

Socialist Party "Theoreticians"

Justify Slavery of Negroes

Deny Existence of Black Belt; Provide Intellectual Weapons to White Ruling Class

By JAMES S. ALLEN
II.

LIVING entirely within the bounds of bourgeois ideas and legality, the Socialist leaders cannot conceive of a revolutionary change in the existing order but as one directed against "all human decency," by which they mean capitalism. Together with capitalism as a whole, they are quite ready to accept the purely "human" and mechanical division of the South into states and counties as a constant, immutable fact. Thus, the Socialist Party theoreticians view the question of Negro majority entirely from the point of view of the existing state and county borders in the South. Together with the Census Bureau and the U. S. Government they find that only within the territory set off by artificially set state borders of Mississippi, the Negroes are in the majority. They also find (on being forced to look for them by the need to answer the Communist argument) 191 counties in 11 southern states where the Negroes are in the majority of the population. They then produce a map, on which all state and county borders are indelibly marked, which they say shows that the Negro majority counties are not adjoining and that therefore there is no continuous Black Belt area.

A "VERBAL SUBTERFUGE" CONFOUNDS A "SCHOLAR"

Comrade Earl Browder in his reply to Norman Thomas' attack upon self-determination, says our "Socialist scholar," by resorting to a "verbal subterfuge has concealed the true state of facts." They base themselves on the statement by Browder that "Black Belt runs through eleven southern states and includes 39 counties forming a continuous area in which the Negroes are over 50 per cent of the population, a considerable larger area than many European countries." Then our S. P. "scholar" proceeds to uncover the "subterfuge" at the same time covering himself with confusion and by his own figures arriving at even a larger continuous Black Belt than the census figures themselves, taken mechanically, warrant.

He objects to the Communist proposal to remove these state and county borders which have served the imperialist purpose of concealing the basic territorial, economic and historical unity of the Black Belt.

According to his figures, there are 191 counties having a Negro majority of 66.5 per cent taken as a whole. Another 211 counties, in the same general territory, have a Negro population of 42.7 per cent. He

then makes the mistake (for him) of actually removing the borders by adding the population of these 402 counties and arriving at the total of 4,822,554 whites and 5,302,505 Negroes. This gives the Negroes a clear majority of 479,951 or 52.4 per cent for this continuous territory taken as a whole.

FORCED TO "ADMIT" BLACK BELT

By a glance at his own map, it can easily be seen that there is a continuous territory, in which the majority of the Negroes in one place offset the minority in another territory beginning from Southern Maryland and running into Texas on which the Negroes have a clear majority.

Thus by his own figures, this "Socialist scholar" has committed the same "mathematically dubious" crime of which he accuses the Communists. But keeping his eyes tightly closed to his own figures, he accuses the Committee of dishonest scholarship. In fact, it is not to a blemishing of the purity of "truth and scholarship" that this "student" objects. His real objection lies in the Communist insistence that the existing state and county borders be removed and that the territorial unity of the Black Belt be established. This is a necessary part of the right of self-determination, for without clearly established boundaries to the Black Belt, the Negro majority cannot exert their right to governmental authority and their right to choose between separating from or federation with the then existing U. S. government.

LENIN ON IMPORTANCE OF FRONTIERS

The denial of American Socialist Party of the establishment of such new borders is nothing new in the history of betrayal of the second International. The Socialists of Europe refuse to recognize such territorial unity for the oppressed nationalities in the Balkans. In an exposure of the betrayal by the Socialist Parties of the struggle of oppressed nations for liberation during the World War, Lenin wrote that the proletariat "must not evade the question that is particularly 'unpleasant' for the bourgeoisie, namely, the question of the state FRONTIERS that are based on national oppression. The proletariat must fight against the forcible retention of the oppressed nations within the boundaries of a given state, and this is precisely what the struggle for the right of self-determination means."

This Socialist Party "scholar" attempts further to obscure the "unpleasant" existence of the Black

Belt by publishing additional figures, which by their mute appearance in the columns of the *New Leader* are supposed to knock the bottom out of the Communist position. He shows that the Negroes in the Black Belt form 63.1 per cent of the Negro population of the eleven states through which runs the Black Belt "conjured up by the Communists." These figures are supposed to speak for themselves, for he makes no comment on them. Presumably they are supposed to show that the Black Belt does not even include a very high percentage of the Negroes in the southern states, let alone of the country as a whole.

