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**THE
SCOTTSBORO
BOYS**

*Four Freed!
Five To Go!*

by **ANGELO HERNDON**



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THE SCOTTSBORO BOYS:

Four Freed!

Five to Go!

By ANGELO HERNDON

EUGENE WILLIAMS, Roy Wright, Willie Roberson and Olen Montgomery are free! Let this victory and great cause for jubilation hasten on the struggle for the freedom of the other five boys.

Six years of unyielding struggle of the Negro people, of their supporters, and of friends of democracy and justice the world over—in the U. S. A., London, Moscow, Berlin, Cuba, Mexico and Spain—have wrenched from the hands of Alabama's feudal despots four more intended victims of the rope and faggot.

Congratulations, International Labor Defense, the Communist Party, and the Young Communist League. Congratulations to the organizations of the united Scottsboro Defense Committee, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the League for Industrial Democracy, the Church League for Industrial Democracy (Episcopal), the I.L.D., the Methodist Federation for Social Service and the American Civil Liberties Union. You have scored a smash-hit victory for Negro rights and the preservation of civil liberties.

We of the Young Communist League are proud that we have played a leading role in this noble cause for justice and democracy. In expressing our greetings to the Scottsboro boys and their defenders, we pledge our continued efforts in mobilizing every possible force in the fight for the freedom of the other five. We shall be ever vigilant in bringing to the consciousness of all youth the shameful crime of Scottsboro. We will leave no stone unturned in the fight for the liberation of the Negro people from the rule of Southern landlord oppression.

Alabama's attempt to perpetuate the slave system by framing nine Negroes met with universal opposition from those who have been outraged by this crude type of injustice. The liberty-loving people of the world chorused in repeated determination: *The Scottsboro boys shall not die!* The hundreds and thousands of mass meetings, demonstrations and other dramatic actions struck a ringing blow at Alabama's system of human bondage. The compelling force generated through the organized might of millions wrung from their bloodstained hands this glorious, but partial, victory.

On July 25, 1937, after six long years of endless and tireless work for the freedom of the Scottsboro boys, the news which flashed around the world that four of the boys had been freed came as a thunderbolt of joy and happiness to the hearts of millions. In Harlem, New York, many Negro mothers, who had untiringly followed the Scottsboro case from its beginning, wept for sheer joy. Kerchiefs in hand, they dabbed away almost incessantly at the tears that flowed freely until their warm hearts tired from the excite-

ment. In their happiness, they expressed their kindred feeling of brotherhood with all the members of their race who are degraded and crushed by the iron heel of Southern barbarism. They wanted to share with these mothers the joy which now came after six years of grief and sorrow.

One Negro mother, in a sonorous voice, intoned: "Great God, Scottsboro boys are free! I knew the lynchers would never touch a hair in their heads. O, ye Scottsboro, shame of the lynchers' rule: we will never forget you—you who torture and burn black men! But we've cheated you—four lives you'll never get. O, Scottsboro, now we're wise—five more lives will never satisfy your ravenous thirst for black man's blood!"

Like this Negro mother, white trade unionists, liberals, clergymen, writers and all progressive people who believe that "all men are created equal" have understood that the fight to save the lives of the nine boys is a fight of progressive humanity against the barbarities of an age-worn slave system. The corrupt politicians and other shady characters have fought so stubbornly to send the boys to their death because they, too, have recognized that Scottsboro is a challenge to their vile system of political and economic servitude.

For six years, through falsehoods, intrigue, bribery and intimidation, the State of Alabama has insisted upon the supreme penalty of death for the boys. At the second trial of Haywood Patterson, the late attorney general, Knight, after working himself up in a lather, in a thundering voice of hatred and contempt for the Negro people demanded of the jury:

“Send that black thing [Haywood Patterson—A.H.] to his death. Alabama justice cannot be bought with Jew money from New York.”

