



Half the World

by Claudia Jones

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THREE WEEKS is not long in the annals of time, yet—the three weeks since the leaders of the Communist Party were imprisoned seems like a decade.

Events have moved with pell-mell speed as these towering working class Communist leaders warned it would, particularly as regards the onslaught of legal violence against the democratic rights of Americans, the Bill of Rights and the Constitution, free speech and the right to one's own ideas. This is shown by the widening net against 17 Communist and working class Negro and white leaders—and others now contemplated according to J. Howard McGrath, U. S. Attorney General, under the pro-fascist Smith Act. At this writing, I haven't heard any steps of his office moving towards investigation or harassment against the vandals in Cicero, Illinois, who violated the home of a Negro veteran, his wife and two children.)

Not to be missed, however, is that in line with the historic peace policy of the Soviet Union for peaceful co-existence between states having different social systems, and on the initiative of the Soviet UN delegate, Jacob Malik, peace has come nearer in embattled Korea, and can be won if all peace loving people in our country boldly speak out to demand it now!

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ON TELEVISION, in press and movie, millions during these three weeks saw pictures of these working class Negro and white leaders being pushed into vans (marias as the unfortunate inmates of the Women's Detention Jail call these stuffy moving jails), as ordinary criminals. But the very denial of bail for the 17 working class leaders denies the false assertion of the ruling circles of the Truman Administration and courts that this is an ordinary criminal case, or that these working class leaders are criminals, as is lyingly charged.

Traditionally, even prior to the days of chattel slavery or the struggle to abolish it, working class and oppressed Negro people have had to establish People's Bail Funds in defense of their ideas, since the regular bail bonding companies who ordinarily rush on collateral to give bail to murderers, pimps, gangsters, etc., deny it to political prisoners.

History will record that having revoked this bail, a Court judge gave 14 political defendants less than 24 hours to raise bail amounting to \$165,000!

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THE JAILED COMMUNIST LEADERS are political prisoners, held hostage by the desperate men of the Truman Administration which fears their advocacy of peace, security, fraternity and Negro freedom; unity of all people who hold similar ideas—no matter how remote—with that of the Communists for peace, against a new world war, against fascist reaction and for an adequate standard of living.

This is why millions are ever more expressing concern that men are jailed solely because of their advocacy of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism, the social science of the working class. This is why they are beginning to recognize the truth of the assertion of the Communist Party and its leaders that the Supreme Court 6 to 2 decision, which, in effect, legally outlaws the Communist Party, is a solar plexus blow against the Bill of Rights, the first and eighth amendments to the Constitution.

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I PARTICULARLY WANT to register the reactions of the Negro people to this development. Such newspapers as the Oklahoma Black Dispatch, the Afro-American, outstanding figures such as Justice Delaney, Mrs. Charlotta Bass, Paul Robeson and others have given indignant voice to the growing conviction among 15 million Negro Americans that the jailing of Negro and white working class leaders is a blow against the struggle for first class citizenship of the Negro people. In an editorial entitled "Creating Communists," the Afro American declared:

"The first question Ben Davis asked on reaching Lewisburg prison, where he was sent permanently to Terre Haute federal penitentiary, was, according to the N. Y. Amsterdam News, whether jim-crow existed in the Federal penitentiary. It is my opinion that the imprisonment of Ben Davis in Terre Haute and not below the Mason Dixon line, represents a recognition (albeit sullied by his very jailing) by the reactionary Truman Administration of its own vulnerability on the Negro Question at home and abroad.

"Typical of reaction's fear of Negro-white unity, another historic contribution of the Communist Party, was their separation in imprisonment of this stalwart son and outstanding leader of the Negro people from his white co-leaders."

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ONE APPRECIATES this recognition not only from the newspapers, but from life. Three weeks ago, speaking in Harlem, at a mass open air rally, I quoted Ben Davis' verbatim testimony in the court during the closing historic minutes of the sentencing of the Communist leaders to prison for five years. When I asked if there were any who could deny Ben Davis' assertion that Negroes have never had the benefits of the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution, with one voice Negro men, women and children in that audience replied: "None of Us!"

To free the Communist leaders swiftly from prison, to win bail for the 17, to nullify the Smith Act, to win lasting peace, means to rally and unite in defense of the campaign for the swift freedom of these political prisoners. To fail to do this is to fear to throw obstacles in the path of those who would blot out the democratic traditions of our land. It is because it is the temporarily powerful men who give grounds to fear and not us that we should ride more than surf during these hot summer months,