

FALL 1973 SALES DIRECTORS HANDBOOK

Excerpts from The Militant Sales Directors Workshop held Aug. 6 and from the Fall Circulation Campaign Workshop held Aug. 9 at the 1973 SWP Convention

Sept. 7, 1973

EXCERPTS FROM THE MILITANT SALES DIRECTORS WORKSHOP (Aug. 6)

Sharon Cabaniss, Militant Business Office: The sales campaign this fall will have three main goals: 1) to increase substantially the branch and local bundle sales over what they were last spring, 2) to further try to involve all the comrades in selling on a regular basis, going out at least once a week, and 3) to try to continue to pay the bills promptly and on time with each branch and local keeping current. In addition, to try to finish paying off the back debts, which we made substantial progress on last spring.

We want to gear up our sales in four key areas: One is campus sales, both the daytime sales and the night schools, in places where we have fractions and where we're hoping to build up fractions. Another place we want to develop sales is in the Black community; Chicano community, especially around the Farm Workers coverage; and the Puerto Rican community. A third place we want to expand is sales at plant gates and work places. The fourth area we want to be able to expand on is sales at political events, meetings, conferences, and similar kinds of activities.

Carl Finnamore--Oakland/Berkeley: Although an increase and upgrading of the propaganda departments of the party occurred at a time when mass activity decreased, we do not want to see it decrease and fall back when mass activity picks up. The propaganda campaign initiated by the party has been best able to intervene into the radicalization at this stage over the last several months. And we want to use this period to establish norms in the party that will establish qualitatively higher sales than we ever had before, as a regular feature of branch work, in order to take advantage of the bigger and larger opportunities that will arise when mass activity picks up. In this period we are using the nationally-focused campaign as an opportunity to really galvanize and mobilize the party behind that effort, so that it can become a norm.

I'll just speak to two aspects which were fairly successful in Berkeley. Of course every area is different, and comrades will have to generalize from what we did.

On the plant gate sales, we have over 20 to 25 comrades participating in it, and they go to about 17 different plants, such as transportation and steel. The plants themselves are chosen according to their political importance, their composition, and their proximity to the political areas we work in.

First of all, it had to be extremely well organized. We use the national focus of the campaign and the higher quotas we have as an opportunity to reach out to areas that are politically important, but we've never been able to allocate the labor power to it in order to establish regular sales. The fact that it is a priority of the party means that we can realistically establish it as a norm.

It was our experience that since it was a new field--that is, the branch had not done it regularly, and it is something that we would want to do on a permanent basis--the type of

program we initiated was one that was conducive to a long-term strategy. It's true it was a campaign, but it was a campaign that was paced out. Comrades understood that what they were doing, what they were being asked to do, was something with a certain permanence to it. So that we did not rush the branch, we did not expect 20 comrades or a quarter of the branch to participate in this effort in the first week.

We started with five comrades, who had some very valuable experiences, going out to key plants. We had a few incidents that convinced the branch that it was politically important. We took the example of about five to six comrades to do it. The first thing was that the branch had to see that there were productive areas that you could sell at in plants.

The second important thing is that the leadership of the branch took it very seriously and assigned a leading person to it. Because when we're talking about early morning sales, we're talking about people being awakened a couple hours earlier, and transportation has to be worked out. It's a very technical thing and if it gets fouled up one week, comrades can justifiably fall back on it. So we assigned a leading comrade on the executive committee, and this was the major assignment of the comrade and still is.

He works out transportation to or from work for the comrades, calls comrades to remind them, etc. The technical end of it required a lot of attention. And it still requires a lot of attention three months later when we have 22-25 comrades doing it every week at the same 17 or so plants--selling 120 a week now.

The reason I emphasize the organizational aspects of it is because plant gate sales is different from other sales of the party in this respect. There is no one plant that we have experienced bulk sales. The average is like 7-10 per plant per shift with a team of two comrades. Comrades get up a couple of hours early, go to a plant gate, and sell only seven papers. There's a tendency to fall back, so the thing that helped a lot was a leader in the branch, whose parttime assignment, was just to deal with this question. He was able to talk with comrades and put plant gate sales in a certain perspective.

