***Workers of the World*:** (<https://www.picturingblackhistory.org/workers-of-the-world>)

The multitude of signs reveal the confluence of issues that brought the Communist Party and Black activists together in the early 1930s…The Party initially treated police brutality and [lynching](https://origins.osu.edu/historytalk/confederates-and-lynching-american-public-memory) as merely class issues. Early Black activists forced the Party to change its approach.

In Chicago…African Americans were 3 percent of the city’s population but 21 percent of police homicide victims from 1910 to 1920. Many of those killed were shot to keep them from fleeing and one in ten were innocent bystanders killed when police fired into crowds….

The Communist Party took up the struggle against police brutality both as a class-based appeal to Black workers and as one of its specific demands for worker safety.

…calling for a meeting March 7 at Odd Fellows Hall was likely in response to the lynching of Laura Wood in North Carolina. Killed for supposedly stealing a ham, she was the third Black person publicly and ritualistically murdered by a mob that year. At least twenty were lynched in 1930 alone…the Party started to realize that lynching was being used as a tool to divide the working class from one another.

Without addressing lynching and police brutality alongside demands for reasonable hours, fair pay, and unemployment benefits, the Party had limited appeal to most African Americans. Would-be Black members had to demand that the Party not soft-pedal the battle for racial equality and physical safety.

…the Party solidified its standing among African Americans when it took up the appeal of nine Black teenagers who had been wrongfully convicted of raping two white women in Scottsboro, AL. Black membership in the Party boomed as the Party made this clear miscarriage of justice and attempted legal lynching into a cause célèbre.