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# FOR A FREE, HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS SOUTH

BY FRANCIS FRANKLIN

## 1. THE SOUTH AS A REGION

COMRADE BROWDER in his report to the June Plenum of the Central Committee pointed to the fact that complete national unification of the United States has never occurred. Regional antagonisms and differences still exist, and it must be the role of the American People's Front to achieve the real unity of all these regions.

Of all the regions of the United States, none stands out more distinctly than does the group of Southern states. If one examines tables or maps of comparison of various sections or states of the United States, such as are to be found in Odum's *Southern Regions of the United States*, he will be struck by the fact that, from almost any standpoint, the group of Southern states stands out as a region.

The South is the most predominantly agrarian section. Two-thirds of the Southern people live in the country, whereas in the nation as a whole only 45 per cent are in the country. In Mississippi, only 17 per cent of the population live in cities. Furthermore, the Southern countryside is the most densely populated of all agrarian sections in America.

Of all sections of the United States, the South has the greatest proportion

of young people. No state outside of the South has as much as 40 per cent of its population under 19 years of age. Yet no state in the Southeast, with the single exception of Florida, has as low as 40 per cent of its population under 19. The two Carolinas have respectively 50 per cent and 49 per cent of their populations under 19 years of age.

These figures speak volumes. They indicate the existence of an appallingly high death rate, a high birth rate, and also a tremendous and continuous migration of adults from the South. So great is the latter, so high is the Southern birth rate that the South can be characterized as the breeding ground of the nation.

The high death rate flows from the poverty and exploitation of the Southern people. The high birth rate flows in part from the general ignorance, including lack of information concerning birth control, in which the Southern people are held. The exodus of young adults from the South indicates the effort of the Southern masses to *escape* from poverty, ignorance and exploitation.

The poverty of the Southern mill workers and sharecroppers is widely known. The sharecropping system, with its attendant peonage, is a direct remnant of the economy of slavery.

The persistence of this slave-heritage has established a standard of cheap labor which has also fastened a "Southern differential" in wages upon Southern white labor. On the basis of stimulated race prejudice (white chauvinism), the exploiting classes play white labor against black labor and vice versa, to the detriment of both. Thus, the exploiters have been able in the past to prevent that organization and united action of the Southern toilers which would have put an end to this Southern differential.

It must also not be overlooked that, in comparison with the rest of the country, the South *as a whole* is held in relative poverty. Odum gives the following interesting figures. In the entire Southeastern section of the United States, embracing Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, Kentucky, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, there are only seven millionaires. These seven are to be found in only three states—Tennessee, Kentucky, and Florida. On the other hand, in the Northeast alone, there are 513 millionaires. Over half of these, 276 to be exact, live in New York. Of the 15,000 persons in the U.S. with incomes over \$100,000, eight states have 12,000. No one of these eight is Southern. New York has one-third or 5,538 of them. One-sixth of the states, no one of which is Southern, possesses five-sixths of the large fortunes of the country.

These figures indicate that, while the Southern landlords and capitalists are among the most brutal exploiters in the U.S., they are for the most part dependent upon and agents of those Northern financial barons

who are the principal exploiters of the nation.

Everyone knows that nearly all the mills of the South are financed or owned by Northern capital. Most of the Southern mills have run away from the Northern labor movement to the unorganized South. The industrialists strive to disunite the American working class and to oppose Southern and Northern workers against each other.

James S. Allen has shown in his book, *The Negro Question in the United States*, that the Southern plantations, through the banks, are also dependent on Northern finance capital.

As a result of industrialization of the South by Northern capital and the financing of Southern industry and agriculture by Northern bankers, wealth is constantly pouring out of the South into the hands of Northern capitalists. The large Northern financiers and industrialists, with the active aid of their landlord semi-feudal agents in the South, utilize the unorganized "backwardness" of the South, the remnants of a slave-tradition, and the ability to pit black labor against white labor, in order to drain super-profits out of the South. Behind the Southern exploiters stands Wall Street. Northern finance capital is the chief exploiter of the South. It is this same Wall Street, which is also the chief enemy of the working class and the people as a whole in the North. The Southern toilers not only find their chief exploiter in the North, but also those with whom they must be indissolubly united in order to meet the common enemy.

