

Tom Johnson:

When these 9 Negro boys in Scottsboro were on trial, we brought forward in our papers the fact that a mob of 10,000 whites were there demanding their lynching, legal or otherwise. Well, these 10,000 whites were ragged, many of them had not had a square meal for days. They were poor farmers from the State of Tennessee and yet they constituted a real potential force of fascism because we had never approached these poor farmers without propaganda, our agitation, and because we have never organised them for the struggle against their present conditions.

In the South this question is particularly sharp because of course the whole development of our Negro work in the South, the whole development of the struggle for Negro rights of our agrarian work, from the pushing forward of the immediate partial demands of the Negro masses, against the slave remnants found in Southern agriculture, against the barbar oppression of a whole national minority. And this struggle, by its very nature will be an exceedingly sharp and violent one. I think Camp Hill is typical of what we may expect to run into in the South as our movement develops and it shows certain dangers we have to guard against. The outstanding weakness in Camp Hill situation was the almost complete lack of solid organisation: The fact that it was loose, that we were unable to control the elements under our influence, unable to direct the fight, choose ourselves the terms and conditions of battle, instead we ran into it helter-skelter and it was forced upon us at a time when we were unprepared. Secondly, perhaps an even greater weakness was the fact that we had no Party in Camp Hill. When this situation broke we had no Party right there able to storm, able to gather together the loose ends of our movement and weld them together into a solid whole. We did not have in Camp Hill this kind of leadership.