

Djilas and the Daily Worker

Twenty-seven prominent Americans have written Tito asking that he help release Milovan Djilas from prison. Djilas has just been given an extended sentence for having smuggled into the United States and published his book *The New Class*.

The *Daily Worker* for October 3, 1957 carries an article by Simon W. Gerson entitled "The Djilas Case and the Smith Act Trials."

Gerson calls to task most signers of the Djilas letter for their failure to ask President Eisenhower to free Gilbert Greene, Henry Winston and Irving Potash from their Smith Act sentences. Gerson then goes on to smear Djilas in a manner which is typical of the Stalinist slander machine which we all remember from the good old days. His book "has become an ideological platform for the 'liberationists.' In brief, it has become a manual for the cold war . . ." the cold warriors whose fundamental outlook is that of 'liberating' the socialist countries by atomic war and restoring capitalism . . . have clasped Djilas to their bosom. . ."

The *Daily Worker*, Gerson continues, opposes the Djilas trials because they "unfortunately play 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 Yugoslav government is, in his opinion, strong enough to be able to combat Djilas by ideological rather than police methods. Then comes a paragraph which can only be described, even in these days of diplomatic par-

lance, as a slimy little offal right out of Stalin's own Moscow Trial meat-grinder:

"If Djilas is guilty of illegal relations with 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."

Does the *Daily Worker* charge Djilas with espionage? Not quite. It only hints broadly. Tito's regime didn't charge him with that, or even hint at it. Even to Tito that must smell too reminiscently of Stalin's handiwork. Enough for them was that Djilas did violate the "laws of his country," just as, incidentally, Green, Winston and Potash "violated" a law of theirs.

To be critical of Djilas' book is one thing. To oppose it ideologically is one thing. But what would one think of people who, while saying that they themselves favor the freeing of Green et al from prison on Smith Act charges, went on to add that, of course, if they had been accused of espionage, the question would be different, and then added: "This type of illegal activity cannot be excluded if we realize the nature of the real world and the frantic activity of the various Russian government agencies, particularly its intelligence service, to exploit all problems in the capitalist countries?"

Well, that is what we think of Gerson.