It is a source of information into some of these key plants and into some of these unions. That information should, or course, be forwarded to the National Office if it becomes important. In any case, it give us a good feel for the union situation and the situation in the plants in our areas and prepares us for having a certain amount of contacts or at least having the paper known so that when mass activity picks up, we will be able to go with the headline of the paper and it will be known.

Now, I'll go on to the organization of the sales committee. We found in our experience that it was very valuable to have a large sales committee. We have several comrades on the branch exec on the sales committee. In addition we have a strong YSA sales committee.

The sales committee was as strong in the branch as the cam-

campaign committee had been. The political impact of the sales campaign, in terms of the perspective of the party's work, had to be felt and seen visibly by the comrades in the branch. And one of the best ways to do that is to have the political weight reflected in the personnel in the committee. So our committee had seven to eight people. And for each sales category we thought it was important to take advantage of--plant sales, campus sales, regional sales, day teams, evening teams, Saturday mobilizations, Thursday evening mobilizations--we assigned a comrade to it. Comrades in the branch began to sift out into regular niches into the sales routine. Of course, there's a constant flux, but because of the size of the committee we were able to spread ourselves out over the whole branch. The personal contact was very important.

I'll just end on one point. That is to make certain that we use the national focus this fall to the maximum advantage and that we mobilize the branch behind this effort with the perspective of maintaining it as a regular feature. So you have to regulate the pace with which you present the branches with the quotas. You shouldn't feel that you have to make it in the first week, or three or four weeks. And the emphasis to the branches will be that what is required to make these quotas is participation.

Lenore Sheridan--Chicago: During the spring sales campaign, we set up our goals in Chicago of increased participation in sales, increased sales by individual comrades, and maintaining a tight control over our bundle, so that fewer Militants would wind up in somebody's car or in their closets. We also wanted to be able to reach and maintain our goal of 500 Militants. It wasn't just going to be something we would hit and fall back down again. We wanted to maintain it.

We set aside Saturday as our big sales day and now on a regular basis we sell between 175 and 200 Militants on Saturday at four main locations in the Black community. We chose these spots originally on the basis of the experience of petitioning during the '72 election campaign.

We took The Militant out to these different places at the beginning and experimented to find out exactly where we could sell large number of Militants. We found that we could sell between 50 and 60 papers at a particular sales location in about an hour and a half to two hours. That's 50 Militants and maybe 10 Ys.

In the beginning we gave our comrades back-up locations, and sometimes it worked out that the second location was better than the first. We also set realistic goals for each team. We never sent out a team with 80 papers and expected them to sell out in an hour and a half, but sent them out with 40 papers or fifty papers or something that we knew that they could sell. We also established the goal with these Saturday teams of staying out until they sold out.

We also organized the Saturday teams so there was always at least one experienced comrade on that team who had sold at the location previously, because some of the places we found were

tricky to sell at. We sell at 35th and King. There's a big shopping mall there, and you can sell on the outskirts of the mall and across the street from it, but you can't sell inside the mall.

We also found during the campaign that it was important to send comrades to places where they sold well, to match up comrades with sales locations so that they didn't mind going out and selling the press. We found that comrades get demoralized when they go out and spend an hour of selling and only sell two or three papers. During the sales campaign with this process of matching people to locations where they sold well, we were able to increase the per capita sales of comrades,

We also sold at plant gates during the week. We have two regular plant gate sales at South Works and United Parcel Service. Also we have comrades in union situations who sell where they work. These are a regular part of our sales projections.

We found that it was important to make projections--for the sales committee to sit down at the beginning of the week and plan out where we were going to sell Militants.

We also found out that it was very important to have the branch exec understand the importance of sales. We're in the process of having all the members of the branch E.C. take out sales teams either on Saturday or during the week so that all the comrades see that sales is everybody's job, not just a number of hotshots who are good salespeople.

A benefit we had from the sales campaign during the spring was that it really professionalized our bookkeeping. Before the sales campaign started, we had absolutely no idea who sold or where they sold. As a result of the campaign we keep records on a week-to-week basis of where the papers are sold, and how many papers each comrade sells.

