

# Decatur Trials Prove: No Justice in Boss Courts

Answer Lynch Verdicts! Build Mass Defense Which Alone Can Wrest Boys from Lynchers

By CYRIL BRIGGS

The Decatur lynch court has again spoken in tones of undisguised hatred and blood lust against the oppressed Negro people. An Alabama all-white jury has returned another lynch verdict against one of the Scottsboro boys. Judge Callahan, who in his charge to the juries openly directed the lynch verdicts and on both occasions neglected even to instruct the juries to consider a possible acquittal, has celebrated the new verdict by speedily setting Feb. 2 for the electrocution of Haywood Patterson and Clarence Norris.

The two trials have been conducted without the slightest pretense of impartiality or justice. The mask of "impartiality" and "fairness" stands stripped from the capitalist courts. The trials are convincing proof that only the mass fight, developed to even greater heights, can wrest the Scottsboro boys from the bloody hands of the lynchers and their courts.

## Lynch Incitement Prelude.

The trials were preceded by a campaign of lynch incitement throughout the South: the double lynching of Dan Pippen, Jr., and A. T. Harden in Tuscaloosa, Ala., the lynching of Dennis Cross, a paralytic Negro, in the same town; the fiendish lynching of Geo. Armwood in Maryland and a whole series of murderous attacks, still growing in volume, against the Negro masses, including the lynch murder of James Matthews by a guard on Welfare Island, and the Tammany police-instigated man hunt against Negro workers in Central Park.

The lynch preparations against the Scottsboro boys and their defenders were given the stamp of approval by the white ruling class and its courts throughout the country. In Maryland, Euel Lee was legally murdered by the state. The U. S. Federal Court not only refused to intervene to stop this legal murder but started proceedings to disbar Bernard for daring to defend the framed Negro. In Washington, the U. S. Supreme Court reversed a decision by the late Judge Lowell of Boston and handed George Crawford over to the Virginia lynch courts.

## Judge Acted As Prosecutor.

It was under these auspices that the Decatur trials opened. Judge Callahan at the very outset indulged in the provocative refusal to afford

## I.L.D. Wins 30-Day Reprieve for Negro Sentenced to Die

RALEIGH, N. C., Dec. 6.—A thirty-day reprieve for John Lewis Edwards, Negro worker framed on murder charges and sentenced to die Friday, Dec. 8, has been forced from Governor Ehringhaus by mass protest against the lynch-verdict organized by the International Labor Defense.

Meanwhile, defense lawyers retained by the I. L. D. are perfecting the papers to force the Supreme Court to reopen the case. A recent decision of the state supreme court was hurriedly made before the appeal papers were completed, after the lawyers had been informed the case would not be docketed until the spring term.

A series of successful protest meetings have been held in the last few days in Charlotte, Morning Star, Hudson Grove, Columbia, and other cities, not only in the Carolinas but also in other Southern states. Scores of churches, clubs, and other organizations have sent resolutions to the Governor demanding Edwards' immediate release.

A strong campaign is being organized, connected up with an exposure of a group of renegades from the I. L. D., which is doing its best to help police in breaking up the campaign, even calling police to break I. L. D. Meetings.

The I. L. D., pointing out the danger of a let-up in the mass campaign, permitting the lynchers to go through with their murder plans at the end of the 30 days, has called for intensified protest activities.

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adequate protection to the boys and their defenders. The lynch gangs were openly invited to take their prey. This maneuver failing, Judge Callahan constituted himself the chief lyncher. He became the prosecuting attorney. He harrassed the defense at every step. He constantly interfered with the right of the defense attorneys to cross-examine the state witnesses who were perjuring themselves. He protected these witnesses at every point in their contradictory testimony. He joined Attorney-General Knight in inciting race hatred against the defendants and their attorneys. He permitted Knight to openly coach the state witnesses in the very court room itself. He brushed aside the overwhelming evidence of the boys of the charge of "rape" brought by Victoria Price, and repudiated by Ruby Bates, whom Victoria Price claims to have been raped at the same time and in the same box car. He refused a delay to allow the defense to present the deposition of Ruby Bates in the Heywood Paterson trial. And when it was presented in the trial of Norris he ignored it.

## Capitalist Press Admits Travesty of Justice.

The capitalist press is now ready to admit that there is no justice in Alabama. This admission is wrested from them by the glaring events of the Decatur trials. They now declare that the trials were "so raw" that the U. S. Supreme Court will readily grant a reversal of the death verdicts. But this is an attempt to calm the angry masses, white and black, and to build up anew the illusions among the masses in the "impartiality" and "justice" of the capitalist courts. The Alabama courts are now discredited before the masses. The masses are therefore asked to place their trust in the U. S. Supreme Court, which they are told will see that justice is done.

But what is the U. S. Supreme Court but an instrument to maintain the oppression of the Negro People and the exploitation of the black and white toilers? Who are the nine old men on the court of last illusions? They are trusted representatives of the capitalist class. They are gentlemen who have been rewarded for

their services to that class by appointment to the Supreme Court bench. They represent not only the capitalists of the North but the capitalists and landlords of the South. They have consistently shown their bitter hatred of the toiling masses. All of their past decisions have favored the big corporations against the workers.

## Verdicts an Attack on All Workers.

The Decatur verdicts are an attack on the entire working class, as are the growing number of lynchings throughout the country. They are part of the sharpening offensive against the working class, reflected in the fascist trend of the N.R.A., the smashing of strikes, in the attempts to outlaw strikes, the use of military drum-head courts against militant strike leaders, the attempt to destroy the revolutionary unions, the denial of the right of workers to organize into unions of their own choice, the building up of company unions, the strengthening of the bureaucratic leadership in the American Federation of Labor and the deportation drive against foreign-born workers. These attacks are sharpened against the Negro masses, but are at the same time directed against the whole working class, against all forces fighting for relief from the burdens of the crisis which are being increasingly shifted to the backs of the toilers.

## Answer the Lynch Lords! Build Mass Fight!

The Negro masses are aroused. They are convinced that the Decatur trials are a travesty on justice. The white workers throughout the country are rallying to their defense. It is possible to build up a tremendous movement for the defense not only of the Scottsboro boys, but of the entire working class, and for the national liberation of the Negro people.

The International Labor Defense, the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, the revolutionary trade unions, with everywhere the Communist Party and the Communist fractions acting as the driving force, must further develop the world-wide mass fight against the Scottsboro verdicts, against lynching, on the broadest united front basis.

Into every shop, every factory, every neighborhood, every school, every rural district with the message of militant struggle against the lynchers.