

CP Spurts in Harlem--Members Double

By Claudia Jones

All signs point to the growth of a mass Communist Party in Harlem. This is what the 300 new, enthusiastic recruits tell you. This, too, is the estimate of the Harlem Communist Party leaders, with whom I recently spoke, following completion of their recruiting drive.

Above all, it is shown in the people's response to the CP's fight for their "bread and butter" needs.

The new members represent the accomplishment of 75 percent of the original quota set by the Harlem CP in the national recruiting drive.

It likewise represents a doubled membership since the organization of the Harlem Section of the CP.

STRIKE STRUGGLES

They are wonderful people—these new members. Leaders of the Harlem CP Section, Councilman Benjamin J. Davis, chairman; Robert Campbell, executive secretary; John Lavin, administrative secretary, and Rose Gauden, industrial concentration

director, point with pride to the new industrial recruits.

Fifty-five percent of the recruits are from this category and were recruited mainly as a result of the recent strike struggles of the trade unions. They include longshoremen, among the most exploited workers in New York City; railroad workers;; hospital and fraternal organization members.

Several new CP branches are now set up to meet the day-to-day needs of these workers, and work is proceeding to stabilize them as industrial clubs. Great credit for this work goes to Rose Gauden, National Committee member of the CP.

Fifty-five percent of the recruits are Negro veterans. Many came straight from the armed services looking for the CP; they tell you today that it is the CP who has taken up their battles in a forthright way as evidenced in the fight against lynch violence and Jimcrow justice in Columbia, Tenn., and Freeport, L. I., and the recent Gestapo-like action of a South Carolina policeman, in Secretary of State

Byrnes' polltax state, who gouged out the eyes of a Negro veteran less than three hours after his demobilization from the Army.

Without a doubt, the Communist Party has won its place as a frontline fighter for Negro rights and for Negro-white unity.

In the course of its recruiting drive, the Harlem CP aided in initiation of a Consumers and Tenants Movement. This new movement, known as the United Harlem Tenants and Consumers Organization, welcomes Communists and non-Communists.

As told me by Bob Campbell, Harlem CP executive secretary, "The party has embarked on a campaign to rid Harlem of the onus of being a slum, unhealthy community because of neglect of the city administration and the policy of the greedy landlords. We are interested in breaking Jimcrow in the existing housing projects (such as "Stuyvesant Town") and also forcing the greedy landlords to use their super profits, piled high for decades, to improve the health and housing conditions in the community."

Many and varied are the experiences of this consumers and tenants movement. Chief among these experiences is the vanguard work of the Communist Party itself, spearheaded by the work of the ever-battling Councilman Benjamin Davis in the New York City Council.

The key lesson of these experiences is that victories have been won by the Communist Party in its struggle for better conditions.

HEAT ON LANDLORDS

One of the stories going the rounds in the Harlem CP today is how the spade work of two small Communist Clubs, the Abe Lincoln and Nat Turner, by their mass activities forced N. Y. Housing Commissioner Thomas N. Saxl to repudiate his former generous policies and practices toward landlords who failed to clean up garbage in their slum tenements.

This work resulted in the biggest court fines to date leveled against landlords for such violations.

Another is the first-time ruling won following a CP fight against

the unwarranted eviction of the Whaley family at 16 W. 125 St., issued by the City Marshal's office, which is: before anyone gets an eviction notice, personal permission must be granted by the City Marshal.

By no means do these imply self-satisfaction. The Harlem CP leaders, conscious of the effect of the revisionist errors on the Party in Harlem, consider the manner in which they are now working to help place the Harlem CP fully on the road to surpassing even its past traditions of militancy and struggle.

Their sights are set on (1) combating the rising prices, rents and growing unemployment, (2) training new leaders for the party, (3) building a stable CP organization in the community through consistent struggle for peace and against World War III.

And in it all, they have their eye on socialism. You feel it everywhere—as in a new members' meeting I attended a few weeks ago, which welcomed the 300 recruits, who bought literature to learn more about socialism.