

Ben Davis an Indomitable Fighter of Jimcrow

LAST WEEK the Government relaxed, at least partially, its grip upon five members of the National Committee of the Communist Party by releasing them from prison under severely restrictive conditions. But one of the National Committee members who were not released was Ben Davis, indomitable Negro fighter against jimcrow. He is being held for two additional months in the Pittsburgh jail, on the pretense of "contempt of court."



Of all the outrageous methods now being used to imprison Communists and other left-wingers, one of the most disgusting is this charge of "contempt of court." When such fighters are on the witness stand, defending themselves and each other, the prosecutors, who are always sustained by the judges, ask them stoolpigeon questions, designed to implicate others, and when the witnesses refuse to do this dirty work, they are jailed for contempt.

This practice is illegal and a denial of justice, as the courts and prosecutors understand

quite well. It is just another arbitrary method of railroading working class fighters into jail. Ben Davis is a victim of this shameless malpractice.

BEN DAVIS is one of the most outstanding fighters in this country against jimcrowism. This he has demonstrated throughout his life-long fight against the white chauvinists of every shade and description. Even while in Federal Prison, doing a five-year sentence for no crime whatever, except to insist upon his right to speak out as an American citizen, Davis has found the means to deliver a solid blow against the jimcrow system.

This is his suit in the United State District Court for the District of Columbia, demanding that an end be put to the jimcrow system of segregating Negro prisoners in the Federal Penitentiaries. This move has definitely put the Eisenhower jimcrow Administration on the hook and it is now squirming about trying to wiggle out of its predicament.

Davis' fight on this issue, carried on under grave difficulties, is of major importance and should be given the active support of every believer in civil rights.

Alert to battle jimcrow at its

every weak spot, Ben Davis has long been especially keen to attack it on the international scene. As Davis has repeatedly stated, the American Negro's persecution has now become a question of world concern. Recent events have fully sustained Davis' opinions in this general respect.

Principally as a result of exposure by Communists and progressives, the world's democratic and national liberation forces have become widely aroused over the rank discrimination practiced



BEN DAVIS

against the Negro people in the United States. One of the best examples was the famous book, We Charge Genocide, circulated all over the world.

American imperialism is therefore finding the jimcrow system to be an Achilles heel in its attempt to subjugate other peoples, especially non-white peoples. Consequently the U.S. Government has been compelled to make a gesture or two in this situation by apparently taking the "rough edges" off the jimcrow system in a few respects, but without abolishing the infamous thing itself, and without even halting the Dixiecrat drive against the rights of the Negro people.

Considerations of foreign policy, of breaking down anti-jimcrow opposition among the masses abroad, were of major importance in such recent moves as the desegregation of the armed forces and the U.S. Supreme Court order for desegregation of the public school system. Along with Paul Robeson, William L. Patterson and others, Ben Davis has been particularly keen in making full use of such opportunities, on a world scale, for the Negro people to press their case more effectively for full economic, political, and social rights.

The answer of American re-

By William Z. Foster

Letters Urged

The Civil Rights Congress emphasized again yesterday that Ben Davis is permitted to receive letters to him at Allegheny County jail, Ross Street, Pittsburgh, Pa. Protests against Davis' 60-day jimcrow contempt sentence are also urged to be sent U. S. Attorney General Herbert Brownell, Washington, D.C.

action to the progressive forces is to break them up and to arrest their leaders. But such pro-fascist treatment cannot defeat such indomitable fighters as Ben Davis. He is one of the greatest of today's leaders of the Negro people.

His imprisonment, far from weakening his mass influence, will broaden and strengthen it. Vast numbers of Negro and white workers and other fighters for freedom will impatiently await the release of their friend and co-fighter, Ben Davis. And in doing this, they should, in the spirit of this indomitable fighter, demand the release of political prisoners and the abolition of all the reactionary laws and governmental practices that have brought down upon Ben Davis and many other fighters such harsh imprisonment and general persecution.