The poverty of the South also expresses itself startlingly in the form of soil erosion, more extensive here than elsewhere. The South expends by far more money for fertilizer than any other section.

This poverty presents itself to the eye most vividly as one rides through the vast cotton belt of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. For interminable distances, one sees only cotton fields amidst gaping gullies, while as far as the eye can see, are scores of miserable, unpainted huts set in the midst of the fields, the homes of the modern serfs, the sharecroppers and peons. These vast regions are not like industrial America, but remind one of a semi-feudal or colonial country. Only an occasional mill or mill village, shot through this landscape of black cabins and cotton fields, filled with their hosts of bent backs, breaks the monotony of the miles of fields and cabins. Scarcely a house is painted. There are only boards for windows. Even the churches and whole villages have never known paint and are black. The cabins and churches are bent and mashed flat to the earth with age, having become a natural part of the landscape. An occasional gleaming white mansion—even these are rare in the rural areas—serves only to intensify by contrast the surrounding dreariness.

In practically all comparisons of the South with the rest of the nation, the South stands out by standing *at the bottom* of all the other regions in such things as social well-being, industrial, technical, and institutional development. Not only has the South

the greatest poverty, the densest ignorance, the most intense exploitation, but also the greatest amount of crime and the greatest number of lynchings. The Chicago murder rate actually seems small in comparison with the Southern murder rate. Yet the South is also the stronghold of Protestantism, and furthermore prides itself on its homogeneous Anglo-Saxon stock, having the smallest percentage of foreign-born to be found anywhere else in the United States.

It is clear that the South constitutes a special problem for the revolutionary movement in America. The key to this problem is the special oppression of the Negro people. *However, the Negro question in itself does not concern only the Negro people, but the entire South and America as a whole.*

## 2. A SOUTHERN "DESIGN FOR LIVING"

In contrast to the poverty of the Southern people, one hears a great deal about a Southern way of life—a "design for living" as it has been called—consisting of such things as grace of manners, courtesy, hospitality, social charm, and the like. These are by no means myths. The South is rich in a native and virile culture. These qualities in their finest form are not to be found in the aristocratic arrogance of the Southern upper classes, but among the Southern poor.

But whence did this Southern "design for living" originate?

The South still possesses remnants of a pre-capitalist economy.

The introduction of capitalism anywhere has always marked a definite advance over feudalism in that it increases production, frees the toilers

from bondage to the soil, and brings them together where, even though suffering the most frightful exploitation, they are able to organize and prepare for the final onslaught against exploitation in general. Yet, as *The Communist Manifesto* states, capitalism is merciless in its destruction of all elements of social charm in personal relationships, of all ideas of *noblesse oblige* and the like. It tears away the halo which has shrouded all pre-existing forms of exploitation and substitutes cold and naked cash relationships.

"The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his 'natural superiors,' and has left no other bond between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous 'cash-payment.' It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy waters of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless infeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single unconscionable freedom—Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

"The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation, hitherto honored and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage-laborers.

"The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation." (*The Communist Manifesto*.)

It is this "halo" of a pre-capitalist form of economy which has not yet been completely destroyed in the South. This is to a certain extent the

"charm" of the South, its "design for living," which appeals to those who are sick of the purely cash relationships of the industrial North. Yet getting rid of this "halo," enabling man to see the harsh and brutal aspects of exploitation, is in itself an advance.

There are certain Southerners, like the so-called "agrarians," who see something good in itself in this pre-capitalist "design for living," who consequently want to go backward, away from industry. They do not see that this "design" is primarily a glamorous illusion, obscuring the brutal reality of the remnants of slavery. They do not see that the only way out of the present confusion is not backward to feudalism—an impossible movement—but forward from capitalism to the substitution of a collective life of "social charm," as it were, not for a small group of exploiters, but for all who toil, resting not on slavery and an agrarian economy, but on industry which has been socialized.

