



C. Bean

AN HISTORIC REPORT ON THE SOUTH

In the First in His Series of Weekly Articles, the General Secretary of the Communist Party Discusses the Document Submitted by the President's National Emergency Council

EARL BROWDER

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT's National Emergency Council has made an historic report on the economic conditions of the South. Confining itself to the simple recital of established facts, it is by implication a political document of first importance, as an indictment of Wall Street rule of absentee ownership typical of capitalist development but exaggerated in the South on the basis of remnants of slavery. Its inevitable programmatic conclusions, inherent in the facts, are clearly along the lines of struggle against monopoly capital, against the economic royalists; this was demonstrated at once by the howl immediately raised against the report by all Tories, North and South. All progressives and true democrats, whatever their other differences, will, if they are at all awake to the realities of the day, rally around this report and help to develop its implied program of progress for the South.

It would be very easy for Communists to content themselves with the lesson that the South requires Socialism for its full emancipation from the terrible conditions revealed in the report. For that is in truth an ines-

capable conclusion for all who would dig down to the very roots of the problem. The Soviet Union with its Socialist system is revealing, in its development of its many constituent republics, especially those formerly most exploited under czarism, how economic deserts under capitalism quickly become blooming gardens under Socialism. As the report of the President's committee makes clear on many detailed problems of the South, most of the problems of especially depressed areas are the product of social institutions stemming directly from capitalist monopoly.

But the argument for a new, Socialist organization of our national life is not the immediate conclusion for the great majority of Americans, and especially not for Southerners. Most Americans have not yet faced the issue of Socialism. Are we therefore to conclude, as the dogmatists and confusionists of Socialism doubtless will, that nothing good will come of the President's committee's report, until the American people are ready for Socialism? No, such a conclusion would be wrong and harmful, a betrayal of the interests of the South and of the nation. Immediate conclusions from

the report will be drawn by the majority of the American people, before the issue of Socialism is faced, but conclusions of tremendous importance for the future of America. We Communists, and together with us, we hope, all sincere Socialists, will give all possible help to crystallizing *majority opinion* on this report in the direction of a *minimum program for the South*, behind which can be rallied the progressive and democratic majority of the people, North and South. This is a task of today, not tomorrow, and is a task, as President Roosevelt has correctly emphasized, for the whole country, not merely for the South itself.

For many years the Communist Party has been deeply concerned with these problems of the South, so well summarized by the report of the National Emergency Council. We have suffered great hardships to maintain the growing Southern movement. Hundreds of our best men and women have risked their lives in pioneer work for the rising Southern labor movement and the Negro liberation movement, and many have given their lives in this cause. At our Tenth National Convention we greet-

ed with joy the first well organized representation from the whole South, and expressed our judgment that this was a sign of political awakening of the whole South, not merely the small growth of our still weak Communist Party. The President's report comes now to confirm this judgment of ours, and further to stimulate the great movement for Southern regeneration.

What are the main features of an immediate program for the South around which can be rallied now the majority of Southerners and of all Americans?

First of all, the people of the South must be enlisted in their own voluntary organizations, designed to bring them into active work and fight for their economic needs. Trade unions for the workers, various cooperative and other organizations for the farmers—these are the foundation stones for all Southern progress. The work begun in Harlan, Ky., must be carried to completion.

Then the Southern working people, agricultural and industrial, must find ways and means to regain some measure of genuine political control of their states. Democracy in the South, long prostituted to a Southern bourbonism which is nothing but a local agency for Wall Street exploitation and oppression, must be reclaimed for the working population, with the participation of an awakening Southern intellectual group.

To that end it is imperative that all progressive forces move in concerted action as against the common enemy, that there must be a progressive democratic front. That means, especially now, working relations between the labor movement (including the Communists and Socialists) and the New Deal wing of Southern Democracy, to guarantee that no dissensions among the people shall help the bourbons retain their old dictatorial power of the South. That means effective anti-lynching legislation. That means a great united movement to regain the franchise for the Southern masses, most of whom are denied the vote by poll taxes and other devices (in Mississippi, only about 10 percent of adults participate in elections, and the problem is general for the whole South). That means, above all, uniting the white and Negro populations into an effective Southern democracy.

President Roosevelt and his associates are working out—slowly, it is true—various concrete measures for the economic rehabilitation of the South, all of which are worthy of support, no matter how limited the objective of each measure. While supporting all such separate measures, however, it is necessary to point out the need for a comprehensive program which tackles all sides of the problem simultaneously from a unified approach. Such a program for the South is still to be hammered out.

All progress for the South, however, is conditioned upon the destruction of the old bourbon machine of the Democratic Party. Exercising a monopoly of political power in the South, exploiting all the poverty and ignorance arising from Wall Street's absentee-

ownership government for its further perpetuation, with the great majority of the people effectively disfranchised, Southern bourbonism has been not only the octopus that has strangled the South, but it has simultaneously been a source of poison for the nation as a whole. The leadership of the anti-Roosevelt wing of the Democratic Party stems first of all from Southern bourbonism. This old Solid South of reaction has been the greatest threat of fascism for the United States. It must be undermined and destroyed, root and branch. A new South, a new democracy, must arise. Otherwise the President's report might just as well not have been written, for nothing will come of it.

