

Negro Reformism in the Camp of the Imperialist Enemy

N.A.A.C.P. POLICIES INEVITABLY LEAD TO BETRAYAL OF NEGRO MASSES; CRAWFORD CASE A CLASSIC EXAMPLE

—/ CYRIL BRIGGS

THE defeat in the Alabama primaries of Judge James E. Horton, "liberal" lyncher, is seized upon by the Pittsburgh Courier, unofficial organ of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N. A. A. C. P.) as the occasion for another unprincipled attack on the Communists.

The Communists are held responsible for Horton's defeat and for the triumph of Bibb Graves,

notorious Ku Klux Klan candidate for governor of Alabama. The N. A. A. C. P. — Roosevelt mouthpiece declares, with shameless parroting of the arguments of the Alabama lynchers against "outside interference" with their persecution and lynch terror against the Negro masses, that:—

"The net result of the flood of threatening letters, telegrams and denunciations poured upon Ala-

bama by zealous Communists the world over, has not been to make white Alabama ashamed and more disposed to mete out even-handed justice, but rather to increase bigotry, chauvinism and race prejudice. Outside interference always does that, from the family to the State, unless it is skillfully executed, and Communists are notoriously bungling and inept."

This is a re-statement of the familiar reformist philosophy that since resistance on the part of the oppressed invites new reprisals from the oppressors there should be no resistance, but slavish acceptance of oppressors, persecution and terror.

Reformist Philosophy Leads to Betrayal

But the class and national struggles have their own dialectics. The growth of the revolutionary resistance of the toiling masses causes the ruling classes to intensify their terror, but at the same time it is the power which alone defeats, forces the ruling classes to withdraw their bloody attacks. This is shown, for example, in the fact that the Alabama rulers have been forced three times to postpone the dates set for the mass murder of the Scottsboro boys. Certainly not because they were ever "disposed to mete out even-handed justice," but because of the roar of indignant protests by millions of white and Negro workers against the mon-

Scottsboro Mother



Mother Ada Wright, mother of one of the Scottsboro 9, who got the floor at the recent convention of the N. A. A. C. P. only after a sharp battle.

strous frame-up and lynch death verdict's.

ON the other hand, the reformist philosophy inevitably leads to collaboration with the oppressors and betrayal of the struggles of the oppressed. This is exemplified in

the persistent attempts of the N. A. A. C. P. leadership to disrupt the mass fight for the freedom of the Scottsboro boys. It is emphasized in the shameless betrayal by that leadership of George Crawford, William Peterson and other framed-up Negro workers. With the net results of the "skillful" back-door diplomacy and dickering with the lynch courts by the reformist leadership, we will deal later on in these articles, in connection with the Crawford betrayal—a classic example of the aptitude of the "non-bungling" reformist leaders for co-operation with the lynchers.

Lynchers Learning to Appreciate N. A. A. C. P.

That the Southern ruling class lynchers are increasingly coming to understand and appreciate the role of the N. A. A. C. P. leadership is shown in their changing attitude toward the organization. Where formerly its activities were fiercely opposed, they are now welcomed by the ruling class. The jailers of the Scottsboro boys are today the most ardent exponents of N. A. A. C. P. "defense" for these boys. In Jefferson County Jail, Birmingham, Ala., several of the boys have been tortured and held in solitary in a vain effort to force them to repudiate the I. L. D. and accept the "defense" of the N. A. A. C. P., according to statements by the boys themselves.

Significantly, too, under discussion of the "Changing Front," the 25th Annual Conference of the N. A. A. C. P., held last week in Oklahoma City, Okla., adopted a proposal for closer co-operation with the "liberal" section of the Southern white ruling class. It at the same time rejected the appeal of the Scottsboro Mother, Ada Wright, for a united front with the International Labor Defense and the revolutionary white and Negro workers in the fight for the Scottsboro boys.

The Courier's latest diatribe against the Communists is symptomatic of the new attempt to disrupt the mass fight for the freedom of the Scottsboro boys. It is moreover a re-statement of the resistance of Negro reformist leaders to militant mass defense for Negro victims of capitalist justice. On both these counts, the reformist leaders are shown in a united front with the lynchers and their courts.

FOR the purpose of its slanderous attacks on the Communists, the Courier finds it necessary to "forget" that these same courts had condemned eight of the boys to be electrocuted in August, 1931, and that only the world-wide mass protests, organized by the Communists, have prevented the mass murder of the boys during the past three years.

It sneeringly refers to the indignant world-wide protests of millions of white and Negro workers as "international ballyhoo." But Messrs. misleaders, it was precisely this so-called "international ballyhoo" that smashed through the criminal conspiracy of silence in the capitalist press, that three times wrested the boys from the death chair, that forced the Courier itself to revise its first version of the case in which, together with the white capitalist press, it described the boys as "rapists."

The policy of revolutionary mass defense, supplemented by the best possible legal defense in the courts, finds ample vindication in the entire history of the long, bitter fight for the freedom of the Scottsboro boys. Its efficacy is proved not only by the partial victories won in the fight for the Scottsboro boys, but in the victory of the international proletariat in wresting Dimitroff from the hands of the Nazi butchers, in the recent victory of Detroit workers in smashing the frame-up against James Victory, in forcing commutation of the death sentence against Theodore Jordan to life imprisonment, in forcing an Atlanta court to grant bail for heroic Angelo Herndon.

(Tomorrow's article will deal with the fruits of the N. A. A. C. P. "defense" policy in the George Crawford Case in Virginia.)