

# THE DJILAS CASE AND THE SMITH ACT TRIALS

By SIMON W. GERSON

Twenty - seven well - known Americans, including three U.S. Senators and Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, made public a letter urging President Tito of Yugoslavia to help release Milovan Djilas from prison.

With the honorable exception of Mrs. Roosevelt, none of the group has asked President Eisenhower to free Gilbert Green, Henry Winston and Irving Potash, American Communists sentenced to long prison terms on political charges. These arise out of the Smith Act, the now discredited thought - control law jammed through Congress without real debate in 1940.

The Djilas case has received wide attention - principally from sources anxious to heat up the cold war and discredit the basic ideas of socialism.

His most recent book, "The New Class," smuggle out of his own country and issued here by a publishing house specializing in cold war material, has become an ideological platform for the "liberationists." In brief, it has become a manual for the cold war. Its various points can and will be analyzed in detail but its central thrust is unmistakable: **it favors the overthrow of the socialist governments of the world, including Yugoslavia.**

No one who favors socialism and no friend of peaceful co-existence - the peaceful competition of

different social systems - can logically hold a brief for Djilas' book. The Daily Worker emphatically does not. It has devoted its energies precisely in the opposite direction - that of fighting the most dangerous elements in American life, the cold warriors whose fundamental outlook is that of "liberating" the Socialist countries by atomic war and restoring capitalism.

These forces in American life - who have clasped Djilas to their bosom - would wreck the peace of the world and the security of America. Their political defeat and the ideological defeat of those who are their "thinkers" are indispensable if our nation is to adopt settled policies of peaceful co-existence.

The Djilas trials, as the Daily Worker has pointed out on previous occasions, unfortunately plays into the hands of the worst enemies of both the American and Yugoslav people. For it gives them the argument - a specious one, indeed, on the lips of men who hail the Smith Act! - that in Socialist countries men are imprisoned for writing articles and not for overt criminal acts.

The Daily Worker has taken the position that the powerful Yugoslav government, enjoying the confidence of their people, can easily defeat by ideological means the poisonous propaganda of Djilas. The Yugoslav people will

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not be taken in by the kind of ideology found so attractive by John Foster Dulles' State Department, Voice of America and Radio Free Europe.

Exactly because of that confidence in the basic Socialist strength of the Yugoslav people, many Socialist-minded people, while carrying on the firmest kind of ideological struggle against Djilas' anti-socialist and essentially "liberationist" views, deplore the Djilas trials.

(If Djilas is guilty of illegal relations iwth enemy agents diplomatic or otherwise, and has therefore violated the laws of his country then we have a different question. But then the indictment, trial and evidence must be of a different nature. This type of illegal activity cannot be excluded if we realize the nature of the real world and the frantic activity of the various government agencies, particularly the Central Intelligence Agency, to exploit all problems in the Socialist countries.)

But whatever the facts, President Tito is now getting some expressions of liberal and labor opinion on the case and may review the situation accordingly.

**How about President Eisenhower now hearing from these liberals and labor leaders on Green, Winston and Potash?**

People who are interested in obtaining justice 4,000 miles away might look closer to home. The liberals who signed the letter to Tito are undoubtedly privately critics of the Smith Act. Many in the labor and progressive movement, whatever their views on Djilas, would be interested to hear of their reactions on amnesty for Green, Winston and Potash here at home.