### 3. THE DOMINANCE OF THE SOUTH BY WALL STREET

Before the Civil War, the South had its own distinct economic system, based on slavery. Capitalism was beginning to evolve within the South and the native Southern capitalists were definitely hostile to the slave system. However, it was not this native capitalism which destroyed chattel slavery. The latter was destroyed from without by the industrial North, although with the active support of those in the South who suffered from the slave economy. In fact, preceding the Civil War, there was a rapidly growing abolitionist movement in the

South. The Southern mountain people were always hostile to slavery, and many of them fought in the Federal army.

The bourgeois revolution in the South, however, was never carried to its logical end. Before the Negro freedmen obtained land, the Northern industrialists, afraid of the revolutionary activity unleashed during Reconstruction, betrayed the former slaves, whom they had used as temporary allies, and compromised with the Southern landlords. This made possible that counter-revolution which terminated Reconstruction and reintroduced remnants of slavery in the form of sharecropping, peonage, Jim Crowism, disfranchisement of the Negro, etc, etc.

The Negroes who were brought over from Africa were from many widely-divergent tribes, with different languages and customs. However, slave-dealers deliberately separated those from the same tribe, in order to make rebellion more difficult. Thus slavery forced the Negroes to forget their old languages and customs, and fused them together, so that today they form a homogeneous people. The Negroes today live on a common territory, the Black Belt, in which they form the majority of the population; they live under common economic conditions; share a common language and culture; and possess a common historical tradition. They are, therefore, a distinct national minority. However, since they are for the most part landless, they are completely denied the material prerequisite for self-determination.

There is a small, but definite Negro bourgeoisie, which, however, is

limited in its development by the discrimination against *all* classes of Negroes and by the poverty of its own people. The Negro people thus definitely form an *oppressed national minority*. The Negro people during Reconstruction were fighting for full national self-determination, *viz.*, for land and for social, economic, and political equality. These efforts were completely crushed by the post-Reconstruction counter-revolution. Thus today, the necessity to win full bourgeois-democratic demands still confronts the Negro people. Their special oppression holds down the level of the whole South and casts its shadow over the entire nation. Complete national unification of the United States can never occur while a national minority in the United States continues to be exploited. The right to self-determination on the part of the Negro people is a necessity for the achievement of thorough-going national unification.

Because of their partial defeat by the Northern capitalists, the Southern landlords have retained a certain *psychology of defeat*. The ruling class of the South has been able through its control of the schools, churches, press, etc., to impose this psychology of defeat to a large extent upon the Southern people as a whole. The sectional aspect of the Civil War made this easier. Poverty and suffering have afforded a material basis for such sentiments. This is something which we cannot afford to ignore. Comrade Dimitroff pointed out in his report to the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International that the national (or in this case, regional) sentiments of a people cannot be ignored.

The destruction of chattel slavery in the South was a definitely progressive movement to which the labor movement and the international revolutionary movement gave complete support. It resulted in greater unification of the American nation. But this war, led by the Northern bourgeoisie, at the same time resembled a conquest of the South. It was not only the landlords who felt their vandalism; the masses of Southern poor were also looted. Such events are incidental to any progressive war, although especially so in *bourgeois* revolutions. Nevertheless, we cannot ignore this aspect of the Civil War and expect Southerners who remember these things or who know how their grandparents suffered to listen to us.

It is true that there were some idealists and sincere abolitionists who remained in the South after the Civil War and who tried to aid the Southern people through the establishment of schools, etc. However, great numbers of the carpet-baggers were mere adventurers. In the midst of Reconstruction, while the former slaves and Southern poor in general, with the support of labor and liberals in the North, were sincerely trying to achieve democracy and a better life, many of the carpet-baggers from the North were looting the entire South. When the time came, they did not hesitate to betray their former allies and to leave the Negro people and Southern poor completely to the mercy of the Ku Klux Klan and the reactionary and illegal legislatures. The K.K.K. was directed not against the corrupt carpet-baggers, who united with it, but against the Southern masses, both

Negro and white, who were trying to achieve democracy.

