

# Let's Face It

## CP Dissolution in South Dramatic Highlight of State Convention

A HIGH point in last weekend's dramatic and tense Communist state convention was the five-hour discussion, or rather denunciation, of the dissolution of the Communist organization in the South.

The feeling on this issue was perhaps more intense than on any other raised in the discussions on Communist policy because of the consciousness that reaction has its main base in that region.

A disposition exists in some circles to consider southern reaction, as reflected in the racist rantings of a Rankin or a Bilbo, as something that is entirely different in origin from the similar rantings of the Nazis. The argument is offered that the anti-Negro, anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic attitudes of the southern tory antedate Hitler by many decades.

That, of course, is true but it misses the main point, namely, that there is a significant parallel between the facts of German history that led to the ascendancy of Hitlerism and our own history in the South.

The success of monopoly capital in foisting fascism upon the German people has its roots in the betrayal of the democratic revolution in Germany by the bourgeoisie. Because that democratic revolution was never actually brought to completion the Prussian feudal

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spirit continued to dominate German life.

The American bourgeoisie, too, betrayed the democratic revolution in the middle of the last century, thereby fastening upon the South not only the spirit of the slavocracy but a semi-feudal economy. This provides a ready base from which monopoly capital can operate in its efforts to place reaction in the saddle.

When, therefore, we describe the rantings of a Rankin or a Bilbo as "Hitler-like," we are not merely using a symbol calculated to exploit the hatred that exists against Hitler, we are also expressing the profound historic truth that the circumstances that made possible the ascendancy of a Hitler in Germany are not so different from those that produce a southern tory.

The obvious conclusion is that the struggle to prevent fascism in America calls for the smashing of the semi-feudal system in the South. This is a political and economic struggle. It must be conducted within the South, but it cannot be confined to the South. It is a struggle of the entire nation.

The political aspects of this struggle, the fight for the vote, for FEPC and for democratic rights are fairly familiar. The economic aspects are, unfortunately, not so well-known. Southern economy is primarily agrarian and many of the issues involved in the struggle to destroy the semi-feudal setup are agrarian issues. Both the Communist movement and

the trade union movement in America have dangerously neglected such issues.

For instance, the agricultural program of the Roosevelt administration before the war had a number of planks which, if continued and pushed, would have greatly weakened the plantation economy. These included the farm security administration, the AAA-benefit payments, the farm tenancy program, the anti-peonage laws. The tories succeeded in smashing or distorting these programs.

Right now there is a struggle going on nationally in agrarian circles that has a vital bearing on this question. This is the fight between those who want to keep cotton production high, with the government to provide foreign markets through export subsidies, and those who want to see part of the cotton lands converted to other forms of agriculture, such as food. Leaders of the large farm organizations are opposed to conversion because, they say, it will mean competition with farmers in other parts of the country. Actually, the reason is they recognize the political dangers involved in weakening the semi-feudal cotton economy.

A conversion program, with the government aiding displaced share-croppers to gain farms of their own, would mean a political revolution, as well as an economic one, in the South. This, as well as similar agrarian issues, must become the concern of the Communist and trade union movements if they want to destroy the reactionary base there.