THIS is the acme of bourgeois constitutionalism and legality. It does not remove the fact that 5,000,000 Negroes, the majority of them peasants, are at present enslaved within a vicious system of peonage and national oppression in the Black Belt; that this landless peasantry, denied every democratic right, must carry on a revolutionary struggle for the land and for the overthrow of the rule of the Yankee imperialists and the big white landowners in the Black Belt; that in this struggle the Negro people become a powerful ally of the whole workingclass in the struggle against imperialism.

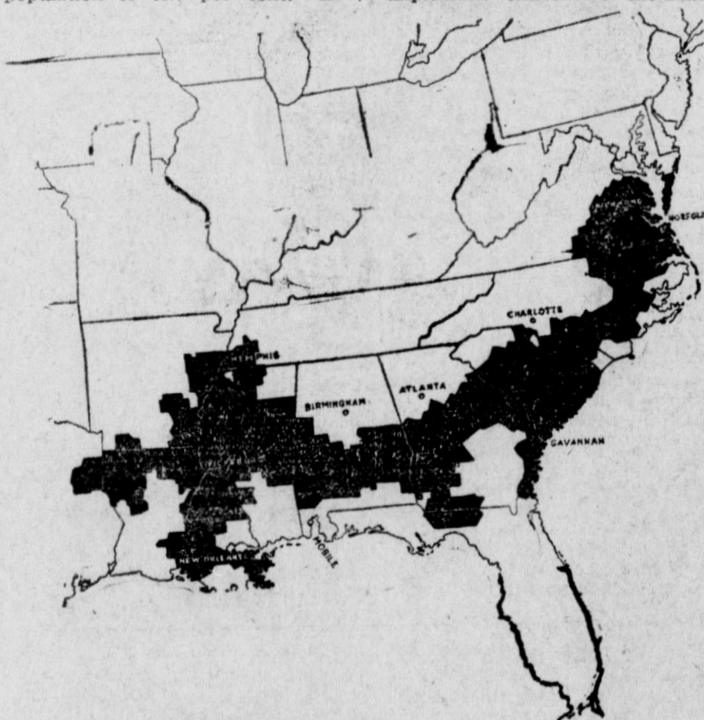
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

This "socialist scholar" who can only view the Black Belt as "conjured up by the Communists," is of course quite incapable of thinking dialectically. In determining the extent of the Black Belt we are forced to accept the tabulation of the population figures by the U. S. Census (for there are no other figures available.) The census bases itself upon the existing state and county borders. We use these figures as a basis, but must recognize that our method suffers from rigidity and mechanical faults arising from the use of the figures as tabulated by capitalist statisticians. But by going further, by making an historical study of this territory we find that:

1. Even from colonial days, with the establishment of the first plantation using Negro slaves, the Negroes were in the majority in the plantation area.
2. That the area of Negro majority travelled along with the rapid spread of the plantation system to the Mississippi following the invention and utilization of the cotton gin.
3. That the Black Belt today is the historical cotton country, the former area of the slave plantations. (A map of the Black Belt today contrasted with a map showing the production of cotton, tobacco and rice in 1860, runs almost spot by spot with these crops).

THE Black Belt is the territory which belongs historically to the Negro people, to do with as they please. There they developed as an American Negro people. The vast majority of the Negroes in other parts of the country migrated from the Black Belt. It is here, and on the immediately adjoining territory (where lives another 3,000,000 Negroes forming between 30 and 35 per cent of the population) that Yankee imperialism subjects the Negro people to a vicious system of national oppression.

The developing of agrarian struggles in the Black Belt and the fight for freedom, will, by revolutionary struggle establish this state unity. Supported by a revolutionary American proletariat (in and outside of the Black Belt) the Negro people will win the right of self-determination. Regardless of census figures, or distortion of these figures by "socialist scholars" the land will be seized, the landlords driven off and state unity of the Black Belt declared. The revolution will find its way with the help of and under the leadership of the Leninist revolutionary party of the proletariat, the Communist Party. The white workers must realize this in order to forge immediately the alliance with the Negro people for the overthrow of imperialism.



The Socialists say that the Negroes are not in a majority in the Black Belt, and therefore "have no right to rule that territory."

But here is a picture of the Black Belt which shows how the Socialists lie. This territory is a continuous stretch of land, extending like a crescent moon from Southern Maryland to Arkansas, in which Negroes outnumber the whites. This territory sweeps through twelve Southern states, and contains over five million Negroes, constituting the majority of the population.