The South passed definitely under the control of the Northern bourgeoisie, and it is still under the dominance of Northern finance capital. This dominance continuously drains wealth out of the South, leaving its people in a state of impoverishment.

#### 4. ORGANIZED LABOR AS THE SAVIOR OF THE SOUTH

Throughout the South, antagonism toward the North is still strong, and as Marxists, we must reckon with it seriously.

Hitherto, the landlords and capitalists have been able to a certain extent to direct these anti-Northern sentiments against the labor movement and especially against the revolutionary movements. They have branded the labor and revolutionary movements as something alien, coming into the South from the North. They have branded labor organizers as "racketeers from the North," as a new variety of carpet-bagger.

To a certain extent, our movement has made a head-on collision with the antagonism of Southerners toward Northerners. There have been too many statements like the disgraceful slanders of the Southern people made by Leibowitz during the Scottsboro trials. Every true Southerner, and no one more than a Southern Communist, resents slurs cast upon the Southern people, just as Dimitroff resented insults heaped upon the Bulgarian people.

The task which confronts us is to direct the anti-Northern sentiments, produced by conquest and exploitation on the part of Northern indus-

trialists and bankers, not against the international labor movement, but against its proper focal point, *viz.*, Northern finance capital and its landlord-capitalist agents in the South.

Lenin and Stalin have taught us that we must not pull demands and slogans out of the air and try to force them down upon the masses. We must keep close to the people, take up those demands which they already have, and, by leading them to struggle for these demands, lead them also to advance new and more far-reaching demands.

Our Party has been close to the Negro people of the South, and has advanced these demands dear to the hearts of the Negro people. We must now begin to advance a program which will bring us just as close to the masses of Southern whites. We will lead the Negro people to realize their demands, we will begin to win thorough-going liberation for the Negro people only when we begin in practice to rally the Southern whites in unison with the Negro people.

Are we to scoff at Southern pride? Under no conditions. We must rally that pride for the building up of the South. The present poverty, ignorance and exploitation of the South violently contradict this pride. We must stand for a prosperous and progressive South which will take its place in social well-being, educational opportunity, etc., on a plane of equality with the rest of the nation. This means putting a stop to the constant draining of wealth out of the South by Northern capital and retaining it for the welfare of the Southern people.

These are demands near to the hearts of the Southern people.

We must avoid the error of making over-simplified generalizations about the South. There has been too much loose talk about the "solid," "reactionary" South. Such talk antagonizes many liberal and progressive Southerners, of whom there are far more than is generally realized. Our aim should be not to lump the whole South together as one "solid" mass of reaction. We should rather emphasize the existence of Southern liberalism, popularizing the latter, in order to mobilize it *against* reaction. We should stress the fact that outstanding leaders of the American Revolution—Washington, Jefferson, Henry—were Southerners. Our aim should be to introduce a *wedge*, still farther than at present, into the "solid" South, not to help solidify the South in the camp of reaction.

The Chinese have a vivid expression for their native exploiters who have sold themselves body and soul to the Japanese militarists. They call them "running dogs of Japanese imperialism." Everyone is familiar with the shameless manner in which Southern Chambers of Commerce advertise for Northern industries, boasting of their "cheap, contented Southern labor." Everyone knows how they give concessions to these industries, permitting them to enter free from taxation. Too often one gains the impression from articles about the South in our press that such people as these, lynchers, chain gang bosses, scoundrels, are typically Southern. We must put an end to such insinuations. We must brand these Chambers of Commerce and all their fellow petty ex-

ploiters of the South with the name of *treason*. It is not they who represent the South. Just as we brand Hearst as un-American and subversive, so we must denounce these people as *traitors to the South*. They are the "running dogs of Wall Street."

