

Chronology of the 34-Month Mass Fight for 9 Negro Boys

Nine Innocent Lads Menaced by New Lynch Trials and Organized Lynch Gangs

By CYRIL BRIGGS

The nine Scottsboro Boys, facing a new lynch trial on Nov. 27, and further menaced by the State-fostered lynch-gang conspiracy exposed by the "Daily Worker," have been in the shadow of the electric chair for the past two years and eight months. Their lives have been several times threatened by lynch gangs and by prison guards and gangsters introduced into the prison.

\$1.80 a Week in South Carolina

Get Six Hours Work in Seven Days

(By a Negro Worker Correspondent)

COLUMBIA, S. C.—Enclosed please find something as a payment for the Daily Worker. We Negroes are catching hell now in South Carolina. We get only one day's work per week. \$1.80 for six hours. We must pay rent out of this, also eat something. This is what we are getting now all over South Carolina. This is part of the New Deal.



investigation and trial in Baltimore of the Armwood lynching on the Eastern shore of Maryland. There will also be an anti-lynch conference, organized and held under the auspices of the League of Struggle of Negro Rights.

The common attitude of Governor Ritchie and Attorney-General Knight in states so widely separated show the spread of lynch and murder terror throughout the South and its encouragement by the responsible authorities.

The increase in lynch and murder terror, and the growing mountain of evidence of the connection of the authorities with it, as part of the drive against the living and social conditions of the Negro masses, the increasing use of force against all sections of the working class, both white and Negro, in their struggles for better living conditions, has made it necessary to begin at Baltimore a mass counter offensive against lynch and murder terror. This will be the main purpose of the conference of the League of Struggle for Negro Rights.

TERROR

Proclaims Watchword Of "Land, Freedom And Equality"

for fighting against it; the struggles of the sharecroppers in Alabama against serfdom, which is only a first step in the struggle for land; the growing solidarity of white and Negro workers as shown in the struggles of recent years.

Thus extends the path to freedom. No utopian dreams of escape to Africa preached by Garvey, but a struggle here for the freedom and land in the Southern Black Belt, for the right of the millions of Negro people there to say: This land which we have tilled for generations belongs to us; these counties which hold our majorities we will weld into a new state where we shall have authority and where the whites as a minority will have equal rights with us. It is here that the Negro people shall have the right of self-determination—the right, if they choose, to proclaim an independent country.

Only then will the American Negroes appear upon the world stage as an independent and free people, equal to all and subservient to none.

A Call to White Tollers

And to the white workers it must be said: Without the Negro masses you cannot be free, with them the future belongs to you. The Negro workers are your powerful black hand. Would you go to battle with one arm severed? Would you not equip that arm with the best of weapons? Then disown the vile slander against the Negro people which has been foisted upon you, step forth free from the filth of race hatred, to claim the Negro masses as your friend and ally.

Arrested on March 25, 1931, the boys were first charged with hoboing. This charge later changed to rape when two white girls were discovered on the freight. Girls at first refused to accuse the boys of rape. But later, threatened with prosecution on their widely known record as prostitutes, one of the girls, Victoria Price, accused all nine boys of having raped her. Ruby Bates still held out, but later gave in to the coercion of State officials.

On April 2, the Daily Worker began the first expose of the Scottsboro frame-up.

Rush Through Lynch Verdicts

April 6—Trials of the boys open at Scottsboro before Judge E. A. Hawkins. Denied the right to select their own attorneys, tried by all-white juries, eight of the boys were speedily condemned to burn in the electric chair. A mistrial in the case of Roy Wright, 14 years old at the time, prevented a unanimous lynch conviction. The trials were deliberately set for horse-swapping day in Scottsboro as an additional attraction to draw visitors from the outlying districts. Outside the court, a brass band furnished by the local mill bosses, hailed the verdicts with a rendition of "Happy Days Are Here Again."

April 9—Death sentences pronounced on eight of the boys, and date of execution set for July 10.

Masses In Indignant Protests

The International Labor Defense enters the case. Its attorney, Gen. George W. Chamlee, gives notice of appeal. The Communist Party, the I.L.D. and the League of Struggle for Negro Rights roused the white and Negro masses to angry protests. A thunder of protest rises all over the country and is echoed throughout the world.

June 22—Judge Hawkins overrules all motions for new trials. I. L. D. gives notice of appeal to the Alabama Supreme Court.

Jan. 21, 1932, Supreme Court of Alabama hears the appeal.

Ala. Supreme Court Upholds Verdicts

March 24, 1932, Alabama Supreme Court upholds lynch verdicts against 7 of the boys, grants new trial to Eugene Williams. Chief Justice Anderson in dissenting opinion admits that none of the boys had had a fair trial.

March 25—I.L.D. files petition in U. S. Supreme Court for new hearing.

Oct. 10.—U. S. Supreme Court hears arguments on appeal. Defers decision.

Mass Fight Wins New Trials

Nov. 7—U. S. Supreme Court hands down decision, on eve of presidential election, granting new trials to the boys, but ignoring constitutional questions raised by the I.L.D. Scottsboro protest demonstrations held throughout the world. Demonstrators before U. S. Supreme Court building attacked by Washington police.

Nov. 21—J. Louis Engdahl dies in Moscow following strenuous European Scottsboro defense tour with Mrs. Ada Wright, Scottsboro mother.

March 7, 1933—Change of venue granted. New trial set for Decatur.

March 28, 1933—New trials open in Decatur, Ala. I.L.D. challenges jury system of South on exclusion of Negroes from jury. Haywood Patterson first of boys to be re-tried.

April 7—Ruby Bates appears as defense witness, repudiating her former testimony, causing great sensation. Lester Carter, one of the male companions of the two white girls, also appears for defense. Attorney General Knight attacks Ruby Bates as having "sold out" the South.

Mass Upsurge Answers Patterson Verdict

April 9, 1933—Palm Sunday. Grinning, all-white jury brings in lynch verdict against Haywood Patterson. Harlem in angry upsurge. White and Negro toilers throughout country answer lynch verdict with indignant protests and iron determination that "the Scottsboro Boys Shall Not Die."

April 17—Judge Horton postpones indefinitely further lynch proceedings.

May 8-9, 1933—5,000 Negro and white workers in Scottsboro protest march to Washington place demands on President Roosevelt and Congress for release of the boys, and for adoption and enforcement of Bill of Civil Rights for Negroes drawn up by L.S. N.R. and carried to Washington by the marchers.