



Dear Editor...



The Next Heikkila?

May I offer you my deepest appreciation for your exposure of the Heikkila case and your great editorials on the matter.

I am greatly concerned with the revelation of such news to the American people because I believe that if they knew the sordid police methods being used by our Immigration Dept. they would rise with indignation and demand a change.

I know because I too am a Heikkila case. I was brought here when I was a year old. I was under the impression that my parents were naturalized, but found out differently when I reached voting age. I applied for citizenship; I never received it because, under the McCarran-Walter law, I am considered a terrible, dangerous subversive.

During the depression, I had liberal ideas and wanted to do something about unemployment. In 1934, I was charged with having Communist ideas. I was arrested six years ago and have been forced to report to the Immigration people every week. I must report whom I see, what I do and where I work.

I have been hounded and fired from five jobs because my employers were frightened after immigration officers queried them about me. I am so restricted that I cannot travel more than 50 miles away from the city without special written permission 48 hours in advance. I must tell them where I stay and whom I see. I must report to the police wherever I go.

I have not had anything to do with politics for 20 years. I have children born in this country, yet I am in danger of being deported at any moment. It is only through my last ditch efforts in the courts that I am allowed to remain here—the only country I know.

I too face the sudden fear of kidnaping as happened to Heik-

kila. I never know when two men will suddenly pounce on me and cart me off on some plane bound for a country they claim is supposed to be mine. I know my family would be deprived of all my help and support.

I belong to no organizations. I associate with nobody that is in the least radical. I am isolated from people and ideas that are controversial. I have to be. Because otherwise when I report for my weekly immigration visit, they could clap me in jail for violating my parole conditions.

Is this what we mean by American democracy and freedom? Is this what we want to export to the neutral countries; is this what we want them to emulate?

I don't think so. And I am certain the American people, if they only knew, would not think so either. There is a callousness and cruelty here that is unbelievable because nobody investigates. The people who suffer are the aliens who carry no votes and hold no political power.

This is why I feel so deeply about this Heikkila matter. Someone somewhere must look into the McCarran-Walter Act and the methods the Immigration Dept. uses to confuse it. Judge Murphy's charge of Gestapo and other methods seems to come as a great surprise even to our own officials.

You have saved Heikkila's life and that of his family. But how many more cases are there like his?

I can assure you there are many. And I wait for true Americanism with its love of fair play and deep humanity to come to the fore and save people like Heikkila and myself who suffer silently and who endure the daily terror of a sudden exile into some strange land.

For obvious reasons, I cannot sign my true name. The Immigration Dept. would seize me instantly, suspend my parole and throw me out of the country. Please understand. NAME WITHHELD.

(Letters must be signed. Names withheld on request.—Ed.)