RELEASING FOUR TO MURDER FIVE

Of all the inconsistencies, one might be prompted to ask: why have the authorities of Alabama for six years held all nine of the boys guilty of the crime of rape and now, as if by some stroke of magic, they suddenly decided that five of them are innocent? The answer is that they have known from the very beginning that all of the boys are innocent.

In the case of Ozzie Powell, Alabama has laid itself wide open for castigation. Ozzie Powell was exonerated from all charges of rape and sentenced to twenty years for scratching Sheriff Sandlin's throat. The truth of the matter is that Ozzie Powell, in almost insane desperation after more than five years of prison confinement, was provoked to defend himself from the taunts, jibes and physical maulings received from the hands of Sheriff Sandlin. Half of his brain was shot away—his whole body is practically paralyzed from the bullet that almost proved fatal to him. For this, Powell has been sentenced to twenty years.

But, like a thief when caught in the act of committing some terrible crime, the authorities of Alabama have tried to wriggle out of a situation in which they have received scathing admonitions from the working class and prominent liberals. Yes, the whole world knows that the Scottsboro boys are not guilty. Nobody will be fooled by the

insidious move of releasing four in order to murder the other five.

Victoria Price lied defiantly for six years. She swore by the Bible and everything else, as only a disreputable character like her would do, that all nine of the boys raped her in succession. According to her story at the first and other trials that followed, she was thrown on top of sharp jagged rock, in the open gondola car in which they were riding, and the nine Negroes ravished her one after the other. Clearly the State of Alabama now admits that she was giving false testimony.

Dr. D. R. Bridges, who examined her, testified that there was no evidence of scratches or cuts on her back, nor of such injuries as would be expected after such an experience. It seems rather interesting in view of the fact that she claimed to have fought back vigorously in trying to keep the Negroes off, that there were no bruises or scratches on her back—a remarkable back she has! The examination of Victoria Price by Dr. Bridges on the day of the alleged rape indicated that she had not had intercourse for at least twenty-four hours.

Dr. Bridges also testified that she was calm and showed no signs of excitement such as would be inevitable after mass rape.

RUBY BATES DECLARES BOYS INNOCENT

Ruby Bates, who repudiated her previous testimony, blasted the whole frameup when she testified that neither she nor Victoria Price had been touched by the nine

Negroes. Since then Ruby Bates has been working for the freedom of the Scottsboro boys.

Her conscience would not allow her to be a tool of the white ruling class in sending nine innocent boys to death. The Scottsboro case had such a strong influence upon her that she has now dedicated her life to the fight for the freedom of the Scottsboro boys. Her deep-going experience with the attempt of the whiteslave masters to use her as a pawn in their dastardly game of oppression and exploitation caused her to recognize in this fight that only through the united efforts of Negro and white workers can there be any real solution of their mutual problems. Such courage and heroism should serve as a symbol of greater solidarity in the struggle of Negro and white oppressed.

But the State of Alabama concurred in Victoria Price's perjured testimony and held her up as a glowing example of true white womanhood. Upon the words of a habitual prostitute, whose purity of womanhood and character had long passed into obscurity, the lynchers sought to snuff out the lives of nine black boys.

The trial was a farce, as all the others have proved to be. Guilty or innocent, Alabama wanted nothing short of the death penalty. On April 8, 1931, an all-white jury found the boys guilty, and Judge Hawkins set the date of execution for July 10.

A UNITED WORLD-WIDE STRUGGLE

It was at this time that the I.L.D. stepped in and demanded a halt to this attempted wholesale massacre. It

dispatched the following wire to Judge Hawkins and the Governor of Alabama:

"We demand stay of execution and opportunity to investigate and prepare for new trial or appeal. We demand right for our attorney to interview defendants and obtain formal approval of defense counsel. And, above all, we demand absolute safety for the defendants against lynching."

Joseph R. Brodsky, chief counsel for the I.L.D., went down to Alabama and made application for the arrest of judgment against the boys. Upon his arrival, he was met by a howling mob of lynchers. In his efforts to have the convictions set aside, Hawkins immediately overruled Brodsky's request. Brodsky took exception to the judge's ruling, whereupon the judge overruled his exception. Brodsky then countered with an exception to Hawkins' decision overruling his previous request to except.

