

Membership Series by District for the (unified) Communist Party of America, June to October 1921.

Based on a document in the Comintern Archive, f. 515, op. 1, d. 57, l. 13.

“Dues Actually Paid” as Tabulated on October 31, 1921

Date	Boston D1	New York D2	Philadelphia D3	Cleveland D4	Chicago D5	Detroit D6	St. Louis D7	S.E. D8	Seattle D9	TOTAL
06/1921	1,137	2,294	672	1,192	1,886	697	343	135	0	8,356
07/1921	1,864	2,175	1,331	1,501	2,133	717	423	72	334	10,550
08/1921	1,066	1,565	1,041	1,512	2,210	803	336	197	18	8,748
09/1921	1,251	1,125	431	861	1,582	606	410	228	384	6,978
Q-III Ave.	1,394	1,622	934	1,291	1,975	709	390	166	245	8,759
<i>pct.</i>	<i>15.9%</i>	<i>18.5%</i>	<i>10.7%</i>	<i>14.7%</i>	<i>22.5%</i>	<i>8.1%</i>	<i>4.5%</i>	<i>1.9%</i>	<i>2.8%</i>	
10/1921	1,336	2,105 ^A	659	1,012 ^B	1,963 ^C	470	383	156	224	8,308

A.- Includes 259 paid members now counted as the new D10 (Buffalo).

B.- Includes 439 paid members now counted as the new D11 (Pittsburgh).

C.- Includes 187 paid members now counted as the new D12 (Minneapolis).

Notes by Tim Davenport:

1. This is the definitive membership series for the first phase of the (unified) Communist Party of America, from the time of its founding at the May 15-28, 1921 Unity Convention (Woodstock, NY) to month preceding the disruptive split of the so-called “Central Caucus” at the tail end of November 1921.
2. This is a count of actually paid members. It does not include exemptions, which were roughly estimated by the original preparer of the document as one-sixth (16.67%) of the total membership figure.
3. The original handwritten document (copied in the handwriting of Charles Dirba) includes a series for total paid Unity and Federation assessments, which indicate a slightly higher membership count than the monthly dues figures above.

Such statistics do not represent a valid counting methodology, however, illustrated by *Official Bulletin No. 1*, which exhorted members to purchase “AS MANY UNITY ASSESSMENT STAMPS AS YOU CAN.” (pg. 1).

4. In September of 1921, the (unified) CPA split 3 of its 4 largest districts, forming new districts based in Buffalo, Pittsburgh, and Minneapolis. To better illustrate the trend of party membership over time, these relatively small new district counts for October 1921 have been reintegrated into the original districts. The creator of the original document did the same.
5. For the record, the official name of the (unified) CPA was “Communist Party of America (Section of the Communist International).”
6. One slightly disruptive structural change that occurred during this period was the move from Federation Officials to Central Party Officials for the collection of dues, which was to change effective July 1, 1921. The original document in the archives includes dual sets of numbers for Federation and Party collections. These figures have been combined as a single set of numbers here.
7. The document includes average statistics by Federation for Q-III of 1921 (July-Sept.) as follows:

<i>Federation</i>	<i>Ave. Members</i>	<i>Pct.</i>
Lithuanian	1,935	22.5%
Russian	1,479	17.2%
Lettish [Latvian]	1,020	11.9%
Ukrainian	920	10.7%
English	814	9.5%
South Slavic [Slovenian, Croatian]	629	7.3%
Finnish	463	5.4%
Jewish [Yiddish]	447	5.2%
Polish	373	4.3%
German	273	3.2%
Hungarian	86	1.0%
Italian	58	0.7%
Estonian	56	0.7%
Miscellaneous	46	0.5%

The total of these “Federation and Language” counts for the quarter was **8,602**.

The author of the document then added an all-too-round 20% to these figures to compensate for “exemptions and corrections.”

8. While the actually paid membership of the (unified) CPA showed growth over the old CPA in absolute terms (variously 8,600 or 8,750 in the unified vs. 7,200 in the old party), the Q-III figures above show severe attrition of the Lithuanian, Russian, and Ukrainian Federation memberships relative to previous year figures. The Lithuanian Federation’s average membership plummeted by 29.0%, Russian Federation membership was off by 25.3%, and Ukrainian membership fell by a massive 37.3%. Bear in mind that this dramatic membership attrition took place *before* the split of the “Central Caucus” in Nov.-Dec. 1921 and shows up even after the wave of Lithuanian, Russian, and Ukrainian members who came into the unified CPA via the UCP. It seems clear that there was a severe membership crisis in each of these organizations *prior to and independent of* the purported cause of the Central Caucus split — the decision to rapidly establish a Legal Political Party. The “Central Caucus” was comprised primarily of a section of the memberships of the Lithuanian, Russian, Ukrainian, and Latvian Federations with roots in the old CPA.

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.

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