

FOREWORD

IN these days when the people of the United States are but awakening to the terrible fact that our country has been fully seized from within by the same forces which have reduced so much of Europe, Asia, and Africa to a bloody shambles, and so many great cities to ruins; when the shadows of tyranny, imperialist war, famine, and pestilence reach across the oceans to darken our own shores—it is not too early to raise for most serious study, and for answer in practical terms, the question of “The Way Out.”

This is the question most feared by the ruling class, the bourgeoisie, and by its ideologists and statesmen. Indeed, these gentlemen and ladies have already looted the historical armory of the Inquisition to find weapons to combat this question with its inevitable answer.

The story of Galileo, under the Inquisition, has again, as so many times in American history, an immediate significance for us. Let us recall the story. In the early seventeenth century, Galileo, a foremost representative of progressive humanity of his day which was reaching out to understand and master the world, was halted in his progress by the stone wall of Church Dogma and Law, which proclaimed that the earth was flat and immobile, and that all contrary conceptions were heresy, punishable by death. But Galileo became convinced that the earth was round, and that it moved, and that all future progress depended upon the recognition of this truth. When he propounded this new truth, he was seized and imprisoned by the Inquisition, and put on trial, in 1633, in Rome. Found guilty of heresy, Galileo was given the choice between retraction or being burned at the stake. Not being prepared for the latter, Galileo knelt before his inquisitors and solemnly pronounced the retraction: “I abjure, curse, and detest the error and heresy of the motion of the earth.” Then as the jailors released their

grip, and he rose from his knees, he muttered to himself in an undertone: "But the earth does move."

Eventually, through years of struggle and suffering, the Dogma and the Law were defeated. The Inquisition was overthrown and disappeared, leaving behind only a dishonorable memory. Galileo with his stubborn insistence upon the truth, even in the moment when to preserve his life he was forced formally to retract it, became one of the great legends of all mankind.

In the United States today, there are laws being multiplied everywhere which make it heresy to utter the only possible answer to the question of "The Way Out." This book is therefore a "dangerous" one. If the reader should become convinced that its answer to the question is true, and if he should publicly proclaim this fact, he may by authority of laws of the United States and of various states be deprived of employment, public or private; he may be deprived of his right to vote or to run for public office; he is subject to all sorts of spying, snooping, wire-tapping, stool-pigeonry, and slander, from which he will have no legal recourse, and for which his tormentors will be rewarded, some of them most richly. If he is stubborn about it, he may find himself suddenly arrested and sent to prison for a greater or lesser term of years, on the most sophistical pretexts, such as the case of Oscar Wheeler of West Virginia, sentenced to fifteen years for gathering signatures to put his candidacy for the governorship on the ballot.

Yes, it is dangerous to search for "The Way Out," to think any thought not already blessed by the King and Queen, or one of their children, or a High Priest. It is especially dangerous to read this book, unless one is prepared to repeat after Galileo: "I abjure, curse, and detest the error and the heresy of 'The Way Out' and of all Communist ideas."

It must be admitted that millions of Americans today, like Galileo, find discretion the better part of valor, so far as their public utterances and professions are immediately concerned. While seeing ever more the forbidden truth, they obediently vote for the laws placed before them, they vote for resolutions condemning Communism and everything it stands for, they kneel before their Inquisition. But in the very moment while they recant the "heresy," like Galileo they stubbornly murmur to themselves: "But the earth does move."

Unlike Galileo's time, today's problem does not present itself entirely as that of the isolated individual against the all-powerful Inquisition.

Today truth has powerful and growing organizations fighting for its recognition. Above all, today we have a Communist Party which, day in and day out, month after month and year after year, never tiring, never compromising, never wavering, spreads the truth and organizes the seekers for truth, organizes the masses of the people, for "The Way Out."

This book is part of the Communist Party's answer to the Modern Inquisition, that "the earth does move." Unlike Galileo, and his modern prototypes, we refuse to recant and we shout the truth. And we do this in full confidence that the millions of American Galileos who at this moment only mutter the truth under their breath will soon be shouting it aloud with us.

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