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Valiant Men and Free

By FRANCIS J. GRIMKE

THE Alabama Supreme Court has refused a new trial to the two Scottsboro boys and fixed the time for their execution August 31.

After all, I do not see that there is very much difference between lynching a Negro by the mob and treating him in the manner in which these boys have been treated by the state under the cover of law. They were arrested, tried, convicted, it is true, but on evidence and under circumstances that make it a mere travesty of justice. Every one is assumed to be innocent until proven to be guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. What proof is there beyond a reasonable doubt that these boys are guilty? That there was doubt, and serious doubt as to their guilt, is clear from the fact that when the verdict was rendered at the end of one of the trials, the presiding judge set it aside as not in accordance with the facts. No evidence since has been produced, through all the phases it has since passed, that makes it any less doubtful as to their guilt. And yet in face of the facts clearly, forcibly presented by the defence, the Supreme Court of the great state of Alabama votes to let the verdict stand and appoints a day for their execution. This is why I say, I do not see that there is very much difference between lynching a Negro by the mob, and doing it in this way under the cover of law; except that in the latter case it is even worse, for it is deliberately done, not in the heat of passion as in the case of the mob, but calmly, deliberately, and by the legal lights of the profession and not by the rabble.

A blunder has clearly been made in this case. These boys ought not to have been found guilty; but since they have been so adjudged, and since the case involves the testimony of several Negroes against that of a white woman, though a woman of questionable character, at what ever cost, the word of the white woman must be upheld. It will never do to take the testimony of Negroes in preference to hers. It would outrage Southern sentiment, and it would be setting a bad precedent. This is the thing that the Negro has to encounter when his accuser happens to be white, and especially, a white woman. He is likely,

under such conditions, to fare no better at the hand of the court than at that of the mob.

What is to be done? What can be done? Nothing, except to go on protesting, crying aloud against the injustice; and also urging the church and the rightly disposed citizens to come to the rescue, as some few are doing, and set in vigorous operation the forces of moral and spiritual education among the masses of the people. Thus may we hope, by pouring in the light of knowledge, by lifting up the great ideals and principles of Christianity, to bring about a change for the better. A case like this, as well as the facts revealed by Arthur Raper in his noble book, *The Tragedy of Lynching*, show how sadly such education is needed in every part of the South.

We talk about sending missionaries to the heathen. Where in all the world, even in the darkest regions of heathendom are missionaries, real missionaries, men and women who know the truth of God as revealed in the Scriptures and who have the courage to preach and live it, than right here in so-called Christian America?

The awful things that are taking place in the South, particularly, the treatment that is accorded to Negroes, are appalling. Every time a horrid lynching occurs or a travesty of justice as in the Scottsboro case, I find myself crying out, "How long, O Lord, how long!" Or sending up the prayer of the psalmist, "Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just."

I am reminded also in this connection of Tennyson's noble lines:

*"Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of Good.
Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land—
Ring in the Christ that is to be."*

Are not these the very qualities that are particularly needed in our southland?

"The valiant man and free," not the miserable

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A distinguished clergyman makes an appeal for the application of the principles of Christianity to the problems of race.

—The Editor.

group made up of representatives of the several departments which has facetiously been dubbed, "The Negro Brain Trust."

It has gathered statistical data on the Negro for use in governmental offices, and through Dr. Foreman's membership on the National Advisory Committee on Subsistence Homesteads, has been active in encouraging Negro participation in these projects.

* * *

Aviation

C. E. Anderson and Dr. Albert B. Forsythe, America's most outstanding Negro aviators, will make a 12,000 mile good-will flight to the Caribbean and to South America in September. Dr. Forsythe, a physician from Atlantic City, New Jersey, holds a pilot's license and Mr. Anderson of Bryn Mawr, holds a transport pilot's license. Last year they successfully completed a trip across the continent. The flight to South America is being sponsored by the Interracial Good-Will Aviation Committee. The National officers are: Miss Julia Goens, Chairman; Miss Alice Banton, Vice-Chairman; Miss Ruth Waites, Secretary; W. Hibberd Smith, Treasurer; Miss M. J. Washington, Publicity Director. Advisory Council: Congressman Oscar DePriest, Eugene Kinckle Jones, Emmett J. Scott, T. Montgomery Gregory, R. R. Wright, Sr., W. T. Coleman, W. R. Valentine.

* * *

Correspondence

New York, Tuesday

The Editor:

Dear Sir,

It saddens me immeasurably to read a story like "Tin Can," and find only futility and defeatism as the answer. None can point the way to this writer. She knows. And the sooner she goes "left" the less will be the chances of spoiling a fine story-telling ability.

I wish to go on record (if only in this letter) as opposed to the liberal, lachrymose attitude of Marita Occomy because her stuff if used could burn into the consciousness of every oppressed heart. Also, please don't feel too politely amused or give yourself the customary, knowing look when I state that I am a white man.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) GUS LEVY

NEGRO WORKERS AND ORGANIZED LABOR

(Continued from page 278)

every thousand gainfully employed in the United States ten years of age and over are Negroes, and yet only fourteen out of every thousand of organized workers are Negroes.

It is the hope that the National Urban League program for organizing Negro workers as sponsored by the Committee of One Hundred outstanding leaders in Negro groups will come quickly to the forks of the road where the Negro is halted in the midst of confusion and indecision and point the way out.

COLLEGE INTERRACIALISM IN THE SOUTH

(Continued from Page 269)

case. What is meant is that the students who are leaders, whatever professions they may expect to follow, are active church workers and believe definitely that the Christian religion constitutes the main hope for solving the race problem. Here the church, in a vital area of living, still has a definite opportunity to prove its worth for contemporary life.

The movement may become a non-religious, political program of action. If it does, little effort is required to see what will be its complexion. At present, I believe it safe to say, there is not a single leader of college interracialism to be found in the South who avows "rugged individualism." Nine leaders of the most aggressive organizations to be found from Texas to Virginia have disclosed their political faith to me. Of this number two expect to abide loyal to the New Deal as long as it proceeds on the assumption that all groups are interdependent. The remaining seven favor some brand of socialism.

VALIANT MEN AND FREE

(Continued from page 276)

cowards who delight in brutal lynchings or the more orderly processes of injustice as practiced in the courts. "The larger heart, the kindler hand," and not the spirit that robs the Negro of his hard earnings and keeps him in a half starved and depressed economic condition.

"The darkness of the land," needs to be rung out. How much darkness there is there, gross darkness,—the wilful, deliberate shutting of the eyes to the simplest, most elementary principles of right, of justice, of the common decencies of human relationship when it comes to the Negro.

What it needs, blink at it as we may, is to have rung into it, "The Christ that is to be." His noble ideals, principles, his kindly, gracious, loving spirit. How much there is of darkness that still overhangs it!

I am not discouraged however. I am still hopeful, still looking to and working for the coming of a brighter day. I will not live to see it, but it is sure to come, if we who are Christians will do our part, will stand up bravely and uncompromisingly for Christian ideals and principles.