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They Shall Not Die!

Stop The Legal Lynching !

THE STORY OF SCOTTSBORO IN PICTURES



● Drawings by A. Refregier ●

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INTRODUCTION

Scottsboro is a small town with a population of 2,000, located in the Eastern part of the state of Alabama. The eyes of the world are today focused on this typical Southern village, with its backward hill people. Overnight, all over the world, the name of Scottsboro was written big upon the front pages of newspapers large and small, and uttered by the lips of black and white, native and foreign people.

The Scottsboro case has been a thunderbolt that has moved the Negro masses and advanced white workers into stubborn struggle to resist the sharpening terror. It has hurled these peoples into powerful mass action. It has ripped the cover off the monstrous system of national oppression of the Negro peoples, exposing it in all its vicious nakedness. It has brought quaking fear to the murderous landowners and capitalists and their hangers-on.

Why such mighty mass action? Why such furious mass anger? Why have the white ruling class officials of the state of Alabama trembled in their boots upon receiving thousands of protest telegrams and resolutions from the angered masses all over the world? Why have government officials in foreign countries, and especially in the United States, hidden in deadly fear before the mass protest demonstrations of Negro and white toilers against this hideous frame-up? Why have mayors and other city officials been forced by the mass pressure of the working class to send their protests to the Alabama authorities? Why have scores of prominent men and women — famous writers, scientists and artists such as Albert Einstein, Theodore Dreiser, Langston Hughes, Edna Vincent Millay, Lincoln Steffens, John Dos Passos, Franz Boaz, Malcolm Cowley, Maxim Gorky, Leo Tolstoi, Eugene Gordon, Henri Barbusse, Sherwood Anderson, Waldo Frank, Mary Heaton Vorse, Michael Gold, Charles R. Walker, Floyd Dell, and many others—joined with

the hosts of angered and aroused masses in protest and demanded the immediate release of the innocent boys? Why have the workers, black and white, faced the nightsticks and tear-gas bombs of the bosses' savage and blood-thirsty police, the gunfire of uniformed thugs, to protest the Scottsboro verdict? Why have the boss-controlled reformist organizations, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the International Ministers Alliance, etc., betrayed at every turn the nine Scottsboro boys? What is the role of the working class organizations of Negro and white, the League of Struggle for Negro Rights and the International Labor Defense, in the case, together with many other organizations?

These questions of vital importance, which concern the lives and liberty of the nine boys, are answered graphically in the following pages, in the pictures and the running story that accompanies them.

The Scottsboro case is a symbol of the bloody reign of American white ruling class persecution of the Negroes. It reveals the robbery and slavery of the Negro masses. It lays bare the fact that the barbarous oppression of the Negroes is a link in the chain of American capitalist exploitation and plunder of the entire working class. It has thrown the light on the close relationship between the Negro misleaders and organizations, e. g. the N. A. A. C. P., and the white ruling class, in their betrayal of the struggles of the Negro masses.

Revolutionary organizations are building up a mighty mass defense campaign against this special terror. They have appealed to the world's toilers to join the united front movement of the Negro masses and black and white workers. The response to this appeal has shown the willingness and readiness of broad sections of the working people to struggle, to take the streets and demonstrate, before American consuls and embassies and ruling class officials, demanding the immediate release of the nine boys.

The toiling masses throughout the world will not allow the capitalists and their courts in Alabama to carry through unnoticed their intended legal lynching of these nine victims of American "democracy." Thousands upon thousands of workers have joined the

mass defense movement and have pledged themselves to fight to save these boys as part of the struggle of the working class for better conditions.

The compilation of the facts in this pamphlet has been the result of the energetic labor of worker-artists and worker-writers. This pamphlet can help to build up the defense movement and spread broadcast the revolutionary working-class ideas of solidarity of black and white, and build a fighting alliance of black and white workers as the only method that will force the bosses to open the prison doors that hold these youthful victims.

The sketches in this pamphlet were drawn by a worker-artist, A. Refregier, a member of the John Reed Club, and were first printed in the LIBERATOR, the fighting organ of the League of Struggle for Negro Rights. The running story that accompanies them was written by Elizabeth Lawson, Managing Editor of the LIBERATOR.

The toiling masses throughout the world are asked to read this pamphlet, arm themselves with the facts in the Scottsboro lynch frame-up, pass them on to their employed and unemployed worker-brothers, and assist the Negro masses and white workers to build up this mighty mass protest movement for the unconditional release of the nine Negro boys.

B. D. AMIS.



The Story of Scottsboro in Pictures

IN 1931, in the Southern part of the United States, where Negroes are still held in virtual slavery and subjected to the most brutal terror, there lived nine young Negro boys of working-class families.

In Chattanooga, Tennessee, lived Haywood Patterson, 17 years old; Eugene Williams, 13; and the brothers Roy and Andy Wright, 17 and 14 years old. In Atlanta, Georgia, lived Clarence Norris, 19; Charlie Weems, 20; and Ozie Powell, 14.