We plan to use the fall sales campaign to get on a good basis for the election campaign and to lay a basis for building the YSA convention. Also we've already begun a probe of the Chicano community. We've sent people out to sell at various places where there are Farmworker pickets or places where we think there is a possibility of good sales, and this has worked out. This fall campaign is going to give us the opportunity to test out more of those locations and really get The Militant known in all parts of Chicago.

Betsy McDonald--San Diego: Ever since the launching of the spring sales campaign, San Diego has had a sales campaign spirit, and sales are viewed as being a major political activity of the branch by all the comrades. That is why the San Diego branch had made its quota every single week but once since then.

One objective of the spring sales campaign was to increase the percentage of the bundle which the branches sell. During the sales campaign, San Diego sold 90% of its bundle. In other words, an average of 292 out of our bundle of 325. The overall

average of the branches was 75% of their bundles sold. We think it is possible for other branches to increase the percentage of their bundle, primarily by tightening up on the organization of The Militant sales.

The Militant bundle arrives at the San Diego airport on Friday afternoon. The sales committee meets shortly afterwards. At this meeting the committee draws up the schedule for the coming week and prepares a sales sign-up sheet which is later circulated at both the YSA and the branch meeting.

The schedule for sales is very specific, including the name and address of the sales event, the time the team should meet at the headquarters to leave for the sale, and then a blank to indicate the number of comrades who might profitably go on the sale. These specific details, including the location of the sale and the time to meet at the headquarters, are itemized in the branch city letter.

Except for times when branch meetings, educationals or forums are occurring, we schedule sales for every morning, afternoon, and evening. We schedule a wide variety of sales to fit comrades' schedules and preferences, trying to make it as easy as possible to sell.

In San Diego, in addition to campuses, supermarkets and political events, we schedule sales at the beaches and at the navy base. We also integrate the sales with events that other fractions are planning, such as campaign tables, sales at women's meetings, and other political events. These are listed on our sign-up sheet. A copy of the sign-up sheet is kept by a committee member and used to telephone comrades who have signed up to remind them of the sale.

We also try to arrange transportation for those comrades who don't have cars, and comrades who haven't signed up are called and asked to fill out sales teams.

Another way San Diego sells a high percentage of our bundle is by keeping careful track of the whereabouts of The Militants. No one is to take a single Militant out without signing for it, and every Militant that is not returned must be paid for, and all unsold Militants must be returned by Thursday evening so that we can use them for our final sales.

Next to The Militants is kept a notebook with mimeographed forms on which the comrades sign out The Militants, number taken, and the destination of the sale. When comrades return from the sale, they enter the number sold and the money returned. We have a supply of small envelopes made from cutting and taping junk mail return envelopes and note on them the name, the issue number of The Militant, the location of the sale, the number of Militants sold, and the amount of money enclosed. These envelopes are stuffed into a locked box. In this way we have complete records of the whereabouts of The Militants and of the current status of our sales.

These current and accurate records of the sales contributed to San Diego's continuing ability to make its branch quota each week.

For each issue of The Militant, the sales director keeps a list of the comrades' sales on which are tallied daily the number of Militants sold and the money turned in. The totals indicate the status of our sales. If by Wednesday or Thursday, the tallies indicate that we may not meet our quota, members of the sales committee and members of the executive committee of both the YSA and the SWP are notified. In a tight situation, we call on comrades to go on special sales on Thursday night and on Friday, and in crisis situations both the SWP and YSA executive committees go on special sales. And if necessary to make our goal we will extend the issue sales to Saturday.

By Thursday we start counting down the number of Militants necessary to make the branch quota. The countdown helps comrades know how many we need to sell and motivates them to sell their fair share to guarantee that we make our quota.

In addition to helping us make the quota, this detailed accounting helps us to keep the percentage of the bundle sales high by enabling us to call in unsold Militants for other comrades to take on sales. It helps us to keep our monetary accounts current. And most of the money is returned to us in the envelopes and accounts are kept weekly. And comrades are reminded by the following week if they have not turned in all the money for The Militants.

Finally, one-half to two-thirds of our sales are on campus. All our comrades sell on campuses, not just those who attend college. Non-students sell as many Militants as students, and we sell as many Militants on campuses where we do not have comrades attending as we do on campuses that we do.

