

# Stop That Game of Bluff

## The Facts of the Membership Drive

By Jay Lovestone

One of the trump cards of the present puppet leadership of our Party has been its much-heralded "membership drive." The "tremendous gains" of the membership have been broadcasted thruout the whole Communist International to prove the "radicalization of the masses," the "correctness" of the "new line" and of the expulsion of the former Party leadership and of every other crime or stupidity of the new leadership. Internationally, the membership drive figures have proved a gorgeous feather in the cap of Stalin-Molotov.

But "now it can be told." What a grand fraud, what a plain fake the whole thing has been! The new leadership of the Party stands convicted of a most deliberate campaign to fool the member-

1. The Organization Department claims that there were 8800 members left in the Party after the Address. For the sake of argument let us grant this for the moment and assume that this is so. But what does this show? This figure indicates a loss of more than 4,000 members as compared with the months prior to the Address of the Comintern. *Where did these 4000 members go?* It is sad but true that the majority of these thousands of members dropped out of the Party in utter disgust with the new line and the new leadership.

2. The Party bureaucracy claims 6,167 members. Obviously, this is just a plain fraud. For instance, Stachel at the last Plenum told how Williamson, head of the Organization Department, had asked him

on the grounds of unemployment or some other reason. In the New York District, for instance, the proportion of dues paying members in the exempt class recently totalled nearly 72%. Actually, there are about 3,000 dues-paying members in our party today. *How does the new leadership explain that in the whole Party only 6,145 paid dues* (inclusive of exempt stamps given away by the car-load), *when according to their own claims 6,167 members joined the Party in the last drive alone?* How come that the grand total of dues-paying members is 22 less than the number which are supposed to have joined our Party in the last drive alone? What happened to the 8,800 old members? Are they excused from paying dues?

### Organization Department CENTRAL COMMITTEE, COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE U. S. A.

| District        | Memb.<br>before<br>Plenum | New<br>memb. | Total<br>memb. | Init.<br>three<br>months | June<br>1928 | Jan.<br>1929 | June<br>1929 | Dec.<br>1929 | Jan.<br>1930 | Feb.<br>1930 |
|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Boston       | 500                       | 302          | 802            | 215                      | 767          | 492          | 534          | 599          | 450          | 479          |
| 2. New York     | 3000                      | 1450         | 4450           | 620                      | 2396         | 2664         | 2218         | 3138         | 3253         | 2914         |
| 3. Philadelphia | 650                       | 447          | 1097           | 120                      | 608          | 389          | 275          | 429          | 223          | 376          |
| 4. Buffalo      | 250                       | 267          | 517            | 26                       | 246          | 246          | 211          | 155          | 128          | —            |
| 5. Pittsburgh   | 350                       | 266          | 616            | 80                       | 918          | 406          | 270          | 284          | 110          | 228          |
| 6. Cleveland    | 560                       | 668          | 1228           | 276                      | 417          | 575          | 162          | 183          | 225          | 414          |
| 7. Detroit      | 575                       | 1079         | 1654           | 450                      | 509          | 356          | 452          | 675          | 374          | 505          |
| 8. Chicago      | 1125                      | 605          | 1730           | 212                      | 1368         | 795          | 100          | 754          | 365          | 556          |
| 9. Minnesota    | 450                       | 423          | 873            | 110                      | 454          | 515          | 379          | 319          | 461          | 561          |
| 10. Kansas City | 195                       | 50           | 245            | 35                       | 193          | 268          | 234          | 99           | 109          | 182          |
| 11. Dakotas     | 100                       | 25           | 125            | 0                        | 25           | 76           | —            | 134          | 42           | 64           |
| 12. Seattle     | 350                       | 84           | 434            | 60                       | 251          | 410          | 206          | —            | —            | —            |
| 13. California  | 450                       | 307          | 757            | 95                       | 409          | 200          | 234          | 268          | 299          | 315          |
| 15. Connecticut | 245                       | 132          | 377            | 82                       | 128          | 57           | 198          | —            | 106          | —            |
| 16. South       | —                         | 62           | 100            | 10                       | —            | —            | —            | —            | —            | 27           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    | <b>8800</b>               | <b>6167</b>  | <b>15005</b>   | <b>2389</b>              | <b>8689</b>  | <b>7449</b>  | <b>5773</b>  | <b>7037</b>  | <b>9145</b>  | <b>6621</b>  |

ship, to fool the American workers, to fool the whole Communist International.

On the basis of American cables the *Pravda* informed the Russian workers as did the *Rote Fahne* the German and the *Humanite* the French workers that the Party now has over 15,000 members. But we have an official document before us, the unpublished Convention Call, dated April 19. In order to have the coming Seventh Convention equal the size of the Sixth Convention of March 1929, the basis of representation is changed from 125 to 75 or major fraction thereof. On this basis, there will be 102 delegates, exclusive of the Young Communist League. Even if we were to say that every delegate will represent no less than seventy-five members, then, the total number of delegates to be at the Convention shows very clearly that there are in the Party today at most—inclusive of exempt "members" and allowing for terrific padding and manipulation—7,650 members. *This is only about half of the number of members who are supposed to be in the Party today.* According to these figures there are today in our Party 6,167 new members and, therefore, only 1483 old members. Obviously, even these rock-bottom calculations of the Party bureaucrats are reeking with falsehoods.

We herewith reproduce a confidential tabulation of membership figures prepared by the Organization Department. The membership figures shown for June 1928 and January 1929 are deliberately reduced from what they actually were and the figures shown for June and December 1929 and January and February 1930 are purposely inflated. But, for the sake of avoiding issues, let us momentarily accept all the figures of the following table as true. Then, let us proceed to ask the new "leadership" some pertinent questions which we hope will not embarrass them too much in this so-called pre-convention period.

how many of the 1,079 reported new members in Detroit the Party would succeed in keeping? To which Stachel admitted replying: "Comrade Williamson should rather have asked: How many new members have we succeeded getting to join the Party." Likewise a member of the Central Control Commission told me that in his district not even 10% of the alleged new members have actually joined the Party.

