

Negro steel workers in Youngstown, Pa. They are for the mass struggle policy to free the 9 Scottsboro boys.

The N.A.A.C.P.—Assistant Hangman

By HARRY HAYWOOD

What has prevented the execution of the Scottsboro boys? Why were they not burned on schedule on June 10, 1930?

There is only one answer: because the workers of the world roared their protest. Because the International Labor Defense, the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, and every working-class group throughout the world turned upon the lynchers the glaring spotlight of exposure. Squirring in this fierce light, they were forced to stop their bloody work.

What did this spotlight reveal? It revealed in all of its hideous nakedness the system of serfdom and robbery of the Negro masses. It revealed the nature of boss-class justice in the courts. It revealed how these courts are the instruments of the slave-drivers and lynchers for the purpose of maintaining the whole system of super-exploitation of the Negro masses.

The lynchers knew that this exposure of their system would weaken the authority of their courts. They feared that it would awaken the Negro masses to a deeper sense of the injustice of the system, and stimulate among these masses a desire to struggle against their oppressors. This would make their rule more difficult.

But all of those who wished to save the nine Scottsboro boys, all the workers who hated the lynchers and their system, were glad of this spotlight. For they knew that it was this alone that saved the innocent boys from the electric chair.

But the enemies of the boys hated the roar of the workers' voices. All those who wished to see the boys die, all who feared to disturb the slavery and terror of boss rule, banded together and shouted: "Take away the spotlight! Let the voices of the workers be stilled! Do not disturb the lynchers at their work. Do not anger the slave-drivers!"

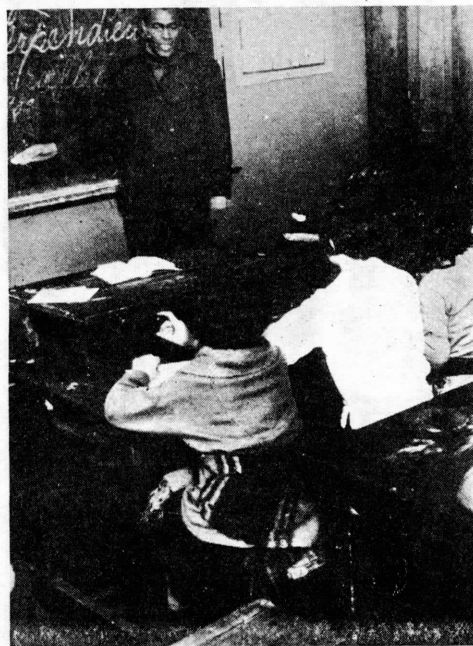
One of the loudest voices in this pack was the voice of the N.A.A.C.P. It screamed with anger. At the lynchers? No! It screamed at those who mercilessly held the spotlight upon the lynchers.

The N.A.A.C.P. entered the case to defend

the lynchers, and their system, and not the intended victims of the lynching. They defended the court which sentenced them and did not defend the victims. They hired the lawyer Roddy, who betrayed the nine Negro boys in the trial, and they did not defend the victims of Roddy's treachery. The N.A.A.C.P. protested against calling the prosecution and trial of nine innocent boys an outrage, and refused to defend the victims of this outrage. They were concerned with maintaining the confidence of the American masses in the courts that perpetrate legal lynchings like that against the nine Scottsboro boys, but they were not concerned with saving these intended victims from the outrage of the court. They raised the cry of the "red menace" even more loud than the lynchers, thus putting weapons into the hands of the slave-drivers and lynchers.

Why?

Because the official leadership of the N.A.A.C.P. does not represent the interests of the



An American Negro teaching English to Russian workers' children. In Moscow.

Negro toilers. It represents that class among the Negroes which has a stake in the system of exploitation and segregation—the Negro bourgeoisie. The ruling white imperialists which demands the lion's share of the profits coming from the special exploitation of the Negro toilers, in the industries, and on the plantations, hands to the Negro bourgeoisie the remaining juicy crumbs of exorbitant profits to be gained from the perpetuation of the Negro ghettos. This Negro class which includes the real estate brokers, the owners of insurance companies, the bankers, and other such commercial groups, also a section of the most influential Negro professionals are interested in maintaining the Negro ghettos as the basis of their existence.

In this manner the white ruling class fosters a buffer class between itself and the Negro masses, an ally which it uses to throttle the growing militancy of the Negro toilers against their brutal oppression. It is precisely this community of interests, which is the basis of the "holy alliance" between the white imperialist masters and their Negro reformist lackeys against the Negro masses. These masses must not be blinded by the phrases of these reformists who wage sham battles against the white ruling class in their quarrel for larger share of the profits.

Therefore the growing unity of Negro and white workers, as in the fight against the Scottsboro frame-up by attacking the whole system of segregation and exploitation threatens the very existence of this parasitic Negro bourgeoisie—and threatens the leadership of its chief representative, the N.A.A.C.P. (the Whites, Pickens, Du Bois, etc.) professional racketeers battering on the misery of the Negro masses. It is apparent from the above facts that the role of the N.A.A.C.P. in the Scottsboro case, stands exposed as that of assistant hangman to the bosses. Therefore the struggle of the workers for the freedom of the Scottsboro boys, and against lynching, legal and otherwise, must have as one of its chief centers of attack, the N.A.A.C.P. and the whole tribe of Negro reformists.