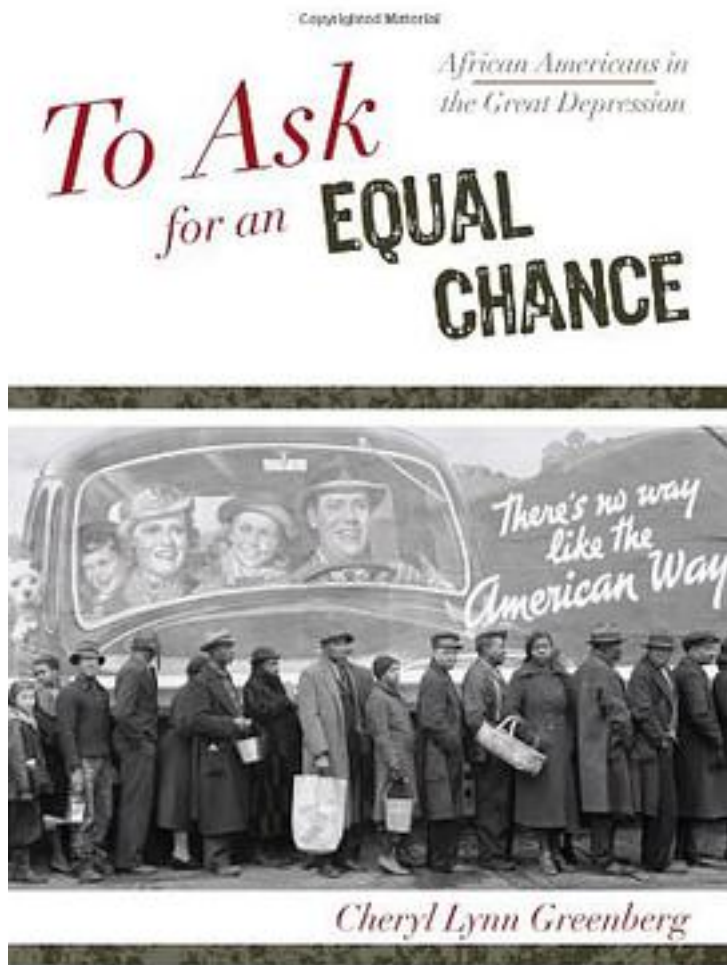


To Ask for an Equal Chance



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The Great Depression hit Americans hard, but none harder than African Americans and the working poor. *To Ask for an Equal Chance* explores black experiences during this period and the intertwined challenges posed by race and class. "Last hired, first fired," black workers lost their jobs at twice the rate of whites, and faced greater obstacles in their search for economic security. Black workers, who were generally urban newcomers, impoverished and lacking industrial skills, were already at a disadvantage. These difficulties were intensified by an overt, and in the South legally entrenched, system of racial segregation and discrimination. New federal programs offered hope as they redefined government's responsibility for its citizens, but local implementation often proved racially discriminatory. As Cheryl Lynn Greenberg makes clear, African Americans were not passive victims of economic catastrophe or white racism; they responded to such challenges in a variety of political, social, and communal ways. The book explores both the external realities facing African Americans and individual and communal responses to them. While experiences varied depending on many factors including class, location, gender and community size, there are also unifying and overarching realities that applied universally. *To Ask for an Equal Chance* straddles the particular, with examinations of specific communities and experiences, and the general, with explorations of the broader effects of racism, discrimination, family, class, and political organizing.

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