We sell on seven colleges of all types--junior colleges, city colleges and universities. And we sell on campuses at night as well as during the day, so that comrades who work during the day can sell on the campus of their choice at night.

Ron Wolin--Lower Manhattan: First, on the branch sales report. In presenting initial sales reports, sales must be established as an extension of our political work, as part of the political perspectives of the branch. It follows from this that every sales report to the branch should be presented as a political report. I want to give you an idea of what a typical sales report to the Lower Manhattan branch during the spring sales campaign included. First we put up the sales chart, and we broke down our chart into campus and non-campus sales. We put our sales chart up and reviewed how we did in the past week. We gave our total sales in relation to the sales goal and the bundle and compared it to the previous week of the campaign. We indicated the number of comrades participating in our report, broke that down by party comrades and non-party YSAers. We analyzed where we made our sales.

One of our main goals of the campaign was to establish off-campus sales, to make our participation politically felt in the Lower Manhattan area and to support on-going struggles we were participating in like the District One fight for Puerto

Rican, Black and Chinese control of schools. In this part of the report we tried to present specifics like the numbers of sales of campus fractions, and other fractions, the number sold on our Thursday night blitzes, and on Saturday all day. Saturday was established by the sales campaign as an all-day political-ly active day.

Also, we broke down what and how we sold at demonstrations or other political events and meetings. Wherever possible, we gave concrete sales experiences in this part of the report. We felt it was important to give comrades a sense of how the sales of a particular issue were made. We explained what articles or sales appeal sold the best, the composition of the crowd at different locations, and who bought the paper.

We wanted to give the human side of sales experience, telling about good conversations and contacts that we made and experiences we had. We felt also that it was important to give individual credit to comrades and teams that had done particularly well and in also opening new sales locations. All of this gives the comrades in the branch confidence that we can sell our press in this period. It helps open up new locations and motivates comrades to want to sell. We usually initiated new locations by sending at least one person from the sales committee and another one or two good salespeople there for at least the first one or two times. They brought back those experiences to the branch.

We listed, after this, the top five or ten salespeople for the week by name with the number of papers they sold and that was a regular part of our campaign. All this was in the first part of the report.

Next we projected our sales for the coming week. We gave the sales goal, the days and times of the major sales emphasis. We mentioned the places we could use more comrades to sell and if necessary took volunteers on the spot for certain situations. We'd take time out frequently to hold up the current issue of The Militant and discuss how we project selling it--which specific articles in that paper we thought we could sell on at the locations we were projecting. If any new locations or types of sales were proposed at this point we motivated it carefully. If an increase or decrease of sales goal or bundle was proposed we'd fully explain why the sales committee and the executive committee recommended it.

Once a month we prepared and distributed a mimeographed report. It's very much like a branch financial report. It must fully inform the comrades of the sales progress and help comrades analyze this important aspect of our political work. I think that report really played an important role in the entire branch to get people involved in the whole process of sales.

On the use of visual aids in sales reports. They can be sales charts, individual participation charts, listings of top salespeople, that kind of thing. The kind of visual aid you develop would depend, of course, on what you want to achieve with the sales campaign. For instance, in Lower Manhattan we

wanted to show our progress from the period before the sales campaign began as well as the growth of our off-campus sales and the progress of our weekly sales in relation to the sales goal. We found the sales chart helped to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of our campaign, and it definitely played a role in creating a campaign atmosphere and spirit in the branch. And particularly toward the last couple of weeks, when we dramatically went over our goals, it was exciting for all of us to put that on the chart, take a look at it and see what kind of results our efforts had brought. The important thing is to have a concrete way to express branch sales progress which comrades can easily understand and follow on a week-to-week basis.

In Lower Manhattan we found that the team sales really made the difference in putting us over the top in the spring campaign. It was one of the key lessons that we learned. We didn't organize teams as permanent structures, but based them on the needs of concrete sales locations or situations as they came up. We never sent out comrades to sell alone. We found that the results weren't as good and, of course, the NCLC attacks which occurred about halfway into the sales campaign were a definite defense consideration.