But a new South is arising before our eyes. On the basis of the rising labor movement, and the stirrings of the New Deal ideas among the masses, we witness a challenge to

bourbonism even from the progressive Southern bourgeoisie. Supreme Court Justice Black, of Alabama, and his successor in the Senate, Lister Hill, certainly do not represent the Old South. Senator Pepper, of Florida, sounds a new note for the South. President Roosevelt himself, with his enormous personal popularity in the South, is a big factor in the promise that the basis of reactionary power in the past can become a stronghold of progress in the near future.

The report of the President's National Emergency Council on the economic conditions and problems of the South is therefore a first-class historical and political document. It deserves the closest study and attention of everyone. It is a contribution to the unity of thought and action of progressive and democratic America.



"Name Your Poison."

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WAR WEEKENDS IN PRAGUE

The Nazi Menace to the Czechs Takes Many Forms

F. C. WEISKOPF

Prague, August 1.

OPPPOSITE me now sits a young man, his complexion darkened from the sun. He is dressed in civilian clothes but his bearing and speech and his habit, though seated, of clicking his heels when replying to a question, all betray the soldier. Indeed, the young man is an officer-in-training from the German army; or rather he *was* until a few days ago. By now his name has probably been stricken from the eligibles and has been transferred to one of those numerous lists which are continually being prepared and augmented by the FD section of the Gestapo, the "Missing Persons" section engaged in hunting deserters. For the man before me deserted his outfit and crossed the border into Czechoslovakia to join company with those new-style emigrants whose number is already quite substantial.

Why? As an officer-in-training, he was not motivated by inadequate rations or mistreatment, like many privates who have fled from Germany. This man left because he saw war just ahead.

"In the week before July 15, we were kept in strict readiness," he says. "Just as on May 21, our company was given its full quota of munitions. Villages near our garrison were loaded down with artillery and armored cars. Shacks along the border housed the SS leaders and Special Call officers, in civilian dress but ready to be the first 'over the top.' During instruction period, we were told that 'the situation in Sudeten German territory has grown intolerable and a revolt is certain.'"

In other words, July 15 was one of those crucial dates when all Europe waits with bated breath for the expected Nazi putsch. Again the whispering campaign of Henlein's Sudeten German Party operated feverishly. The FS, initials of the Henlein storm-troop organization, was set to go. The officialdom was mobilized. Precise instructions were given to the Nazi-controlled trade unions and the "coordinated" manufacturers' associations. They were only waiting for the signal, a general strike. "This time, *he's* coming, definitely."

But again, the democratic forces were on the alert. As early as July 11, the Communist and Social Democratic press divulged the plans of Henlein's *Sudetendeutsche Partei*. On July 13, the independent trade unions issued a warning of the emergency. The anti-fascist organizations served notice that any

terroristic attempt to force industry to a standstill would meet with an active counter-movement. And the government, again, as on May 21, impelled and strengthened by the evident determination of every democratic group in the country, took the necessary measures with speed and energy, despite any lack of outward show. Factory owners and union representatives allied with the SDP were informed that they would be taken into custody the moment they made a move to close down plants or create disturbances. Police forces in the Sudeten received reinforcements. And that was as much as was needed: the SDP called the whole thing off. The sensational report of renewed mobilizations in Czechoslovakia which Berlin then inspired was just to cover up a retreat which Henlein's foreign masters now found advisable.

On May 21 and on July 15 the Third Reich's plan of attack foundered upon the rock of Czechoslovakia's determination to defend herself and the loyalty of Prague's allies. From this Berlin concluded that a change in tactics was necessary. Indirect action must replace direct and, for the present, diplomatic pressure might succeed where military force had failed. While Wiedemann was on his mission to London, Sebekovsky, a member of the upper councils of the SDP (and one of the three men who have built up Henlein) was at work on parallel lines in Karlsbad. To the British, Wiedemann dangled the bait of an air agreement, a neutrality accord, peaceable solutions of all shapes and kinds. And in a like vein, Sebekovsky issued a statement that "for the sake of peace" the SDP was willing to "make concessions" on the point of indemnities for injuries to the Sudeten Germans since 1918—one of the demands in Henlein's so-called Karlsbad program. The thought behind these sudden peace gestures is revealed in two documents which saw the light almost simultaneously. One is the report of a Danish officer which gives precise data with respect to the rapid massing of troops and war material throughout lower Austria. The second is a memorandum of secret instructions from the SDP inner councils to ranking officials of that party which the Prague *Sozial-Demokrat* published with



"Damn that fellow, Roosevelt!"

Ned Hilton