

# THE JIM CROW RED CROSS

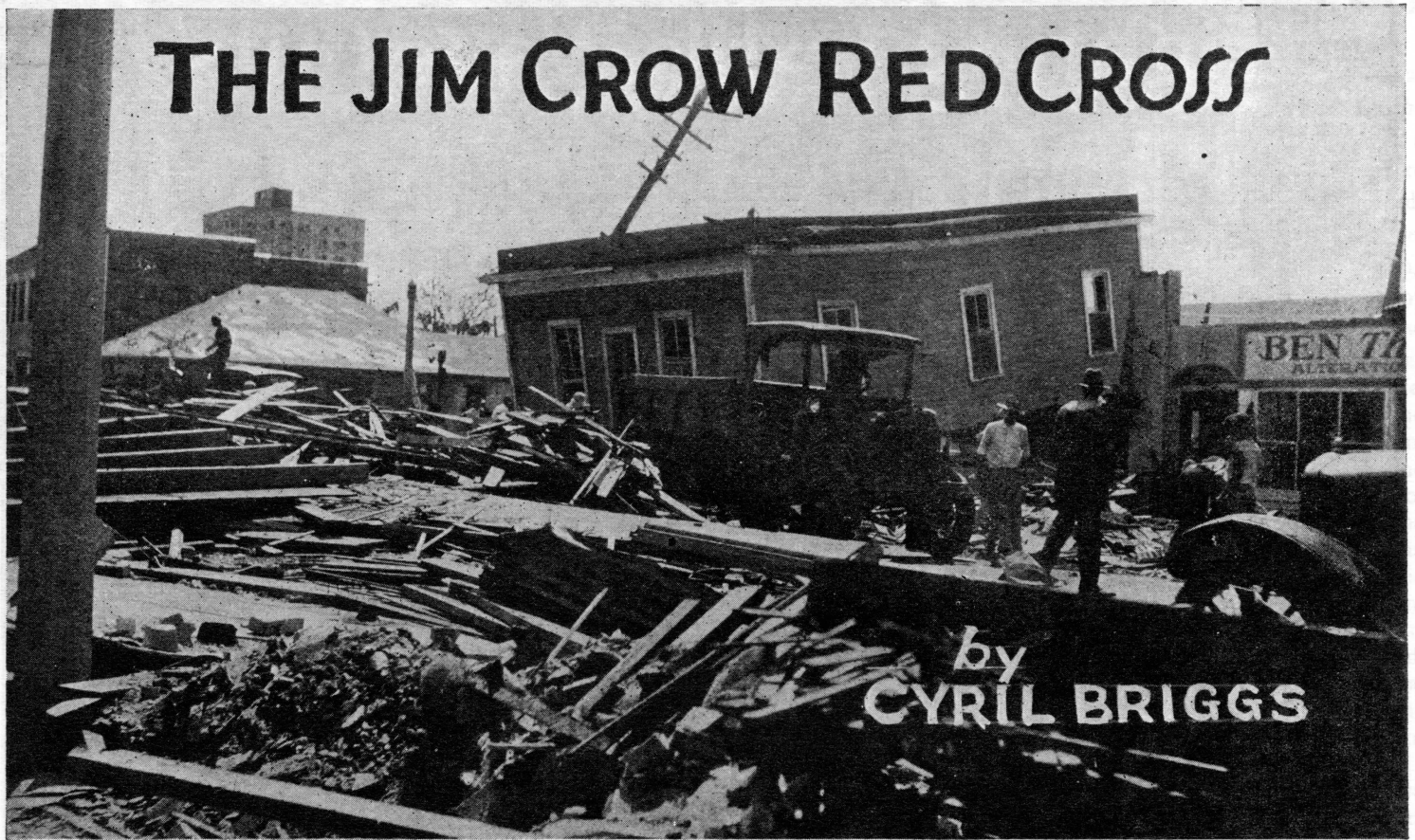


Photo Negro Champion

**F**OR thousands of Negro workers in the Florida area visited by the West Indian hurricane, the two nights of storm terror were followed by a Red Cross terror far worse than anything in their experience. To the horrors of a storm which snuffed out the lives of hundreds of Negroes and which contemptuously crumpled up the miserable match-box shacks in which most of the Southern Negro workers are forced by low pay and intensive exploitation to live, there was added a brutal terrorism against Negro workers and a cynical discrimination in the distribution of food and other relief by the Red Cross and its local agents.

