



they shall not die!

(To Clarence Norris and Haywood Patterson, the two of the nine innocent Scottsboro Boys who were condemned by brutal boss "justice" to die in the electric chair on December 7th, 1934. Mass protest of the working people saved their lives.)

I

If the untold martyred Negroes rose
From long forgotten graves;
If the dark soil burst and issued forth
Its hoard of murdered slaves;

If they marched their broken bodies past
In ghastly black parade
Before the men who struck them down
That fortunes might be made;

The sea of lash-torn human flesh,
Rope-strangled throats, gouged eyes,
Charred bodies, bullet-riddled forms
Would shock the very skies.

But still the lords of greed and gain
Would view it all with pride,
Would count each corpse like miser's gold
And not be satisfied.

II

Too long the trees of Southern hate
Such bloody fruit have borne
As Negroes strangled on boss ropes
For parasites to scorn.

Too oft through balmy Southern air,
The awful, sickening smell
Of burning human Negro flesh
Floats like the breath of Hell.

And now the brutal master class
Puts by its rope and fire,
And turns upon the working class
With copper chairs and wire.

The power plant is humming death
While two boys wait in cells
To take the volts into their bones,
Unless mass protest tells.

III

What for? Who reaps the gain of this?
Whose pockets bulge? Whose hand
Sets fire to men, pulls lynching ropes
And rule this wretched land?

Who profits by the death of men?
By keeping men in chains?
Whose hand is sowing human skulls
Upon the earth like grains?

That hand is white, but not our hand.
White workers will not kill
Their fellow workers, black or brown,
To do a master's will.

Our martyrs lie with your brave dead
In deep graves side by side,
While workers, black and white, above
Are joining hands with pride.

Here is the challenge bosses fling
At black and white alike:
"December seventh is the day
The hand of death shall strike."

We joined our hands. We made a pledge.
This was our battle cry:
We swore before our martyred dead,
THOSE NINE BOYS SHALL NOT DIE!

Let every voice, let every fist
Rise up, for we have willed
To stay the murdering hand of greed;
OUR SONS SHALL NOT BE KILLED!