

Wallace and Hitler

By CARL BRADEN
(SCEF Executive Director)

In the middle of 1967 the Southern Conference Educational Fund issued a brochure entitled "There are 40 million white people in the South. Who will organize them? The Ku Klux? George Wallace? Or the Freedom Movement?"

We saw that Wallace and the forces he represents planned to build a new base for reaction in the South, and spread from there to the rest of the United States.

The questions we asked then are more urgent now. About 6 million Southerners voted for George Wallace for president. This gave him five states with an electoral vote of 45.

Efforts to divert votes from Wallace resulted in Nixon's carrying eight Southern states. Similar efforts outside the South drove voters into the Humphrey column.

In both North and South, people were told that Wallace poses a fascist threat. He was likened to Hitler, while his party was compared to the National Socialist German Workers Party (Nazis).

The fear created by this technique caused millions to change their minds at the last minute and vote for a "lesser evil." The "lesser evil" depended on whether you lived in the North or the South or the West.

After the election, Wallace said he looks forward to 1972. And well he might. He had built himself a base of five states in the South, where there was only one before—his native Alabama.

He had also begun to build outside the South, getting almost four million votes in the East, Midwest, and West. His headquarters in Montgomery, Ala., had carefully card-indexed the names of tens of thousands of people who sent money and letters of support to the American Independent Party (AIP). All Wallace needs now is somebody to organize him.

So the battle is already joined for 1972. The question is whether the left-liberal forces will play dead until the spring of 1972—or whether they will organize for political action for the next four years. Starting last month.

Certainly those 40 million white people in the South

need to be reached, especially the ones who voted for Wallace. They and the Wallace voters outside the South thought they saw in the AIP some hope of relief from the war and the draft, high prices and high taxes, lack of jobs and low wages, and a host of other problems. The Wallace followers had lost faith in the people in power in the Democratic and Republican parties and in the labor movement.

For 30 years the Southern Conference has built toward the day when it would be possible to get black and white people together around the issues that affect all of them.

In recent years we have brought more and more white people into contact and action with black people. We have increased our work among lower-income white people in an effort to show their common interest with the oppressed black people.

The aim is to help them get together to form political organizations which will bring about democratic control of this society. There has been some success, but not enough. We have just scratched the surface enough to give us hope.

* * *

It is easy to compare Wallace to Hitler and the AIP to the Nazis. Those who equate Wallaceism and Nazism may be right. A study made by Rudolph Heberle toward the end of World War II does show many parallels.

Heberle reveals the nature of the Nazis, their leaders, and their followers in a book published in 1945 by Louisiana State University Press. It is called "From Democracy to Nazism: A Regional Case Study on Political Parties in Germany."

Heberle says that Hitler "succeeded in concealing from the masses the counter-revolutionary nature of his policy; he was able to make the financiers of the party believe in its essentially conservative intentions." (Compare how Wallace gets money from poor people and Texas oil millionaires.)

"It should be noted," Heberle adds, "that the early support of the Hitler party came, in all social classes, from those who for some reason or other had failed to make a success in their business or occupation, and who had lost their social status or were in danger of losing it." (Compare the AIP appeal to white people's fear of black people's taking their jobs.)

D AHEAD

Heberle finds that the early leaders of the Nazis "had only a very limited experience in political life . . . Having never held any office or leading position in one of the older parties, nor in a labor union or a professional organization, they thought of politics in terms of conflict and combat rather than in terms of debate, compromise, and social integration." (Such as solving social problems by running over dissenters with automobiles.)

Discussing the Nazi doctrine that the leader alone should determine the people's welfare, Heberle says: "This new doctrine of law inevitably leads to a practice of judicial decisions determined by political and administrative expediency rather than by the idea of justice or by the prescription of positive law. The ultimate result is complete abolition of the safeguards of life, liberty, and property." (Compare attacks by Wallace and other right-wingers on the U.S. Supreme Court.)

Heberle notes that the membership of the Nazi Party "became more and more rural; even in the cities a conspicuously large proportion of the members had a rural or small-town background. Consequently, if one wants to understand the reasons for its final success, one should study the Nazi movement in its rural strongholds." (Such as the five states Wallace carried.)

Heberle tells the familiar story of how the Nazis slipped up on their opponents and destroyed them one at a time: "They singled out the Communists, a measure by which they gained sympathy not only among the middle classes but even among the Social Democrats. Having dissolved the KPD (German Communist Party), they did not immediately abolish the trade-unions but waited until they had evidence that these would not fight back; this being accomplished, they proceeded to dissolve the SPD (Socialists)."

The author winds up by saying that firm and determined measures to stop Hitler in his early days would have found enthusiastic mass support in Germany.

Let us hope that nobody will write a post mortem like that about us. We welcome your support and your cooperation as we try to organize Wallace's base right out from under him. And as we take firm and determined measures to stop him.