

The Scottsboro Lynch Verdict

By TOM JOHNSON.

LEGAL lynching on a mass scale in Alabama is to reach new heights if the plans of the State to burn eight young Negro workers in the electric chair July 10 go through. In addition the State will try to send a ninth Negro youth, Roy Wright, 14, to his death with them.

These nine Negro boys, only one older than 20 years, have been convicted in the Scottsboro circuit court of "forcefully ravaging and debasing" two white girls who were their fellow passengers on a freight train in Northern Alabama. The verdict of the all-white jury of local business men and farmers was returned in a tense atmosphere of lynch law and violence with a menacing crowd of 10,000 white mountaineers milling through the streets of the little village of Scottsboro.

This determination of the white ruling class of Alabama to burn these nine Negro boys in the electric chair is not motivated by any desire to protect the virtue of "white womanhood." In a period of sharpest crisis, with armed warfare between the oppressed croppers and the despotic white landlords smoldering on the countryside, with hundreds of thousands of half-starved Negro workers tramping the streets of the towns and daily growing more desperate and with a revolutionary force new to the South, the Communist Party at work crystallizing and organizing for action this revolutionary ferment, the white bourgeoisie finds it necessary to fling in the face of the oppressed Negro people the charred bodies of nine young workers as a warning that the lynch law of the white bourgeoisie still reigns supreme. It is a grim reminder that the ruling class will sink to any depths of brutality and bloody repression to maintain its oppressive rule and to smash any revolt against this rule. By this act the white bourgeoisie serves notice to the masses of Negro toilers, now stirring restlessly and groping as yet blindly for a way out from their poverty and super-exploitation: "Take warning! Accept starvation and semi-slavery as your inevitable lot, for the first signs of revolt against our rule will be met with the bloody fist of ruling class violence."

The attempt of the white bourgeoisie by means of mass murder, to stem the advance of Negro toilers, with the Negro proletariat marching at the head, must and will fall to the ground. This attempt at legal lynching will react as the greatest impetus to the development of a powerful revolutionary national movement of the Negro masses in the South. On the bloody stage at Scottsboro the white bourgeoisie has unwittingly dramatized in the sharpest and most vivid colors the whole system of national oppression which has as its aim the subjection of a whole nation, millions strong, to the unbridled exploitation of the white rulers.

To the most backward Negro toiler it is clear that no "justice"—even of the doubtful variety "enjoyed" by the white workers under the rule of capitalism, could be expected by those nine Negro boys in the Jim Crow capitalist court of Scottsboro. It is clear to all that as long as the Negro is denied every political right, as long as a whole nation is denied the most elementary "democratic rights," "Scottsboro justice," that is lynch-law justice with the full support and active cooperation of all courts and state organs of the white bourgeoisie, will be the order of the day.

Further, this trial reveals to all who care to see that lynch law is not the product of "irresponsible actions by uneducated and degenerated whites" which can be removed by educational methods, as is consistently maintained by the white liberals of the South and their friends the Negro reformists, but that it is an essential part of this whole system of national oppression on which are based the super-profits of the Southern industrialists and landlords.

From these plain facts the Negro toilers will draw the proper conclusions. They will realize that it is impossible to fight lynch law, whether it be of the legal or extra-legal variety, by itself. They will learn that to destroy this infamous institution of the white bourgeoisie, the whole system of national oppression must be destroyed and the Negro masses must win the unconditional right to govern themselves as they see fit

in that whole section of the South where they outnumber the whites.

But it is not enough that the Negro masses draw these conclusions. With this legal mass murder as a starting point there must be developed the broadest possible mass movement for equal rights for Negroes, including the right of the Negro toilers to govern themselves as they see fit, and against the rule of the white bourgeoisie which denies every democratic right to the Negro people. This struggle must not become the fight of the Negroes alone. It must become the common cause of every Negro toiler and of every white worker as well. Around the issue of this trial there must be built up a fighting united front of the oppressed Negro masses and the revolutionary white proletariat and croppers, against the oppressive rule of the white bourgeoisie.

The Communist Party in the South will organize and will lead into the struggle this fighting united front. The Communist Party has raised the fighting slogans of:

Stop the legal lynching of nine Negro working class boys!

These boys are innocent; demand their immediate release!

Demand a new trial before a jury composed of workers, at least half to be Negroes, to expose this outrage-up!

Equal rights of Negroes in all courts!

The National Guard is a tool of the land owners and capitalists!

An armed volunteer guard of Negro and white workers to defend the prisoners against these lynchers!

Landlords are inciting the starving white tenant-farmers and share-croppers to lynch Negroes; the landlords and capitalists and not the Negroes, are starving the tenant-farmers, both white and black.

Demand immediate cash relief for starving farmers and unemployed workers—Negroes and whites equally!

Down with peonage, Jim-Crowism and persecution of the Negro people! For full equality!

For a fighting alliance of the oppressed Negro people and the oppressed white workers and tenant farmers!

Demand the confiscation of the land from the landlords for the Negro and white tenants and croppers!

Negroes can never get "justice" in the courts of the white capitalists and landlords!

Demand the right of self-determination for the Negro people—the right of a Negro state in the Black Belt!

Stop the lynching of nine Negro working class boys!

Death to lynchers!

International Pamphlets Issue First History of May First

The publication, by International Pamphlets, 799 Broadway, New York, of Comrade Alexander Trachtenberg's "The History of May Day," for the first time makes available in English a complete record of this traditional working class celebration. Like all others of the volumes in the International Pamphlets Series, the little book, while brief and popular, is at the same time complete and accurate. This is No. 14 in the series, having been preceded by "Youth in Industry."

Comrade Trachtenberg deals with the struggle for a shorter work day, which began with the 8-hour day movement and is indissolubly bound up with the First of May as a day of working class political action and demonstration. He shows the complete course of the battle for a shorter work day, starting with the introduction of the factory system in this country and definitely formulated more than forty years ago.

This pamphlet is particularly important because May First as a working class holiday is the outgrowth of the struggle in this country, "The Paris decision (to adopt May First)," says Comrade Trachtenberg, "was influenced by a decision made at Chicago five years earlier by