

LESSONS OF THE SUPREME COURT RULINGS

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

Democracy in America may well rejoice at the recent decision of the Supreme Court, curbing partly the dictatorial powers assumed in recent years by Congressional investigation committees, granting new trials in some Smith Act and contempt cases, and otherwise relaxing pressures of the outrageous McCarthyism built up during the Cold War years. This decision is a blow against this whole monstrous system. It ranks in the same category as some of the Court's decisions attacking Negro school segregation and other aspects of the vicious jim-crow system.

Important though the new Court decision is, it is, of course, only a good start. The whole web of poisonous McCarthyite legislation and tyrannical executive procedures still disgraces and defiles our country, including such monstrosities as the Taft-Hartley and Right to Work laws, the Smith, McCarran, and Communist Control Acts, and many other such. We must, however, fully appreciate the vast importance of the Supreme Court's blow at this whole disgraceful anti-democratic network.

The over-riding lesson that must be learned from the situation is the need and opportunity of following up this important victory by wiping from the statute books and from legislative procedures generally the entire reactionary mess of thought-control laws and practices. The Supreme Court judges did not make this vital decision, however, out of the goodness of their hearts. They responded to the growing democratic pressures in this country and abroad. More of the same will topple a lot more of the disgraceful and poisonous thought-control laws.

All honor to the brave men and women, left-wingers and others, who dared the kangaroo courts,

vicious prosecutors, and tyrannical judges of the McCarthyite terrorism, even at the cost of long sentences in jail and the loss of their accustomed livelihood. In this courageous democratic company we can be proud to count the Communist Party and the Communist press, who everywhere stood in the very front ranks of the fighters for the Bill of Rights. The whole country has seen this, and we can be sure that this good fight has not been lost on the American people.

This situation raises a very important special lesson for the left, namely that of the vanguard role of the Communist Party. Many have felt that in these days of powerful and militant mass organizations there no longer remains a vanguard role for the party, except to advocate to socialism.

But the years-long fight for the Bill of Rights, and especially for the legality of the Communist Party, which has proved successful, has shown the incorrectness of this viewpoint. Actually, in every class struggle there is a vital place for the vanguard party, and this has been demonstrated in the extended and bitter struggle against McCarthyism. For certainly, in this case, with its outstanding political clarity, its tireless persistence, and its dauntless courage, the Communist Party was definitely in the vanguard of the struggle.

This is not a matter for unseemly bragging, but our party should get credit where credit is due. It is something that our party members must fully realize and appreciate, especially in view of the severe ideological and organization crisis that the party has been passing through during the past year. Its realization will give the party a much-needed pick-up and inspiration.

The Party has been justly criticized for sectarian mistakes (although I think this has been very

much overdone), but this need for criticism must not be allowed to obscure the Party's great services in the historic struggle for the Bill of Rights. The splendid Abolition movement of the pre-Civil War days also made sectarian mistakes far worse than anything our Party has made—with its anti-religious, anti-U.S. government, anti-politics, and generally intolerant attitude towards other anti-slavery forces. Of course, this movement would have been vastly more effective without these crippling errors, but even they could not obstruct its matchless vanguard role, in its historic battles against tremendous and violent odds, for Negro emancipation. The Communist Party, in this general respect, has some much needed lessons to learn from the Abolition movement.

The Communist Party, inspired by this big Court victory and by its honorable and vital part in helping the American people win it, should redouble its efforts in the fight to protect and vitalize the Bill of Rights, especially in the historic struggle of the Negro people, now in full course, for full economic, political, and social rights.

And not least, we should battle resolutely and ceaselessly for an amnesty for Comrades Henry Winston, Gil Green, Irving Potash, and all the other victims of McCarthyite laws. Let us bury this whole obnoxious mess with its inglorious champion.

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