

SFChronicle

MAR 3 1972

A Demand to Release Angela

Friends Say

'Drop the Charges'

By Carolyn Anspecker

A demand that all charges be dropped against Angela Davis was made yesterday with considerable fanfare at an alfresco press conference during the luncheon break in her murder, kidnap and conspiracy trial.

The conference, held on the damp lawn outside the courthouse where she is being tried, was called by the National United Committee to Free Angela Davis and All Political Prisoners.

Miss Davis herself remained mute during the meeting. But she was surrounded by a swarm of Fresno McAfees — denunciated Rodger, the farmer who posted the \$100,000 surety bond that made possible Miss Davis' release on bail



By Barney Peterson

Angela Davis happily posed with four of the sons of rancher Rodger McAfee (left) during a break in her trial. The youngsters are (from left) Mark, 10, Eric, 9, Adam, 8 and David, 4. At right is Mrs. McAfee.

last week; his wife, Darlene, 32, and their five sons Mark, 10, Eric, 9, Adam, 8, Andrew, 6, and David, 4.

Franklin Alexander, national co-coordinator of the Committee, was, as usual, the day's spokesman.

"Angela Y. Davis is innocent of all charges against her," Alexander read from a prepared release. "The slogan 'Free Angela' continues to be our battle cry. The only fair trial for Angela in this country is no trial at all — drop the charges."

Pending this, Alexander said, bail restrictions placed on Miss Davis by Superior Court Judge Richard E. Arnason must be removed.

Among the conditions of being released on bail, Judge Arnason restricted Miss Davis' travels to within the six Bay Area counties; denied her the rights to travel by plane and prohibited her from discussing any aspect of her trial.

"The bail restrictions placed on Miss Davis not only are unconstitutional, but the right to speak and travel — during pauses in court proceedings — are part and parcel of a 'fair trial,'" Alexander said. "We will mount an intensive movement to remove these restrictions."

'SYMBOL'

Somewhat later in the conference Alexander said that Angela Davis has become a "symbol," and her physical presence is greatly in demand everywhere, including before the UAW in Detroit.

Returning to his prepared statement, Alexander reiterated the committee's belief that Miss Davis cannot get a fair trial in Santa Clara county.

"The established procedure of jury selection shows the de facto exclusion of black, brown, working class and young people from the entire jury system. The fact that jurors are paid only \$5 per day for jury duty already has excluded an Indi-

an American, father of six children, from serving. It is obvious that only the wealthy and retired are able to serve as jurors," Alexander declared.

McAfee, who sat through the morning session of the trial, appeared almost ecstatic during the press conference. He bespoke his love for Angela Davis — "beautiful inside and out" — and said he hoped his posting her bond would make him eligible for membership in the Communist Party of America.

JURORS

The noontime press session came shortly after 12 tentative jurors — eight women and four men — had been seated in the jury box, finished, at last, with the ordeal of private interrogation on "sensitive issues" involved in the Davis case.

These dealt specifically with the probably length of the trial and its affect on the 12 as individuals, and the impact of pre-trial news coverage of Miss Davis' Communist Party membership, her firing as a UCLA philosophy instructor, and her disappearance following the

August 1970 Marin County Courthouse escape attempt and shooting in which she is accused of complicity.

Examination of the 12, sitting as a body, immediately became more personal as Defense Attorney Howard Moore Jr. and Assistant Attorney General Albert Harris Jr. probed to find hidden prejudices and secret motivations.

ZEAL

Moore pursued his interrogation of Mrs. Ruth A. Ruth, a secretary, with such zeal

that the inquiry became a colloquy. Mrs. Ruth asked as many questions as she was asked and never responded with one word when 25 were at her command.

With disarming candor she disclosed that she had been under some pressure from relatives to "get off the trial" until they were told her salary would be paid for the trial's duration.

They also expressed their views of the case, she said, adding: "I wouldn't be swayed by their opinions,

and they wouldn't be swayed by mine."

She said she presumed Miss Davis to be innocent; had no semantic objection to the phrase "not guilty" and had always had friends and acquaintances among black people.

"Would you find Miss Davis guilty because she had a passionate romantic interest in the late George Jackson?" Moore asked.

Mrs. Ruth looked astonished. "No," she said, in her clear, bright voice.