

New York
23 January 1969

Nick D., Detroit,
Gallatin D., Champaign

Dear Comrades,

Either or both of you may be in a position to help the SL overcome an urgent, temporary personnel shortage in our very important Southern Regional Center, New Orleans.

We have been caught in an unfortunate squeeze. Just as attrition for various personal reasons cut deeply and unexpectedly into our New Orleans local, Comrades Joel and Charlotte S. were abruptly halted on the eve of their departure to New Orleans by Joel's severe illness, which postpones for many weeks or months these comrades' transfer. Finally, our key activist and organizer, Joe V., has just become liable for immediate military induction. Taken all together, we face a critical situation which could jeopardize our entire Southern perspective.

Since we have given very high priority to maintaining and building the New Orleans center, there are a number of colonization prospects of a semi-permanent character upon which we have been working, and I want to review these for you. Beyond Joel and Charlotte, we have asked Dave R. (Chicago) to give a top priority to a New Orleans transfer as soon as he graduates from school (assuming the Army doesn't grab him). The comrades George and Judy of Ithaca will be definitely leaving their area this June, and we will shortly be discussing with them a proposal which tentatively and from the organizational standpoint seems optimal--namely, for them to spend the summer in NYC and then go on to New Orleans to assist in the work there. Over a year ago we asked the capable young comrade, Rick S. of Seattle, to orient toward New Orleans. At that time he was favorable to the idea but indicated that a year or more would be required before he could make such a move conveniently. Since these discussions he has become inactive and we know little of his present circumstances.

There is also the possibility of drawing in forces to New Orleans from elsewhere in the South. The initiative for this probably ought to come directly from Comrade Joe V., though of course the National Office would be happy to assist. We raised some time back with the Sebestas the question of going into New Orleans. At that time they were completely willing to do whatever the organization decided, but were heavily tied down by a combination of slender financial resources, meagre employment skills and the necessity, if they were to complete their schooling, to do so in Texas, their state of legal residence. By now these obstacles may well be coming to an end. I seem to recall that the Sebestas themselves have a perspective of ending up on the West Coast, and over all this may well be a good idea, but does not make impossible their spending a year or so in New Orleans first. We have very little idea about the availability, experience or mobility of the comrades in Houston, where we have had recent growth in membership. Comrade Joe V. might well look into the possibilities suggested.

So what all this adds up to for you, Comrades Nick and Gallatin, is that you two seem to be the only qualified and immediately available comrades who could go temporarily to strengthen the New Orleans center through a crucial period, until longer-term transfers can be effected. For Gallatin, I presume this would involve the loss of a school semester, but on the face of it that's not much. For Nick, doubtless this would mean considerable disruption in his personal life, but--again--one doesn't get something for nothing, and the urgency and importance of the New Orleans problem must be weighed against the personal considerations. If we can get either of you comrades, or better, both, to go, then the National Office could reasonably advance some money for your travel expenses, in proportion to the length of your stay in the New Orleans area. And certainly the New Orleans comrades would do their best during your stay with assistance and advice regarding jobs, housing, etc.

We would appreciate hearing from you soon about your response to this proposal.

Comradely,

Jim Robertson

cc: Dave R., Chicago
George F. and Judith M., Ithaca
Rick S., Seattle
Joel and Charlotte S.
New Orleans local
Austin O.C.
Houston O.C.
Bay Area local
National Office file