

Fluctuation Is Serious Menace in District 2, C. P.

By I. AMTER

Organizer of Communist Party, District 2

During the past few months the District Committee of District 2 has sharply raised the question of fluctuation within the ranks of the Communist Party. It gave very sharp directions to the sections and units to do everything in their power to get full attendance at the unit meetings and to get all members to pay their dues up to date. These administrative measures carried out in the sections and units, however, have not increased the attendance to any degree nor have they been reflected in the dues payments. Although there was a slight rise in attendance in some sections and an increase in dues payments, this was only a temporary manifestation. The situation has become so serious that we must insist that the matter be taken up politically and organizationally in every Section Committee without delay. We must begin to find out exactly why there is such tremendous fluctuation. This cannot be answered by the District alone, nor by the Section Committee alone. The sections must arrange conferences with unit functionaries and active members from units and try to learn from them. Perhaps their experience may give a clue as to the reasons for the fluctuation that exists in every part of the Party.

Don't Know Exact Membership

We wish to introduce a basic discussion of the question and shall use as material the reports of the District as compiled from reports that are transmitted to the District weekly by the Section Committees.

First of all we wish to state that the Sections apparently do not know the exact number of members in the Section. All that they give us as a rule are approximate numbers. There is regular recruitment in every section of the Party. Nevertheless, since the section has not a strict check-up week by week of members who have dropped out or been transferred, the report of membership in the section continues practically at the same figure throughout the month. Thus we see that from March 16th to April 13th, Section 1 reported a total membership of 600. During that period, Section 1 recruited 70 members and therefore on April 13th

should have reported 670 instead of 600 members. We select Section 1 merely because it happens to be first on the list. But the same thing applies to at least half of the sections in the District. The Section Committees do not know exactly how many members they have. This shows that slip-shod methods must be overcome if we want in any way seriously to approach the question of fluctuation. The District must insist on accuracy. Otherwise it will not be able to deal with the problem in a correct manner.

The number of units that meet regularly each week it is also impossible to ascertain from the reports of the sections. Thus in Sections 3 and 4 we have the following reports of units that met during the five weeks:

SECTION 3		SECTION 4	
Shop	Street	Shop	Street
Nuc.	Nuc.	Nuc.	Nuc.
March 16	4	18	12
March 23	5	19	4
March 30	4	19	8
April 6	5	18	9
April 13	8	17	10

During the first four weeks Section 3 reported 10 shop nuclei and 21 street units. On April 13th it reported 10 shop nuclei and only 20 street units. For the first three weeks Section 4 reported 18 shop nuclei and 39 street units. During the last two weeks it reported 18 shop nuclei and 40 street units. This shows that the Sections themselves have not a continuous week-by-week report from all the units. Thus during the whole period, no more than 5 out of the 10 shop nuclei in Section 3 and at most 12 out of the 18 shop nuclei in Section 4 meet. Did the same 5 units meet regularly in Section 3? Did the same 8 to 12 units meet regularly in Section 4? If they did, then what about the other 5 shop nuclei in Section 3 and the other 6 to 8 shop nuclei in Section 4? Are they meeting at all? Do all the meetings take place irregularly? Do the Sections know? The report does not indicate this. We understand the sudden drop in the meetings of the units, both shop and street, in Section 4 on March 23rd (4 shop and 25 street units reported). This came as a result of the attacks in Harlem on March 19th and the

Section was not able to handle the situation as well as it otherwise does.

Applies to All Sections

What has been said in this respect of Sections 3 and 4 applies with equal vigor to practically every other Section. The Sections are able to get their information about the attendance, dues payments and activity of the units only through reports of the unit organizers. Obviously, however, as seen from the above, all the units do not report regularly. Therefore the Section has no actual control over the units. If the Sections do not know from week to week particularly whether the shop nuclei are meeting and functioning, then they are neglecting basic work in spite of all assertions that they are building shop nuclei and teaching them to function, which is the fundamental task of the Party.

It is clear in a situation of this kind that we are in no position to make an accurate analysis of fluctuation. However, we must depend upon the reports of the Section Organizers.