The judge became so angry that he made a grand exit through the rear door of the courtroom. In all the confusion, Brodsky turned round, and was suddenly seized by a husky man who said:

"Come on, yah Jew bitch! We'll show you how to defend nigger rapers."

When the execution date, July 10, was set aside, the I.L.D. mobilized all of its forces for a fight to the finish. J. Louis Engdahl, late chairman of the I.L.D., with Mother Ida Wright, toured twenty-six European countries on behalf of the Scottsboro boys.

In Germany, Scotland, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, Belgium and the Soviet Union, the message of Scottsboro was spread far and wide. In his sincere devotion and untiring

work for the Scottsboro boys, Engdahl lost his health and died a few months later in Moscow from pneumonia.

The Communist Party and the Young Communist League were the great stimulating forces which brought Scottsboro before the broad masses of organized labor. In cooperation with the I.L.D., the question of Negroes serving on juries was raised for the first time. Because this question struck at the root of Negro oppression, and because of the mass fight carried on around it, the United States Supreme Court was forced to reverse the convictions of the Scottsboro boys for the second time. Like the infamous Dred Scott decision, in which the Negro-hating Judge Taney ruled that a Negro "has no rights a white man is bound to respect," Scottsboro became the beacon light and symbol of the struggle of the Negro for complete freedom.

All over the country, the Communist Party and the Young Communist League agitated and fought for the unity of all workers and progressive liberals in defense of the Scottsboro boys. Communists were jailed, terrorized and beaten for daring to protest against this gross travesty upon justice. In Chemnitz, Germany, two white Communists were killed in a demonstration for the Scottsboro boys.

Just as the pioneers of 1776 blazed the trails in search of democracy, freedom and a decent world for human beings to live in, so the Communists were the spearheads who first threw their support around the Scottsboro case. Communists recognized that in order to wage an effective fight it was necessary to expose and publish abroad the denial of elementary human justice, the inhuman exploita-

tion which are invariably imposed upon the Negro by the bourbon ruling class of the South. We Communists are proud of the work that we initiated in the fight for the Scottsboro boys. We will continue to pursue that course, which must result in the freedom of the five remaining Scottsboro boys. In this connection, we want to point out that Samuel Liebowitz, Osmond K. Fraenkel, Walter Pollak and other lawyers have put up a brilliant and wonderful legal fight for the Scottsboro boys. But none of these alone could have freed the four boys nor can they free the other five as a lone fighter. Without the backing of millions behind the legal fight, the Scottsboro boys would already have molded away in their graves.

The understanding of the real significance of the Scottsboro case, and the work which the Communists have carried on, has to an immeasurably large degree contributed to the freeing of four of the boys. The fight of the Communists in the trade unions for Negro rights and the decisive turn of thousands of Negroes to the unions of the Committee for Industrial Organization helped to crystallize the broad expression of varied sentiment which made possible this victory.

THE FIVE OTHERS MUST GO FREE

When the jail doors swung open, and Eugene Williams, Roy Wright, Willie Robertson and Olen Montgomery walked out into the free, wide-open spaces, Alabama suffered a terrible defeat. By releasing the boys after six years of struggling desperately to get their blood, the authorities

of Alabama admitted to the whole world that all nine of the boys are completely innocent of the charges for which they have given the best part of their youthful lives. Alabama has admitted its own guilt of wrongfully, wilfully and intentionally persecuting and torturing these boys for six years in the shadow of the electric chair.

The Communist Party and the Young Communist League demand full compensation for every day of these boys' wasted and tortured lives. The authorities of Alabama are guilty of premeditating murder. They must be made to pay.

Communists pledge their continued support to the fight for the vindication of the other boys. One important victory has been won. This should stimulate even more and greater activity on the part of all who have thus far helped to make possible this partial victory. Those desiring to maintain liberty and democracy should redouble their efforts on behalf of the five Scottsboro boys who must be freed.