Negro workers were taken from the sides of their sick wives, terror-stricken children and unburied dead and conscripted for forced labor without pay, at the most arduous and unpleasant tasks. Negro crews were sent out to "fish" for dead bodies; others were forced into work in the kitchens in white tent colonies. The State militia was used to round up conscript labor from among the

Negro refugees, and functioned with the utmost brutality. Many Negro heads of families in a desperate hunt for work of some kind to help their starving families ran afoul of the State militia. Edward Tolliver, one of these, was on the way to Belle Glade to hunt for work in order to relieve the tragic plight of his family when he was conscripted and forced to work picking up dead bodies for two weeks without pay. Coot Simpson, a 35 year old Negro worker,

was shot down and killed by a white guardsman at 8th and Division Streets, West Palm Beach, because he did not obey the order to "climb on that truck, nigger!" but insisted on explaining to the guardsman that he was working for a white man across the street and would have to "get permission of my boss." Simpson started to walk across the street to his place of employment and was shot down by the guardsman, the bullet piercing his back and causing instant death. The guardsman has been subsequently exonerated by a jury of white men.

Conscription of labor was confined to Negro workers.

All this time the Red Cross did little or nothing for the Negro sufferers. The families of the conscripted men were left to starve or beg a few crumbs at the back door of the more fortunate white refugees. Scores of Negro refugees were driven away from Red Cross stations. Even Levi Brown, hero of the storm, who saved many lives, was badly ill-treated at a Red Cross station.

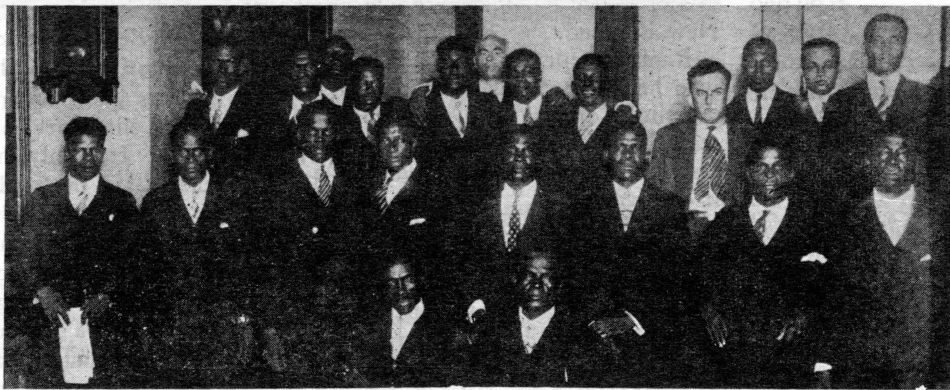


Photo Negro Labor Congress

The photo above shows the heroes of the Vestris disaster, Negro members of the crew, together with leaders of the American Negro Labor Congress and of the Marine Workers Progressive League. The members of the crew were guests of honor at a mass meeting held in Harlem. Robert Minor, editor of the Daily Worker is the sixth from the left, back row. Otto Huiswood, of the Negro Labor Congress is second from the right, back row. George Mink, national secretary of the Marine Workers Progressive League is fourth from the right, back row. The members of the crew are, reading from left right, seated: J. Ford, fireman and W. Dyer, seaman; front row: G. Carter, fireman; A. Bannister, boatswains mate; D. Holder, fireman; R. Weeks, fireman; F. Ford, trimmer; J. Garner, trimmer; Licorish, assistant cook; A. Crick, sailor. In the back row, from left to right are: J. Bramhill, fireman; J. Olliviere, seaman; O. Gordon, seaman; J. Scaly, fireman; J. Boxhill, fireman; Robert Monir; W. Pearman, greaser; R. Harris, steward; J. Williams, Labor Congress; Otto Huiswood and George Moore, of the Labor Congress. A number of those shown in the photo gave important testimony as to the brutal treatment accorded the crew of the Vestris which went down due to the owners greed for money.