

## THE SCOTTSBORO CASE.

**T** Nine Negro boys accused of rape.

No doubt you've glanced at an occasional newspaper article. It's been running in the papers now for nearly seven years. Maybe you've wondered: Did they really rape those girls?

I don't know how you've decided in your own mind. Maybe you've felt: Well, guilty or not the chance of a Negro getting justice in a Southern court is pretty slim.

Or maybe you've said to yourself: It just doesn't sound very plausible. Let's look at it this way: In sexual matters it is exceedingly rare to find a man who does not want consent and surrender or at least a pretense of such. The likelihood of a single rapist being among the nine boys is mathematically very low. Such a one would have found the other eight arraigned against him if not by natural revulsion, then at any rate by fear. That nine boys gathered by chance on a freight train should all be rapists, that neither broad daylight, the use of force, the screams of the girls, the obviously great chances of discovery, the fear of punishment, that none of these concerns should have diminished their passion, in other words, that these nine chance passengers were genuine perverts of the most vicious stripe, that is well nigh impossible.

For we are not dealing here with a group of men brutalized and starved of their natural needs by war or shipwreck or other calamity. We are dealing here with just nine Negro boys from the South, no different from any other chance nine you might collect: the oldest twenty, the youngest thirteen. One was near-blind and on his way to a hospital for treatment. Another was sick. One was very pious, one was very vain. One was gentle and another was truculent. One was gay and one was sullen. All were probably under-nourished on the pellagra-inducing diet of the impoverished Southerner. All were ignorant and pretty much illiterate which is no surprise in the South where little effort is made to educate the Negro masses. All were poor, terribly poor.

And in case you want to know: They didn't rape those girls. It isn't just my word that I want you to take. It isn't just the fact that truth and justice for the Negro isn't likely to emerge from a Southern court. It isn't just a matter of mathematics; the impossibility of so many rapists all hopping by chance on the same freight train.

No, this is a matter which can be proven and will be proven in these pages. The accusation of rape against these boys is an utterly damnable lie. No, more than a lie, it is a monstrous political and economic whip which scourges the backs of the poor of the South. The Scottsboro case is a chapter of barbarian slavery surviving in the twentieth century.