Protest resolutions and telegrams must flood the offices of Alabama authorities demanding the freedom of the Scottsboro boys. Funds with which to continue the fight are also needed. Contributions can be made to the Scottsboro Committee, 112 East 19th Street, New York City.

To the youth of our generation Scottsboro is a tragic lesson of what a future under reaction would hold in store. It spells death especially to the younger Negro generation. But through the victory of Scottsboro, a future which is bright with hope, confidence and the attributes of man's

ability to abolish exploitation of man by man, can be realized.

When the history of the Scottsboro persecution and frame-up is written it will go down in the shame and infamy which it has earned for itself. On the other hand, the lessons of Scottsboro will be a medium through which will be cemented indestructible bonds of unity between Negro and white workers.

But, to hasten Scottsboro on into the chambers of horror, it must be placed there without the satisfaction of having devoured five of its victims—with little or no opposition. The floodgates of our indignation must be let loose in torrents of protests that will make Alabama retreat in its aim to commit mass murder.

Therefore, the Young Communists of America urge the progressive youth of our country to give their unstinted support to the fight to save five of our brothers who share and suffer with us all the horrors of a dying world. Young Catholics, Gentiles, Jews, and Negro and white—Scottsboro is calling you! Five black boys—who have grown into manhood behind prison bars—need you! Will you lend them a hand? You cannot fail them—if you do this, then you are jeopardizing your own rights for a peaceful and happy existence in this world of ours.

To the Negro people, Communists pledge their undying loyalty and devotion to the cause for Negro emancipation—which is the struggle of all people who wish to be free. We recognize that the fight of any people for freedom and independence is not an easy one. The trials and tribulations which must be endured are tremendous. It

took years of agitation and hard and painstaking work to crush the black monster of chattel slavery. There is no room for vacillation. Every hard-won victory must be followed up with even more determination; to the end that our goal shall soon be realized. Those who flinch and stand in the way of progress must be brushed aside.

In all worthy causes there are to be found Judases who would sell their brothers' flesh for thirty pieces of silver. Plagued with the irresistible itch to curry favor of their masters, nothing is too base for them to do. The work of such people is always utilized by the enemy to prevent any attempt at unity among those whom it exploits. The following words of Dr. G. Lake Imes, Secretary of Tuskegee Institute, are being used by Alabama authorities to break the unity of the Negro people in their fight for the Scottsboro boys:

"We can look to the white man in the South for justice—it makes me feel proud to be a citizen of Alabama. I was one of the volunteer committee that went to Kilby Prison and pleaded in vain with these Scottsboro boys to put their cases in the hands of Alabama attorneys."

When servile creatures of that type are at the head of institutions of learning is it any wonder that the road of Negro liberation is beset with damnable obstacles?

Perhaps Mr. Imes does not know that the slave masters of the South realize full well that their institutions of slavery are built upon volcanoes, which may burst forth at any moment, and give freedom to their victims. That is why they are so persistent in their efforts to burn the Scottsboro boys. It is for the same reason that they point

to such Negroes who always want to "trust their interests to the good will" of their white rulers. They seek through such means to demobilize all the energies of the Negro people. But this only points to the heinous crimes which the slave lords wish to cover up.

It is another indictment of their vile system of economic robbery.

There shall be no compromise in the fight to free the five remaining boys. The boys are innocent and they must go free.

6 Years of Struggle

BEHIND the six long years of the struggle that wrested four of the nine Scottsboro boys from the lynch courts of Alabama stands the Daily Worker . . . the one American newspaper that fought without rest from the very first to rouse progressive men and women against this most shameful frameup. Nor has the Daily Worker relaxed its efforts in behalf of the five still languishing in Kilby Prison. Here is but one of thousands of instances where the Daily Worker was the first voice raised against injustice . . . against the bigotry and prejudice that have been used to divide the working class.

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