

A Theoretical and Political Magazine of Scientific Socialism

Editor: V. J. Jerome

On the Release of the National Committee Members

By William Z. Foster

THE RELEASE from Federal prison of Eugene Dennis, General Secretary of the Communist Party, and Jack Stachel, John Williamson, John Gates and Carl Winter, members of the National Committee of the C.P., marks an important stage in the life of the Communist Party. During the 44 months of their imprisonment, the Party found many severe difficulties under the government persecutions and it needed gravely their skilled and devoted leadership. Great numbers of workers will join with their families in welcoming the release of these outstanding fighters of the working class.

The long imprisonment of Dennis and the many other comrades convicted under the infamous Smith

Act, constitutes a dangerous assault upon the people's liberties, supposedly guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. It is the grossest violation of this elementary charter of civil rights, to imprison men and women for daring to speak out against the reactionary programs of the imperialist government of this country. It is one of the most dangerous expressions of the growing fascist trend in the United States.

On a par with the outrageous imprisonment of these Communists is the manner in which this has been, and is being brought about. In this respect the worst methods of the traditional American labor frame-up have been employed. The trials of the 11 national committee leaders,

Re-entered as second class matter January 4, 1945, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. POLITICAL AFFAIRS is published monthly by New Century Publishers, Inc., at 832 Broadway, New York 3, N. Y., to whom subscriptions, payments and correspondence should be sent. Subscription rate: \$2.50 a year; \$1.25 for six months; foreign and Canada, \$3.00 a year. Single copies 25 cents.

and those that have followed it, were a foul mess of government-perjured witnesses, of corrupt prosecutors willing to swim in the filthiest gutters in order to get convictions, of reactionary judges who spit upon the most elementary questions of law and justice, and of juries so intimidated by the prevailing war and fascist-like hysteria that they would hardly dare to bring in an acquittal verdict no matter how decisive the evidence showing the innocence of those on trial.

It was an outrage to railroad the Communist leaders to jail on synthetic, unconstitutional charges. But to continue and to intensify the persecution, the Government is confronting the released Communists with a second indictment under the Smith Act. The first convictions, on the allegations of conspiring to teach and advocate the violent overthrow of the United States Government (which is a brazen lie) are being supplemented by new charges on the basis of membership in the Communist Party, with a penalty of 10 years imprisonment. This is clearly a case of double jeopardy, of being tried twice for the same alleged offense.

Never in the whole history of the United States has there been a more flagrant violation of the Bill of Rights than the second indictments faced by the prison victims of the Smith Act. And all this persecution is supplemented by the provisions of the McCarran Act, which threat-

en a long time in jail for all Communists who refuse to register themselves with the Government as "subversive"—another flagrant violation of the U.S. Constitution.

Varying the line of persecution, the Government is proceeding also to deport those convicted Communists who are not citizens of the United States (for no fault of their own). At present Jack Stachel and John Williamson, who have spent their entire lives, from early childhood, in this country, are being menaced with such deportation. Irving Potash, National Committee member and resident of the United States for 40 years, has already been deported, and several other men and women leaders now face similar persecution. This barbarous deportation policy, separating the deportees from their families, friends, and accustomed environment, also violates every American tradition of popular liberties.

When Irving Potash sailed down New York Bay on the steamer Saxonia, bound for Poland, Miss Liberty, holding aloft her torch in the harbor, might well have blushed in shame. She is an anachronism in these days of advances toward fascism in this country. Instead of welcoming "Europe's huddled millions" of oppressed, the United States today with the most reactionary government of the major capitalist countries, has its doors open only to the worst parasites and reactionaries of the world. The American working class will have to make a resolute

struggle for freedom before Miss Liberty can regain her one-time vivid meaning as the great symbol of freedom.

They are foolish who believe that the present government persecution can destroy the Communist Party. What is happening is that the Communist Party is being steeled by these hardships, as the most powerful Communist Parties of many countries, in their time of persecution, have been hardened.

The real danger of the disease of fascism in this country is to the

basic liberties of the people, to the very existence of the labor movement. The release of Dennis and the other Communist leaders should serve as a stimulus to the democratic forces everywhere to demand the release of all Smith Act and other political prisoners, to prevent the deportation of trade union fighters, such as Potash, Stachel, Williamson and others, and to wipe from the statute books the whole dirty collection of Taft-Hartley, Smith, McCarran, Communist Control and "right-to-work" acts, as well as all other such pro-fascist legislation.