It is not only the South which is especially oppressed by Northern finance capital. In every imperialist country today, the agrarian regions are dominated by the leading financial interests of that country, which are always concentrated in a limited area and which are the real rulers of every imperialist country. The agrarian West, as well as the South, is subjected to the rule of Wall Street. Westerners also have a considerable hatred for what they call the "soft and effeminate East" and especially for New York, which many of them tend to identify with Wall Street, forgetting its millions of poor. This hatred on the part of the Westerner springs from his whole history. The early settlers of the West were fleeing from the oppression of the big planters and traders of the East. The "back country," as a debtor region, has always tended to hate the "creditor" East. All agrarian regions in present-day America feel the dominance of Wall Street. The populist movements have given expression to this hatred. The conflicts in every session of Congress over agricultural legislation reflect the same resentment. In helping to form a national People's Front, we must not forget the *special* demands of *all* the vast depressed agrarian regions of America. This is important in the West as well as in the South.

Potentially the South is one of the wealthiest sections, if not the wealthi-

est section, of the country. The lands of the Southern coasts and the Mississippi Delta were once among the most fertile in the world. This land has been wantonly wasted, but can still be redeemed. No section is richer in natural resources or scenic beauty.

We must demonstrate how a powerful Southern labor movement can put an end to the looting of the South and begin to make this potential wealth actual. Only organized struggle by the Southern workers can put an end to the Southern differential in wages and thus retain in the South the wealth which formerly swelled the superprofits of the Northern owners of Southern mills.

The labor movement in the North is anxious to abolish the wretched conditions in the South which make it possible for employers to run away from unions in the North. The C.I.O. is spending vast sums to help organize the workers in the South. "Run-away" mills are the worst exploiters of the Southern workers. Therefore, workers throughout the nation have one common interest—to organize *all* the workers. The American working class must overcome the division which the industrialists seek to produce between Northern and Southern workers.

We must demand an end to tax-exemptions on industries that come into the South, in order that funds may be obtained for public works, in the interest of the Southern people. We must demand *federal* aid for the South, in the form of legislation to aid the rural poor, for housing projects, for W.P.A., for construction of hospitals, schools, libraries and other needed facilities. Obtaining federal



aid for the South will mean merely *regaining* some of that wealth which since the Civil War has constantly been drained out by Northern industrialists and financiers, aided by their "Southern" agents. Only organized labor can push such legislation most effectively.

With such a program for building up the South, we can mobilize the broadest masses not only among the working class and Negro people, but also among the Southern middle class, intellectuals and professionals. Recently, Representative Maverick of Texas advanced a program for putting an end to the draining of wealth from the South, for fighting the "modern carpet-baggers." This indicates that many Southern Democrats will rally to such a program.

#### 5. THE T.W.O.C. IN THE SOUTH

The present drive of the Textile Workers Organizing Committee of the C.I.O. promises to be the greatest progressive movement in the South since Reconstruction. Not only are textile workers organizing by the thousands, but their example is stimulating organization in scores of other industries. Already the agreement reached with the Viscose Rayon Corporation, having factories in both North and South, has abolished the Southern wage differential in this one corporation, employing 20,000 workers.

Taking into consideration the relationship between the Southern proletariat and the predominantly agrarian economy of the South, it is important that the message of the T.W.O.C. be conveyed through the radio and other means to the South-

ern people as a whole and to the rural poor in particular. Also the unions should begin to advance demands, legislative and otherwise, in the interest of the farmers. Only thus can the repetition of Hershey episodes on a big scale be avoided. Only thus can we begin to move the Southern countryside along with the proletariat.

We must never forget that the Southern working class has its roots in the soil. The Southern workers have come from the soil. Their families are still on the land. They return to the farms for visits. The mills are scattered in small villages, and many of the workers still live on the farms. This connection with the land has tended to retard the development of class-consciousness among Southern workers. However, just because of it, if we are careful to convey the message of organized labor to the farms, when the Southern proletariat does begin to move, it should stir the entire South.

We must spread everywhere the slogan that "Support of Organized Labor will mean the salvation of the South."

If labor is to lead the Southern people to real prosperity, it must achieve unity in its own ranks. This means once and for all overcoming the antagonism, produced by the exploiters of the South, between Negro and white.

Real industrial unionism means organization of *all* workers in an industry. It is the duty of the Communists to see to it that this principle is not slurred over in the case of Negro workers.