However, let's shut our eyes and believe the official figures presented in the above table. On this basis, we demand that the Party leadership explain to the membership how they account for only 2,389 initiation stamps being "sold" to new members when 6,167 are supposed to have joined. Here we underline the fact that we don't mean cash sales. In the 2,389 we already included exempt initiation stamps to the total of more than 1200 as well as deliberately falsified—exaggerated reports from district offices.

The new leadership would do the Party a good turn if they came across with evidence to disprove our claim that at least 60% of the 2,389 initiation stamps sold are exempt. This practice of manipulating the exempt stamps "sales" serves as a very handy proposition for the bankrupt bureaucrats. This is what may be truly called boot-strap lifting progress. The more a District Organizer pushes up without any basis, his dues-payment figures, the more his reputation soars not only at home but what is most important, "in the present third period," abroad. This explains the recent rise of Stachel, the "hero" of the membership drive and the "brave boy" of the Detroit March 6 mass outpouring.

3. The claim is made that there are 15,005 members in our Party today. But the records for February 1 of this year show that only 6,145 are registered as dues payers. Of this 6,145, at least 60% are in the exempt class—that is, workers who are allowed not to pay dues

The Party leadership will have a hard time explaining to the membership how they can expect the workers to believe them when they themselves, after the wildest exaggerations, can do no better than to say that of the 15,005 only 6,145 paid dues. What appalling bankruptcy!

At this very moment, after the "fabulous success" in the last membership drive, under extremely favorable objective conditions, after huge manipulation and falsification in the records, the new Party leadership is compelled to admit, in its own ranks, that thousands of members have dropped out of the Party since the Address and that today the total membership of the Party is less by several thousands than it was before the new line was instituted.

We cannot but wind up with a few remarks in regard to the terrific discrepancies shown by the figures in the various districts. In the Boston District, the total membership is supposed to be 802, but the dues payments inclusive of exempt is only 479. In New York, the banner district, shows only 620 initiation stamps sold and given away within three months among the 1450 members who were supposed to have joined the Party. It is especially significant to note that of the 4,450 alleged members of our Party in the New York District only 2,914 have on February 1st, been gathered up to make cash dues payments and to receive exempt stamps free. It is particularly instructive to note that with a total claimed membership of 1,097 the Philadelphia district can only show a total dues payment on February 1st. of 223—inclusive of exempt! This district shows only 120 initiation stamps sold and given away to the 447 alleged new members. The dead Buffalo district shows quite some life in this game of fake. It reports 26 initiation stamps sold and given away among 267 new mem-

### Our Discussion Page

Up to the coming Convention of our Party *Revolutionary Age* is going to devote a large section of its space to a discussion of the main problems before the Party in its present crisis. This discussion will be conducted in connection with the discussion preceding the National Conference of our group which will take place in July.

*Revolutionary Age* is the only paper in this country in which the Party comrades can discuss the problems of our movement freely and without fear of the "enlightenment campaign." We invite all comrades, whether they agree with us or not, to make use of our columns. Let us make this a FREE Party discussion!

In the next issue in this section there will be: An analysis of the CC Thesis: a review of the Party during the last year—"One Year of the Address"; an article on "What Has the Party Line Meant for the Unions"; and other valuable material.

bers! And our ultra-revolutionary Comrade John Adams (Bimba) of Cleveland is also in the race. He reports the magnificent sum of 225 dues stamps sold and given away to 668 alleged new members by February 1st.

Detroit, under the tutelage of Stachel, has rationalized the whole business of membership drive. Here we have Fordization and the speed-up of bluff with a vengeance. By February 1, Stachel succeeded in "selling" and handing out 374 stamps among a total membership of 1,654. But let this be no surprise to anybody. In Detroit, a considerable proportion of the new members was recruited in the McGregor Institute under the plea that the homeless, jobless, would be given a chance to sleep in Party headquarters if they were to sign up. Hathaway, in Chicago succeeded in getting rid of only 212 initiation stamps during the drive and by February 1 selling and giving away only 365 dues stamps. This is interesting. Compare this with the fact that in June 1928 the Chicago district had a dues-paying membership of 1368. By June 1929 this number dropped to 100! This was in the dog days of the heat of enthusiasm for the Address! Before leaving the Chicago District for his new and higher post, Hathaway succeeded in lifting the dues sales, exempt and all, to the grand number of 556! *This is the lowest "normal" dues-payment the Chicago district has shown at any time in the ten years of our Party's existence.*

The other districts do not show anything different. Seattle seems to have forgotten to make any dues-payment contributions to the National Office for the last three months. The painful fact of the matter is, that the Seattle district is practically wiped out. In Kansas City the devout Lenin student, Gorman, succeeded in expelling one-half of the Party liquidating five shop nuclei, driving nearly all the Negro members and making things pretty hot for any work who dared stay in the Party ranks.

And last but not least, we note that for the last three months there are only 27 dues stamps—the overwhelming majority of this number being exempt—the entire South. Really even we who entertain some doubts about the Communist integrity and principledness of new leadership, could never believe that there were so few members in the Party in the South today. We confess we all were somewhat fooled by all the noise which the *Daily Worker* and the Party Theses and proclamations had made about our victories in the South.

In short we will ask one question which will sum up all our questions:

*How long will the Party membership tolerate such humbug, such quackery, such charlatanism to parade una-*