

From The London End

## The Eisler Affair

IT is seldom enough that the sensational is truly the significant. Yet the trial of Gerhard Eisler, the German-born Communist is of as much importance for the serious political observer as it was for the journalist in search of headlines.

There are several interesting aspects to this case. The most sinister of these was the clearly bitter and angry determination of the American authorities to gel hold of him with a view to 'teaching the communists another lesson'. He was not guilty of sabotage or conspiracy or anything of the kind; he was 'grilty' of being a communist and that was sufficient to stimulate American anxiety to punish him. It is well to note this attitude on the part of the Americans in case one should imagine that it is only 'the reds' who fail to act like gentlemen.

The Americans were not only angry. They were also evidently confident that they would be successful in obtaining his extradition from Britain back to the States. They would hardly have drawn attention to Eisler by getting him arrested, unless they were sure of winning. Yet what grounds had they for thinking thus? None—unless they assumed that the wishes of the country with the big stick are bound to be obeyed! It is well to note this attitude on the part of the Americans in case one should imagine that it is only 'the reds' who can behave like bullies.

Mr. Chuter Ede in the House of Commons said that the Polish Embassy (he was taken off a

Polish ship) had been consulted before the arrest took place. Later Mr. Ede announced that this was not correct and apologised for giving inaccurate information. Now no one doubts that Mr. Ede himself acted in good faith. But then how did he come to be misinformed about so important an issue? Are there in the Home Office—or, as has been suggested in some quarters, in the interfering hierarchy of the Foreign Office—those whose hatred of communism is so violent that they are prepared to let truth take a back-seat and allow loyalty to the Minister to be forgotten? It is well to note this possibility in case one should get the impression that it is only 'beyond the iron curtain: that passions can make men dishonest.

When the case came to be heard at the Bow Street Court in London, the Magistrate, Sir Lawrence Dunne, refused to grant the extradition warrant for which the United States had applied so confidently. "The United States", he said, "have failed to show that Mr. Eisler has been guilty of an extraditable crime and this application therefore fails." Concise, clear and certain are those words and fearless and honest too. It is well to note this when one is in danger of believing that the language of diplomacy has become the only *lingua franca* in a world of power blocs.

The reports tell us that as Eisler left the Court a crowd of some hundred men and women cheered him. Women are said to have patted him on the back and shouted 'Good luck' and 'Keep it up'. Policemen had to hold back these well-wishers so that Eisler could get into his taxi. The reports add

that 'it is believed that the crowd' were communists'. On this last point the reports may or may not be correct. It is not very important. What is most important is that most people here in Britain felt that something vital was at stake in this trial and felt a real sympathy for Eisler. It is well to note this in case one should imagine that justice stops short when it comes to a communist.

Mr. Eisler is reported to have said afterwards:—"I am very glad that the American reactionaries have been defeated and I hope they will be defeated many times more." Several people here in Britain and elsewhere will no doubt share his gladness and his hopes. But that is only a part of the victory—and perhaps not the most important part. What, has been defeated is the great family of political vices—Intolerance, Insolence and Injustice. It has been demonstrated that these issues are of more concern to the ordinary people than are the questions of political beliefs.

It would be well if those who are placed in the high seats of authority would note these things.

\* Florescent Lighting Fixtures  
for Mills & Offices

\* NEW ERA Flexible Fluorescent  
Desk Lamps for AC & DC.

Largest Stockists:

**SHANTILAL & CO.**

197, Abdul Rehman St., BOMBAY 3.