

NEW YORK CITY, April 28, 1930.

District 17, Communist Party.

DEAR COMRADES: We are now reaching the completion of our drive and are ready to begin arrangements for our work in the South. There is certain information, however, which we must have before we can outline any plans.

I. Is it feasible to organize a circuit school to include classes in several adjacent towns in any industrial area of the South? Have we contacts for this purpose?

II. Is it possible to set up in any center a school which can recruit 75 students or more for evening courses, including of course nonparty members?

III. Are there any available technical facilities there at present, such as rooms which are usable for classrooms, blackboards, desks, chairs, etc.?

IV. If we were to start a 1-month full-time training school, do we have sufficient students who have some theoretical training in the South, or is it a better plan to first organize classes in various towns for about three months with teachers sent from the North who will prepare some comrades for the national training school?

I would like to get the answers to these questions and any suggestions which you might have for plans for such a school, especially as to the best time for holding it, the cheapest means for carrying through full-time school evening courses or a circuit school.

Please consider that any information or material that you can send us will be highly appreciated and indeed very helpful. If the American Federation of Labor or the Muste group have ever conducted classes or had a school in the South, please send any material that you can get on this.

And, finally, is it possible to raise any money in the South itself for the school? The extent of our plans will of course depend also upon this fact.

Comradely yours,

SAMUEL A. DARCY.

NOTE.—Since I have written the above letter, the national agitprop department has made a decision to attempt a 2-week-full-time school in the South in August. Can you give me information along the lines of the questions asked above bearing particularly on the possibility, and your suggestions for the organization of such a school?

SAMUEL A. DARCY.

COMMUNIST PARTY, DISTRICT 17,
Birmingham, Ala., May 8, 1930.

SAM. DARCY, *New York City.*

DEAR COMRADE: Yours of the 28th of April came at hand to-day. I can only deal in reply with conditions in this district and not with the South as a whole.

(1) It is not feasible to organize a circuit school. We have established the party in four towns in this district, Chattanooga, Rome, Atlanta, Birmingham. They are considerable of a distance apart. The cost in fare of a circuit school prohibits this.

(2) With our present organizational base it is not possible to set up an evening school in any city drawing in 75 students. This will be possible and will be done this fall. We now have two classes going for new members, one in Chattanooga and one in Birmingham. A total of 21 members are attending.

(3) We have technical facilities in Chattanooga, Atlanta, Birmingham for evening classes, none for full-time training school.

(4) It is my opinion that in this district we do not have to-day enough sufficiently developed comrades to launch a 1-month's training school which will be able to furnish us with southern functionaries and leaders.

The United Textile Workers Union (Muste) has carried on some educational and cultural work in Danville, I believe, and in Elizabethton, I am certain. Their work has been more of a cultural nature—work the Workers International Relief should be doing here, and is not.

It is not possible at the present to raise any funds in the South at least in this district) for a school. We are trying hard to so arrange matters here that we will be independent of the subsidy in both party and Trade Union Unity League. In raising funds this should be our first objective. Of course we are able to keep up our evening schools.

I am not in agreement with the decision of the national agitprop department to establish a 2-weeks' school in August in the South. I learn of this from your letter for the first time, and will write them on it. To conserve time I inclose a copy of my suggestions on this work in the South. I am sending this both to you and to the central committee agitprop department. I would like very much to have your criticism of these proposals.

Comradely yours,

TOM JOHNSON, *District Organizer.*

McDUFF EXHIBIT No. 1, B

PROPOSALS FOR PARTY TRAINING IN THE SOUTH (DISTRICT 17)

1. A circuit school in the usually accepted meaning of the term is out of the question here—the distances are too great. We have at present very few, if any, comrades who are sufficiently experienced and developed to benefit much from an intensive training in a full-time school. Full-time classes in the South in the summer will be a difficult proposition because of the intense. This, of course, is not the most important obstacle.

2. We have in this district a functioning party in four towns. The overwhelming majority of our members are new, without even any previous organizational experience such as comes from participation in union activity. They are not old sympathizers of the party who have been on the fringe of the movement for some time and have absorbed some of our theory and philosophy. They are raw, green workers, with a much lower educational standard than northern workers. Many are illiterate. They have not the slightest idea when they come into the party or how the party operates.

3. To lead and develop these potentially fine elements we will have the following in the district: A Trade Union Unity League organizer, a negro Trade Union Unity League organizer, a Food Workers Union organizer, a National Textile Workers Union organizer, a party organizer. These are absolutely the only comrades we have capable of giving leadership and developing other comrades. We have developed no really leading rank and filers.

4. Although we try to follow a policy of keeping the various Trade Union Unity League and union organizers each more or less permanently in one city in order that they may lead the party work there as well, we can not be

altogether successful in this. Developing situations in other parts of the district mean the removal of these comrades from the cities assigned them for longer or shorter periods. In their absence the party work suffers.

5. This situation places several tasks before us:

(1) To develop local functionaries as speedily as possible; not only through classes, but particularly through working with them, giving them guidance in their everyday work.

(2) To give our entire party membership some elementary training in the fundamentals of communist theory and practice, particularly to train them to carry on their everyday work in the shops and among the unemployed and in the unions.

(3) To give adequate leadership to the party work to-day in the centers where we have a party membership.

6. My conclusion is that the best way to accomplish these tasks is to send into this district a capable party worker—one who is not just a teacher, but a comrade who has taught classes (this, I think, is least important), and who above all has actually applied his communist theory to practical organizational and agitational work.

This comrade should become a sort of traveling organizational and agitational party instructor. He should go into each town and spend there three weeks. In these three weeks he should have at least two evening classes. He should attend every unit meeting and give leadership to the comrades and develop them in the work. He should see to it that the unit executive committees function and give them guidance. He should meet with the party factions in the unions and show them how faction work must be carried on. He should help the best fitted comrades in editing a shop paper and give them individual or group instruction in this art. He should spend a few hours showing the financial secretary how to keep his books properly, etc. He should help the Daily Worker agent organize his work and the Daily Worker campaign.

If this is done our new comrades will develop rapidly, not through sitting all day in classes for which they are not prepared and for which they are as yet ill fitted, but through a combination of classes and comradely aid in the proper carrying out of their party tasks. By these means we will develop local leadership and will at the same time develop the best comrades sufficiently to really benefit from the southern full-time training school which should be established in the early fall. And incidentally the party work will improve.

I think that a full-time training school for southern workers, with most of them negroes, will look fine this summer in the Daily Worker, but I don't think it will do the job we want it to do. All of our experience (at least mine) with the southern comrades, who went to the national training school last year bears me out in this. To give only one instance: Comrade Story, of Atlanta, a fine, sincere negro comrade, was at this school. He went up there too raw and he is no better now than when he went. The whole course of training was not absorbed, I judge from my talks with him, but just passed him by as water falls off a duck's back.

I must say in conclusion, that it would be useless to send in for this work (providing you comrades accept this plan), a comrade who has taught classes but who has never done active party and union work.

I hope that both Comrade Darcy, of the workers' school, to whom I send a copy of this, and you comrades in the central committee agitprop department, will consider these proposals well and will let me know your opinion of them shortly.

With communist greetings,

—————, District Organizer.