Most of our regular sales could be handled by two comrades. These small teams were set up by listings on the sign-up board which was passed around at the branch and local meetings. For political events and demonstrations the sales committee, in consultation with the fractions involved, organized the teams.

Now Lower Manhattan particularly concentrated on Thursday night sales blitzes--these are late shopping nights--and all-day Saturday sales. We got people to sign up and supplemented those signups by phone calls. We asked comrades to come to the hall at certain times and assigned comrades to teams at the hall. We matched experienced, good salespeople with less experienced comrades consciously. We helped to teach many comrades how to sell as part of this whole process. As the campaign moved along we set up team captains and also asked teams to set a goal for themselves and push to meet it.

We established high but realistic goals and motivated the entire team in that process. The Thursday and Saturday teams were sent out in combination sales and campaign tables. We tried to get three or four of them out on Thursday night and four or more out in two shifts on Saturday.

The advantage of team selling, I want to mention briefly. First we increased the numbers of sales we could get from the same number of comrades selling individually. While one comrade hawked the paper, another approached people individually, another runs the table. We have a way to keep the sales situation flowing. It makes it easier to break the ice and get the first sale, gives all comrades on the team more confidence, the team develops in the process of selling the best approach to sell that particular issue in that location on that day, and it differs all the time. It is, of course, faster and better than an individual selling alone.

Team sales permitted us to run the sales/campaign tables

which helped establish the location as our turf, where interested people could be brought to the table for more conversation, to buy subs, get campaign literature and sign up to work on the campaign while single sales were continued by other team members. And of course the team selling allowed us to include Militant, ISR and YS sales while still presenting our election campaign and other literature, and it heightened our entire political impact in our area.

On the integration of the sales and election campaigns which will be a factor in the fall. We used the team and table approach that I just outlined to combine our campaigns. We sent the tables out on Thursday and Saturday, but also on other days and evenings whenever possible in good weather.

Now an important variation that we developed in New York during the spring campaign were Saturday afternoon candidate and sales street rallies, using a P.A. system. We had two experiences with this technique and they worked very well for us. We had citywide and local area candidates speaking at each location. The locations chosen were those areas politically important for the campaign and also where we regularly sold. We publicized the speaking schedule in advance with pasteups, leaflets and press releases. We ran large literature tables and really went into that area before the rallies and after. And we set up large banners to attract attention and people for the rally and table. We sent out teams from the tables to cover the surrounding areas and the candidates referred to the press and sold The Militant and subs themselves.

The value of combining the sales and election campaigns really can't be overestimated. The political impact we can make with this approach is higher than anything that we've tried before. It provides an effective way to support the struggles that we're involved in, which our candidates talk about and which are featured in The Militant. Similar approaches can be used for support to the farmworkers and other local struggles.

Sandy Knoll--Detroit: I just want to speak briefly on our campaign to sell 1,000 Militants, why we decided to do it, and how we conducted the campaign. First of all part of our general campaign to expand sales in Detroit was to expand sales in the Black community. It's always been true that when there is an article on the front or back page of The Militant that dealt with the struggle in the Black community we've had a much easier time selling that particular issue. So when this particular issue came out there was an article in that issue on the history and origins of STRESS and the history of the struggle against STRESS. There was also a demonstration in Detroit that week which we had been building to abolish STRESS. We thought that was a good opportunity to expand our sales in the Black community. We knew we could get comrades enthused by a campaign around that issue because we had been involved in the struggle and comrades were very excited about the demonstration. We also found all during the spring sales campaign that our sales were best when our activity as a whole was at its height. And during that week not only did we have the anti-STRESS demonstration, but we also had a campaign banquet that we were

organizing--a number of activities that comrades were already excited about. And the objective situation existed to bring comrades into high gear around sales.

Now the highest number of Militants that the branch had ever sold was somewhere around 920, and we proposed to the branch that we try to surpass that week and take a bundle of 1,000. The way we organized this campaign was first by consciously integrating it into the other campaigns we were organizing as a whole. We'd already discussed in a number of sales reports how sales of The Militant was one of the best ways to build the anti-STRESS campaign. So we'd already prepared comrades for that kind of campaign. We used the executive committee and the sales reports in two successive meetings to gear comrades into the campaign, and comrades got up during the discussion and motivated the campaign.