Where white workers will not now organize into the same organization

with Negroes, we must not let their prejudices, inspired by the exploiters, stand in the way of organization. We may temporarily permit separate sections of a local. But everywhere we must stand for organization of Negro and white workers under the same charter and for executive councils, shop committees, etc., with full Negro representation.

Because of the vast youth population in the South, we should give a first place to work among the Southern youth.

Southerners are especially fond of social life. This is an aspect of that "design for living," the heritage from a pre-capitalist form of economy, in which there was less "business" and more leisure, thus more joking, merry-making, loving, talking, singing. Yet in spite of this, the general poverty of the South, together with the puritanism of a great part of Southern Protestantism, has deprived the majority of young Southerners of any healthy outlet for their natural desire to enjoy life. A special task of the unions in the South should, therefore, be to take it upon themselves to provide for the needs of the young workers for recreation, entertainment, culture, sports.

#### 6. DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S FRONT IN THE SOUTH

The native Southern exploiters have ruled the Southern people almost entirely through the Democratic Party. However, the Republican Party has been the party preferred by the dominant Northern bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, Northern finance capital, in dominating the South, has been perfectly willing to rule there through

the Democratic Party. The Southern Democratic leaders have been perfectly willing to betray the South for Northern capital. Carter Glass of Virginia has been one of the most outstanding spokesmen for the Wall Street banker, Morgan.

For the very reason that the Republican Party is the typical party of the big bourgeoisie of America, it has been largely through the Democratic Party that liberal currents, the middle class, etc., have usually tried to achieve their ends, although this is the party in the South of the most brutal defenders of the remnants of slavery and also the party of many of the most corrupt political machines of the North.

The big bourgeoisie, however, has managed to keep its grip on both parties with sufficient firmness to keep these currents from being particularly effective until the last election. In that election, the big bourgeoisie, for the first time, was almost *overwhelmingly* supporting the Republican Party; while labor and progressive forces began to crystallize definitely around the presidential candidate of the Democratic Party.

It is fortunate for the development of a progressive, political movement in the South that it was precisely into the Democratic Party of the "solid" South that progressive currents began to flow in the last elections. These national progressive currents in the Democratic Party are also having their effect on the Democratic Party of the "solid" South. Here also cleavages are beginning to take place.

The reactionaries of the Democratic Party in the South sought various methods during the last election cam-

paigned of breaking away from the New Deal-Roosevelt Democrats. This was seen in the case of the abortive Constitutional Democratic Party of Talmadge, backed by Hearst. It was revealed again in the "Jeffersonian" Democrats, who in the name of the Democratic Party gave support to Landon and the Liberty League. Other reactionaries, such as Glass and Byrd, who were also straining at the leash, made no open break with Roosevelt, fearing to lose their "solid" Democratic vote. The temper of the Southern people was shown in their vigorous repudiation of Talmadge and the "Jeffersonians," also in the large Communist and Socialist senatorial vote in Virginia.

Another aspect of the growth of a progressive Democratic wing is the movement of the *Negro people* into the Democratic Party. The Negro masses were once almost solidly supporters of the Republican Party, because of the progressive role played by the latter at the time of the Civil War. During the last election, it became increasingly clear to large sections of the Negro people that the Republican Party has long since become a party of reaction, from which Negroes have nothing to hope. Increasing numbers are seeing that they must join forces with labor, which has thrown its support to Roosevelt. This influx of Negroes into the Democratic Party must exert pressure upon that party to take a more progressive stand for the Negro people.

The best method of forcing the Roosevelt Democrats to take a progressive stand in the South will be by the appearance of labor on the Southern scene as an independent political

force. The T.W.O.C. in the South is now rapidly reaching the stage where it can become such a force, and if it is to become a powerful factor in the South, it must enter politics.

The formation or threat of formation of an independent Farmer-Labor Party in the South would have the tendency of forcing the Democratic Party to take a more progressive stand. This in turn would tend still more to force the reactionary landlords, the Glasses, Byrds, etc., out of such a progressive Democratic Party. We should utilize every opportunity to influence the Democratic Party in the South in this direction. In this manner, it may be possible to swing Southern Democrats into a broad Farmer-Labor Party coalition, thus forcing the reactionaries to split away or else leaving them high and dry.