As to attendance: despite the directives of the District Organization Department, according to the reports of the Section Committee, we find that during the very period that the directives were to be put into effect, in some sections there was an increase, although slight, in unit attendance; in others there even was a decline. Thus we have the following reports from Sections 5, 6 and 7:

	Sec. 5	Sec. 6	Sec. 7
March 16	324	185	197
March 23	326	195	195
March 30	312	233	139
April 6	276	216	187
April 13	309	190	188

In Sections 5 and 7 we had a poorer attendance in the week ending April 13th than the week ending March 16th. In Section 6 an increase of only 5 but during the three weeks of March 30th to April 13th a decline in attendance of 43 members. In Section 7 there was an almost continuous decline during the five weeks and at the end of the five-week period 11 members less attending. This during a period when efforts to get better—yes 100 per cent attendance were to be

made. In Section 22 we have the following record:

Section 22
March 19
March 23
March 30
April 6
April 13

The number attending after five weeks has increased by 41 and during the last three weeks from March 30th to April 13 there is a progressive increase.

Attendance Varies

However, the percentage of members attending the unit meetings for the whole District during the five weeks varied between 52 per cent and 54 per cent. In the week of April 20th the attendance declined to 47 per cent—a most alarming manifestation! Not only had the reported membership grown from 9001 (April 13th) to 9283 (April 20th) but the attendance declined from 4730 on April 13th to 4407 on April 20th—a decline from 52 per cent to 47 per cent.

The dues payments neither show the actual Party membership nor do they stand in any relation whatever to the attendance at unit meetings. The dues payments for the five weeks were as follows:

March 18	8685
March 23	8354
March 30	8084
April 6	8139
April 13	9637

On April 20th they had again descended to 8,855.

When only about 50 per cent of the members attend the unit meetings—and not always the same 50 per cent—then it is obvious that non-attendants pay up for several weeks and thus keep the dues payments much closer to the actual number of members than the attendance at unit meetings would indicate. But the disparity is very great even though the dues payments show a record of about 90-95 per cent of the actual membership recorded (April 13th 107 per cent of the membership recorded). It is clear that dues payments alone cannot be an indicator of the activity of the Party, although they are extremely important.

During the month of March, 590

workers were recruited into the Party and in the first two weeks of April 263. In the week of April 20th the recruiting declined to 103—at a time when intense preparations were being made for May Day and the whole Party membership should have been aroused, and should have recognized not only the need but also the possibility of recruiting actively into the Party.

The total reported membership in the District on March 1st was 8960. Adding the 590 recruited during the month of March and the 263 in the first two weeks of April, there should be a total reported membership, that is, reported by the Sections, of 9813. However, on April 13th the Sections reported a total membership of only 9001. The District registration, on the other hand, on March 1st showed a registered membership of close to 11,000. If we add the recruits received into the Party during March and the first two weeks of April this should give us a total membership of approximately 11,800.

We must ask two very basic questions: (1) Where have the 812 members disappeared that even the Section membership reports indicate as missing from our rolls?

(2) Where have the 2800 members disappeared who, the District membership rolls indicate, should be in the Party? These are questions that every Section and unit must answer. But they are questions that the careless and inaccurate reports of the Section Committees show are being evaded. If we are taking seriously recruitment into the Party and the holding of new members, in addition to winning the older members into more steadfast support of the Party and understanding of the Party program, strategy and tactics, then the Section Committees and units must realize that they have no more important political and organizational question, no more important task in connection with the building of the Party than the above figures indicate. We can no longer evade this question. It must be submitted to the most thorough-going analysis and self-criticism. Our party will continue to recruit and tremendous fluctuation will prevail unless the

proper political and organizational measures are taken.

Fighting Fund Lags

A further indication of the lack of serious approach to some Party problems is to be seen in the Red Fighting Fund. For the same five weeks the totals have been for the whole District:

March 16	\$257.65
March 23	250.60
March 30	260.55
April 6	268.18
April 13	282.84

On April 20th it had again declined to \$259.02. This represents only about 31 per cent of the amount that the Sections were to raise. Although there has been a slight upward movement in the collection, nevertheless we see in the week of April 20th that there was a decline. The question of the Red Fighting Fund was particularly emphasized by Comrade Krumbein. And yet we do not see that the units of the Party recognize the seriousness of this question in order to reach the minimum that is necessary to fortify the Party in its work.

Applies to All Sections

In the above analysis we have mentioned only some Sections. We wish to say, however, that the situation applies with equal force in practically every respect not only to the Sections named but also to Sections 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 24. This is a problem for the whole District and every Section Committee. The District is taking it up very seriously, but is unable to carry out real, methodical work because in the sections the organizational departments are very weak. We have not good Organization Committees, Membership Committees and Financial Secretaries. The tasks involved in Party organization are not as simple as some comrades imagine. On the contrary, the best organizational ability must be put into these departments, for without them we cannot build up the Party and have our hands upon every member so that we will get regular functioning and active participation in all the struggles led by the Party.

(To Be Continued)