Olen Montgomery, 17 years old, lived in Monroe, Georgia, and Willie Roberson, 17, lived in Columbus, Georgia.

Like millions of other young and adult workers, these boys were out of work. Dying capitalism can no longer provide jobs for its workers. Tens of thousands of working-class families are starving today. The families of these boys were starving. Negro workers are always hardest hit in times of unemployment and mass misery. These nine boys tried desperately to help their starving families. But there was no work to be found. Conditions went from bad to worse. No food. Rent due. Mothers and little sisters and brothers hungry, facing death by starvation.

The nine boys determined to leave home to try to find work. Their families gave reluctant permission.



ON March 25, 1931, a freight train running through Jackson County, Alabama, carried many "passengers," most of them being jobless Negro workers bound for Memphis and other places in search of jobs on the river boats.

Among these "passengers" were the nine young Negro boys. They had jumped on the train at various places. Most of them had never seen each other before. They travelled in different parts of the train.

There were also on the freight train seven white men and two girls dressed in men's clothing—mill girls who had been forced into prostitution by low wages and lack of work.

A white boy moving about the train pushed against a Negro worker, who protested. All of the workers on the freight, white and Negro, would be branded by the bosses as bums. But so rigid is the system of Jim Crowism in the South, that even on freight trains "niggers" must "keep in their place." In the fight that followed between some of the white boys and some of the Negroes, the Negroes got the better of the scrap and the whites jumped off the train.



THEIR minds inflamed by the race hatred poison of the bosses and the licking they had been given, the white boys on leaving the train went to a station and told the story of the fight—in their own way, of course. This story was telegraphed to Paint Rock, Alabama, where the train was due to stop.

Now, in the South, it is a “crime” for a Negro to defend himself when attacked by a white man. The bosses determined to make an example of the Negroes. A deputy sheriff and many deputized mountaineers and business men surrounded the train when it stopped at Paint Rock.

The Negroes who had been involved in the fight had jumped off the train before it reached Paint Rock. The only Negroes left on the train were the nine young Negro boys. A few white men and the two white girl hoboes dressed in men’s clothing were still on the train. Armed deputies arrested the nine Negro boys. The charge at first was that of fighting with white boys.



IN searching the train, the deputies saw three white hoboes getting out of the gondola car. But two turned out to be women in men's clothing.

Here were all of the elements for a fine Southern frame-up! The charge against the Negro boys of beating up the white boys was quickly dropped. Eagerly the bosses raised the old lying charge of "rape."

The Negro masses were showing signs of revolt against their terrible conditions. Negroes were even daring to demand payment of their wages! And most horrible in the eyes of the bosses—white and Negro workers were uniting in struggle under revolutionary leadership in some sections even of the South. The carefully built-up wall of race prejudice with which the bosses seek to separate white and Negro toilers was crumbling!

Here was the chance to throw nine dead young bodies into the face of the Negro masses! Here was a fine chance to terrorize the Negro workers and poor farmers. Here was a chance to stir up race hatred among the white masses by painting the Negro workers as "born rapists," by pretending that white women were always in danger from Negro "rapists."

And trade was dull. A lynching or a lynch trial would bring out great crowds and help the business men.

And—thought the lynchers—nobody would bother about the fate of nine "niggers"—and working-class "niggers" at that!



THE two white prostitutes, when first questioned, said plainly that the Negro boys had nothing to do with them. But the state solicitor urged them on. "Go ahead and say they did it," he told the two women. "That boy attacked you, didn't he? Go ahead and say that he did it!" And finally the girls, both of whom were well known in Chattanooga and elsewhere as prostitutes, were prevailed upon to "identify" the boys and to tell an unbelievable story of "rape."

The two white women now ceased to be arrested vagrants and became "pure" and holy examples of "outraged white womanhood."

The boys were thrown into the Gladsden jail, where they were brutally beaten with clubs and blackjacks until they presented a picture of bruised heads, swollen and discolored eyes, cut lips and blood streaming from many wounds.

Finally they were arraigned at the County seat, Scottsboro. Monday, April 6, was selected as the day of the trial, because it was "Fair Day," or "Horse Swapping Day," when thousands of mountaineers would come into town.



ON April 6, the little town of Scottsboro, inhabited by two thousand people, held ten thousand mountaineers, many of them armed. The usually deserted streets were crowded with automobiles.

The boss-incited lynch-mob of the most backward people packed the court-house and surrounded it. A brass-band was provided by the bosses to serenade the jury as soon as guilty verdicts could be brought in.

The whole Scottsboro trial was just a legal substitute for a lynching. The judge, and a hand-picked jury of white business men and backward mountaineers, were to act as lynchers; the court-room would take the place of the woods, where lynchings are usually committed; and instead of a rope, there would be waiting—the state's electric chair.