In certain scattered sections in the South, where progressive currents have entered the Republican Party in order to act as opposition groups to the dominant Democratic machines, the possibility of winning even such opposition Republican groups for a broad Farmer-Labor Party coalition should not be overlooked.

What would be some of the most essential demands of a real Popular Front movement in the South? We may summarize them under the following major headings:

1. The *achievement of real democracy* by the abolition of poll taxes and all restrictions on voting; the redistricting of Southern states to get rid of "rotten boroughs"; the abolition of the fee system for public officials; popular election of judges, school boards, etc.; severe laws against lynching; outlawing of terrorist groups such

as the K.K.K.; full rights for the Negro people to vote, hold office, sit on juries, practice any profession, work on any job, secure relief, or use public facilities;

2. Drastic *labor legislation*, such as passage of State Labor Relations Acts, including guarantees for the right of agricultural and domestic workers and state employees, as well as industrial workers, to organize; passage of wages and hours bills, raising Southern wages to the level of wages anywhere and enforcing equal pay for Negro and white employed on similar jobs;

3. *Legislation for small farmers and tenants*, making adequate grants for loans at low interest to all needy farmers and tenants for purchase of land, cows, or other equipment, shifting from sub-marginal to better soil, or launching of farm cooperatives; and inaugurating extensive programs of soil conservation and rural electrification;

4. *Public welfare measures*, such as building an educational system of equal facilities for Negro and white on a scale equal to the best found anywhere; campaigns to abolish illiteracy, eradicate dietary diseases, hookworm, tuberculosis and syphilis; construction of publicly owned dairies; establishment of free clinics; extensive housing construction; T.V.A. projects; abolition of the chain-gang system, sales taxes, tax exemptions on corporations, etc.

In addition to the *trade unions* and the *progressive Democrats*, many other organizations and groupings in the South must be won to the People's Front.

*Community and civic leagues, Parent-Teacher Associations*, etc., exist

in almost every Southern city, town, and village in both Negro and white sections. Through programs for civic welfare and opposition to the tyranny of the utilities on the part of such organizations, Popular Front movements may be born locally.

The People's Front is at present the main political form which the Negro liberation movement must take. Our aim, therefore, must be to win *every Negro organization* for the People's Front. Unity of action between Negro and white organizations for common specific aims is a transitional form of organization from the present system of segregation to one of complete unity. Winning of full democratic rights, equal economic and educational opportunities is the present stage of the movement for self-determination.

The South has been widely known as the "Bible Belt," and no mass movement in that region can ignore the *churches* and other religious organizations. The majority of Southerners, both Negro and white, are Baptist and Methodist. It is important to recognize that both denominations arose historically from exploited groups and are still regarded as churches of the "common people." We should utilize the role played by Anabaptists in the Peasant Wars in Europe and by such Baptists as Roger Williams in America.

*Southern regionalists*, such as Odum, comprise another group which should be won to the People's Front. In so far as they are prepared to cooperate in building up the South in the interest of immediate gains for the Southern people, we can have a common minimum program on

which we agree. This group represents a widespread sentiment among the Southern intellectuals and middle class.

Such a program as above outlined, by recognizing the real cause and the real nature of Southern regionalism, will by its realization begin to *negate* that regionalism. However, this negation will come not by attack from the outside, but by development of progressive forces from within in conjunction with progressive forces everywhere.

A Popular Front program for the South, whether achieved through the

development of the progressive forces in the Democratic Party or through an independent Farmer-Labor Party coalition, will, by wiping out the Southern differential in wages, carrying forward the liberation movement of the Negro people, winning increased institutional advantages, and the like, begin to abolish the economic *basis* for Southern regionalism. In this manner, the American People's Front will, to the great advantage of the South, take long strides toward achieving that national unification which will raise the South to a level of equality with the rest of the nation.