

"We Cannot Be Absolutely Certain of Their Innocence"

By I. AMTER

The Socialist Party has taken a clear stand on the Scottsboro case. It is in favor of the nine Scottsboro Negro boys being electrocuted. This is not stated in just so many words, but the solidarity of the Socialist leaders with the leadership of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which hired a Ku-Klux-Klan lawyer to "defend" the boys and then let them be condemned to the electric chair without a murmur; the refusal of the Socialist leaders to carry on any work in defense of the Scottsboro boys; and above all their attacks on the Communist Party, the League of Struggle for Negro Rights and the International Labor Defense, which together with working-class organizations, are carrying on the fight against the government and all reactionary groups and organizations—show where the Socialist Party leaders stand on Scottsboro.

But lately we have come into possession of a document that indicates that the Socialist Party and its junior organization, the Young People's Socialist League, are adopting the stand of all cowards and traitors to the working class movement, by a profession of ignorance. "We cannot be absolutely certain of their (the Scottsboro boys') innocence," says the national committee of the YPSL in reply to the demand of the rank and file



A mother of one of the Scottsboro boys

for action in unity with the revolutionary organizations of this country. The lily white socialists—like their friends and brothers the lily white American Federation of Labor officialdom—do not want to stain themselves with anything of which they are not "absolutely certain." The facts are not yet "clear enough." Scottsboro has not been heralded all over the world loud enough. They do not know—then why don't they take the trouble to find out?

The reason is clear: the saving of the nine Scottsboro boys demands unity of the Negro and white workers in action; it demands militant action. The Socialist Party and A. F. of L. leaders want no unity of action of white and Negro workers. They follow the policy of the bosses, which is to drive the wedge be-

tween the white and Negro workers still deeper. They do not want militant action—for this raises the whole question in connection with Scottsboro. They declare that the nine boys are being railroaded to the electric chair, like the six boys now on trial on the same charge and facing the same sentence in Georgia, are being sent to their death because (1) they are workers; (2) because they are Negro workers. There is no more serious crime in this country than to be Negro workers, particularly at a time when the masses are restless and beginning to move in struggle against the system that has plunged them into misery.

The Socialist Party and young People's Socialist League are "not absolutely certain of their innocence," and therefore they link hands with the Ku Klux Klan, the fascists of all varieties, the state government, the A. F. of L. bureaucrats and N. A. A. C. P. leaders in letting these boys be sent to the electric chair.

There is one thing that the workers are "absolutely certain" of—and that is that in the struggle the Socialist Party is clearly showing its social-fascist role—fascist in character though it pretends and tries to use working class language. It is a tool of the bosses, and in the Scottsboro case is again displaying its treachery to the workers as a whole, and to the Negroes in particular.