The nine victims, caught in the trap of boss-justice, were denied the right to inform their parents of their plight, denied the right to choose a lawyer. The only lawyers the boys had were two who actually helped in the lynch frame-up. Stephen Roddy, the drunkard Klansman sent by the boot-licking Ministers Alliance of Chattanooga, stated openly that he was there merely as an "observer."



INSIDE the court a ghastly farce was played. Within a few hours, without the calling of a single witness for the defense outside of the framed-up boys themselves, and on the unsupported evidence of the two white prostitutes, the first two Negro lads, Charlie Weems and Clarence Norris, were sentenced to die. In quick succession, Haywood Patterson and then five more in a group, quickly followed by the last little boy, Roy Wright, were put on "trial." All but Roy were swiftly sentenced to death. In Roy's case, the bosses made a "mere" life imprisonment in southern dungeons for this child. A small minority of the jurors held out for a life imprisonment for Roy. This caused a mistrial to be declared. The brass band furnished by the mill-bosses hailed the first death verdict. The boss-incited, backward crowd cheered. The jurors listened, and speeded through the other death verdicts.

Little Roy was thrown into Birmingham County Jail to await a new "trial." The eight boys railroaded to the electric chair were hurried off to Montgomery, there to begin the torture of waiting in the death cells at Kilby prison.



BUT now a furious storm of protest broke over the heads of the astonished boss-lynchers. The Communist Party and its press had exposed the lynch frame-up. The League of Struggle for Negro Rights, the International Labor Defense and the Communist Party roused the masses, black and white, to angry protests. A mass defense movement was built up and a mass fight begun against the legal lynchings and for the unconditional release of the nine innocent boys.

On May 1, 1931, more than 300,000 Negro and white workers, East and West, North and South, demonstrated in 110 cities in the United States, demanding the release of the Scottsboro victims. Conferences of working-class organizations met in many cities to build a mass defense for the boys. One of the most remarkable of these conferences was the All-Southern Scottsboro United Front Defense Conference held in Chattanooga, May 31, 1931. It was attended by over 200 Negro and white *Southern* delegates. Everywhere, the white workers were coming to a recognition of the fact that the Scottsboro lynch verdicts were an attack on the entire working-class, white and black. Everywhere, they rallied to the building of a fighting alliance of white and Negro workers against the white ruling class.

Tens of thousands of telegrams were sent to Gov. B. M. Miller of Montgomery, Alabama, demanding the release of the Scottsboro lynch-verdict victims. In far-away countries—the Soviet Union, Germany, France, Cuba, Mexico, etc., millions of workers added thunderous voices to the roar of protest.

Competent lawyers were engaged by the International Labor Defense, an organization of Negro and white workers, to defend the boys.



FRIGHTENED by the sight of Negro and white workers joining hands to fight against the lynch verdicts, the bosses, North and South, tried desperately to stop the protest meetings and telegrams, to prevent the building of a mass defense movement.

Is this attempt, the bosses were ably aided by the leadership of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. This group, far too respectable to enter into the case of nine poor working-class boys charged with "rape," had not stirred a finger until the fury of the masses forced them to act. They then tried to head the movement in order to be-

head it. They refused to have anything to do with the organizations defending the boys, the International Labor Defense and other groups. Shamelessly they lied about the facts of the case, tried to cover up the hideous crime of the bosses against the toiling masses.

The N. A. A. C. P. screamed with fury—but not at the lynchers! It screamed at the workers, Negro and white, because they were throwing a glaring spotlight upon the lynchers and exposing the whole rotten capitalist system. More—the workers were exposing the alliance of the N. A. A. C. P. with the boss-lynchers and their system.

Taking the fight for a new trial for the boys to the Alabama Supreme Court, the International Labor Defense exposed the Scottsboro case as a murderous frame-up.



THE bosses had thought that no one would care about the fate of nine jobless "niggers." And now were heard the voices of millions, roaring protest.

The bosses had hoped to throw in the faces of the down-trodden Negroes, nine charged young bodies,

as another warning to these oppressed masses. And now these same nine boys have become symbols of a relentless fight of the Negro masses for their rights.

Always the bosses had tried to divide the white workers from the Negroes—and here were white workers, taking their places in the very forefront of the struggle for the freedom of nine black boys!

Scottsboro stands today as a symbol of the national oppression of the Negroes, of the bosses' oppression of the whole working-class. The cause of the nine Scottsboro boys is the cause of all the workers, Negro and white.

The working-class must renew and intensify its protests. A fighting alliance of Negro and white workers, giant militant demonstrations, a flood of protest telegrams that will throw fear into the white rulers, the building of a powerful mass defense movement of the Negro masses and black and white workers—these alone will break open the doors of Kilby Prison and free the nine framed Scottsboro boys.

Read

The Liberator

weekly newspaper fighting against all persecutions of the Negro masses and for unconditional political and social equality

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