Half the World

by Claudia Jones

A STRIKING EXAMPLE of the present concern of children was a simple letter penned by an 11-year-old boy seven days after Truman's February decision to produce the Hydrogen bomb.



The boy wondered "why billions of dollars are spent to make a bomb that will destroy lives." "Each year thousands of boys and girls are crippled by polio and heart disease," he stated. "Why doesn't our government help to save them?" he asked the President. "Why? Why?" And with childish assertiveness he wrote: "We children have the right to grow up healthy and strong. We do not want to live in fear of death."

Recently, in a press interview, the President was reported as being "worried" that children overheard their parents discussing this monstrous weapon which promises mass extermination of children and people all over the globe.

But even children know who ordered its production, and who was the first to use the bomb at Hiroshima! It is a hallmark of cynical contempt for human life to witness the morality of those who, while expressing concern for children's fears, spend $817,000,000,000 for atomic production alone and at the same time build and stockpile deathly atomic weapons for their destruction!

In the South, where young Negro children work on Jimcrow shifts, minus schooling with horrible exploitation, in the lush agricultural valleys of Southern California where children of migrant workers suffer insecurity, starve and die, they die of diseases of which little Eddie wrote the President, but also as a result of the disease of capitalist economic crises and chronic unemployment. They die and suffer insecurity because Wall Street financiers and their representatives place war appropriations against appropriations for the social well-being of children, basing their policies on war, not peace.

At home or abroad, wherever our U. S. representatives get a toehold on the globe, this policy prevails. In Greece 20,000 kids forcibly removed from their parents are placed in hideous "children's towns" by Greek royalist fascists who remain in power, backed financially, militarily and morally by our government. Where U. S. arms are shipped via Marshall Plan aid and Atlantic Pact agreements to France, to conduct war in Viet Nam, children are being killed. In Africa, where untold exploitation of children takes place; in Spain, where under fascist Franco tyranny children die of tuberculosis and deprivation leaves their eyes lusterless, their bodies with the imprint of degeneration, the story is the same. It is a story of the toil that imperialist war and capitalist exploitation takes on its victims—the first of whom are children.

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IT IS CONCERN with this immorality, this contempt of children, the war threat to their future lives, the defense of their well-being, that moves 81,000,000 anti-fascist women in the Women's International Democratic Federation to inaugurate International Children's Day, June 1. Their call for men and women of good will to join in celebration of this day all over the world, is based on the striking kernel of their appeal, which is also ours: "Our children have sacred claims on society for they are the world of tomorrow. And that world will correspond to the measure in which these claims are satisfied."