



Press Box Red: The Story Of Lester Rodney,

Irwin Silber

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Long before Branch Rickey signed Jackie Robinson to a Brooklyn Dodger contract in 1945, Lester Rodney, the newly hired and first sports editor of the Communist Daily Worker, launched the campaign that proved decisive in eventually breaking baseball's color line. But in the hostile anti-Communist climate of those years and for many years after, Rodney's story remained largely unknown. It therefore came as a surprise to many when Arnold Rampersad, in his authoritative 1997 biography of Jackie Robinson, wrote: /u0022In the campaign to end Jim Crow in baseball, the most vigorous efforts came from the Communist press, most notably from Lester Rodney./u0022 Now Press Box Red tells the story of that remarkable 11-year campaign and of Rodney's unique career covering sports for the Daily Worker until he left the Communist Party in 1958. Press Box Red is packed with first-hand accounts of Rodney's challenges to the high muck-a-mucks of professional and collegiate sports, and contains frank and frequently humorous encounters with owners, managers, and coaches like Branch Rickey, Larry MacPhail, Bill Veeck, Leo Durocher, Casey Stengel, Nat Holman, Clair Bee and numerous athletes including Robinson, Roy Campanella, Joe DiMaggio, Satchel Paige, Peeewe Reese, Joe Louis, Henry Armstrong, and many others. It's a story every fan will love.

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