

Initiation Stamps Sold by Federation for the Workers Party of America. January to December 1924.

Based on a document in the Comintern Archive, f. 515, op. 1, d. 341, l. 22.

Date	Armenian	Czechoslovak	Estonian	Finnish	German	Greek	Hungarian	Italian	Jewish	Larvian	Lithuanian	Polish	Romanian	Russian	Scandinav.	So. Slavic	Ukrainian	English	TOTAL
Date	Arm	CzS	Est	Finn	Ger	Grk	Hun	Ital	Jew	Lat	Lith	Pol	Rom	Rus	Scan	SSI	Ukr	Eng	TOTAL
01/1924	†	0	0	112	0	0	22	82	0	1	7	49	0	5	26	46	18	499	867
02/1924	†	0	0	179	0	0	7	73	1	0	7	0	0	21	0	108	14	599	1009
03/1924	†	0	0	182	0	9	20	36	0	0	25	0	0	32	19	40	18	410	791
Q-I Tot.	†	0	0	473	0	9	49	191	1	1	39	49	0	58	45	194	50	1508	2,667
<i>pct.</i>		<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>17.7%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.3%</i>	<i>1.8%</i>	<i>7.2%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>1.5%</i>	<i>1.8%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>2.2%</i>	<i>1.7%</i>	<i>7.3%</i>	<i>1.8%</i>	<i>56.5%</i>	
04/1924	†	0	0	136	0	0	19	25	0	0	20	0	0	55	1	44	0	488	788
05/1924	†	0	0	185	0	0	5	8	0	0	5	0	0	24	1	17	0	302	547
06/1924	†	0	0	204	0	0	26	9	0	0	7	0	0	18	0	41	0	347	652
Q-II Tot.	†	0	0	525	0	0	50	42	0	0	32	0	0	97	2	102	0	1137	1,987
<i>pct.</i>		<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>26.4%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>2.5%</i>	<i>2.1%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>1.6%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>4.9%</i>	<i>0.1%</i>	<i>5.13%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>57.2%</i>	$\Delta = -25.5\%$
07/1924	0	0	0	92	0	0	44	11	0	0	8	0	0	1	0	20	0	354	530
08/1924	0	0	0	81	0	2	42	57	0	0	5	0	0	46	0	60	0	298	591
09/1924	0	0	0	79	0	0	17	45	0	0	3	10	0	6	10	19	0	537	726
Q-III Tot.	0	0	0	252	0	2	103	113	0	0	16	10	0	53	10	99	0	1189	1,847
<i>pct.</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>13.6%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.1%</i>	<i>5.6%</i>	<i>6.1%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.9%</i>	<i>0.5%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>2.9%</i>	<i>0.5%</i>	<i>5.4%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>64.4%</i>	$\Delta = -7.0\%$

Date	Armenian Arm	Czechoslovak CzS	Estonian Est	Finnish Finn	German Ger	Greek Grk	Hungarian Hun	Italian Ital	Jewish Jew	Latvian Lat	Lithuanian Lith	Polish Pol	Romanian Rom	Russian Rus	Scandinavian Scan	So. Slavic SSL	Ukrainian Ukr	English Eng	TOTAL
10/1924	0	0	0	55	0	9	18	68	0	0	9	0	0	16	11	7	0	486	679
11/1924	0	0	0	61	0	14	3	56	0	0	6	0	0	26	1	38	0	536	741
12/1924	0	0	0	51	0	7	1	26	0	0	28	0	0	7	1	6	0	408	535
Q-IV Tot.	0	0	0	167	0	30	22	150	0	0	43	0	0	49	13	51	0	1430	1,955
<i>pct.</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>8.5%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>1.5%</i>	<i>1.1%</i>	<i>7.7%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>2.2%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>2.5%</i>	<i>0.7%</i>	<i>2.6%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>73.1%</i>	$\Delta = +5.8%$
Σ YEAR	0	0	0	1417	0	41	224	496	1	1	130	59	0	257	70	446	50	5264	8,456
<i>pct.</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>16.8%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.5%</i>	<i>2.6%</i>	<i>5.9%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>1.5%</i>	<i>0.7%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>3.0%</i>	<i>0.8%</i>	<i>5.3%</i>	<i>0.6%</i>	<i>62.2%</i>	

†- Federation only firmly established in July 1924.

Notes:

1. This is an extremely interesting document, which clearly shows that in 1924 the collection of the \$1 initiation fee called for in the WPA constitution was unevenly applied. In that year, nearly half of the WPA's 18 language groups — including the Armenian, Czechoslovak, Estonian, German, Jewish, Latvian, Romanian, and Ukrainian — clearly did not collect the initiation fee as a matter of general policy. These 9 federations, with a 1924 average paid membership of 3597 (20.7% of the WPA), combined for the sale of just 62 initiation stamps out of a total of 8,456. Dodging the initiation fee was in the federation's interest, it should be noted, as the proceeds of this "initiation stamp" were to accrue solely to the central office of the party and removal of such an initiation fee was one less financial barrier holding back new members from participation in the organization. Of the remaining 9 non-English groups, only the branches of the Hungarian, Scandinavian, and the Italian federations can be said to have regularly collected the initiation fee from each new member. In the case of the gigantic Finnish and strong South Slavic federations, compliance with the collection of initiations seems to have been strong in the first half of the year and more haphazard thereafter.
2. A second phenomenon also shows itself — the vast number of initiation stamps sold by English-language branches. This total for the English language branches is so staggeringly high (5,264 or 62.2% of all initiations, for a group with an average paid membership of just 1,909, or 11.0% of the organization) that one must theorize that there is something at play here other than ordinary "membership churn." Perhaps applications for party membership were distributed *en masse* at public meetings conducted by District Organizers, with initiation fees collected but no English language branch or continued organizational existence following. Alternatively, perhaps DOs lazily failed to account for the specific branches to which initiation stamps were sold and the "English" category was used as a miscellaneous "catch all" bracket. Further archival study needs to be conducted to resolve this unexplained anomaly in the data set.

Compiled by Tim Davenport.

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