suffering and pain imposed upon the young generation by a dying capitalist system. Our lives are dedicated to the creation of life with a purpose, and full of meaning. We march forward today for victory tomorrow.