We also asked comrades to set goals for themselves that they would try to make during that week, stressing the fact that it was individual sales initiative that would make the overall goal of the branch. We also offered prizes. The kind of prizes we offered was not only for the highest salesperson, but we offered prizes for the person who sold the most over the highest they had sold during the entire campaign. And we found that that gave a certain push for comrades who hadn't sold that much in the past. We not only had one chart for the entire branch which we kept day-by-day, hour-by-hour almost, of how we were doing in reaching 1,000, but we kept a chart for each individual comrade with their goal. Anyone could walk into the hall and look at the chart and see how everyone was doing and how each comrade was contributing to the overall goal. Day-by-day we had comrades from the sales committee in the hall morning, noon, and night on the phone reminding comrades they were supposed to go out on a sale and making sure that every team went out all the time. Besides the political motivation, without that technical organization you're lost.

Bill Rayson--Chicago: I'm a cab driver, and I started trying to sell papers to passengers and other drivers, and not too many passengers really but it because they're mainly businessmen. But I found that there is a tremendous response from the drivers. They all sit in these lines at the airport and hotels. A lot of them are young, most of them are Black, and they're very interested.

Diane Rupp--Chicago: There are two other lessons that Chicago had in sales. First, we're beginning some probes into the Latino community. One thing we've discovered is the common response that people don't speak English. We decided to test out the sales potential of an area by taking along the "Bert Corona Speaks" pamphlet or some kind of literature in Spanish. Those who don't speak English are offered the Bert Corona pamphlet. Needless to say, we've sold quite a few of the pamphlets. In our first experience in the Puerto Rican community, we sold 15 Militants in about 45 minutes. Of the five people who told us they couldn't speak English, three of them bought the pamphlet. So we were able to decide that interest was fairly high in that area.

A second problem we had to cope with this spring was integrating our big Saturday sales with the campaign around the UFWU, which also had to be done on Saturday when a large number of supermarkets had to be picketed. Comrades who were on the fraction or who were encouraged to emphasize boycott work on Saturdays had the perspective that after being on the picket-line for two or three hours they would go out and sell 10 or 15 Militants or Ys afterwards.

Holbrook Mahn--San Diego: One thing which hasn't been emphasized is the actual way that The Militant gets sold. One thing I think we neglect is to train every comrade in selling The Militant. It's not some skill that people have, but it's developed. In San Diego one of the things we did to start off the campaign was to have a workshop on how to sell The Militant. It was something different than a skit. The way we did it was to have a sort of running commentary on a step-by-step approach to selling and then opened up the floor so that on each point of selling people would throw in ideas or could ask questions. This proved to be very effective and informative. There are a lot of people who hold back asking obvious questions about how to sell The Militant. These kinds of things came out in this informal workshop. The approach that a person has is of course something they develop. Some things that seem obvious to people who have sold for quite a while are not obvious to people who are new.

There are small things I found very helpful in selling, especially in campus sales. First I would never stand with The Militant held up. It's very easy if you're holding it that way for someone to just walk by and wave you off. I would keep The Militants by my side and go up to somebody and say, "Excuse me," and the person would stop, thinking I was going to ask directions or something. I would say, "Have you ever seen The Militant before?" and then the person is forced to look at The Militant. The paper then begins to sell itself. You show the front and back covers and say a few words about the cover stories and then one or two articles. It's very important that comrades be very familiar with The Militant before they try to sell it so that they can flip through it and know what to point to.

It's good to ask the person a question to draw them into it, so that it's not just a pitch, like "Have you been following the farm workers?" If they say yes, then you say, "You'll really like this article;" if they say no, then "it's very important that you read this article." So you draw them into a conversation around the paper. The next important thing is just not to take no for an answer. "Why not?" "Well, I'm not a militant." And it's important that you have your answer ready. You run into the same kind of negative reply over and over, so it's important that comrades all have answers to every single negative reply. If you ask if they've ever read it, and they say no, you say, "Well, you should at least try it once," and just keep pushing at it.

When comrades get this basic framework to use they gain a lot of confidence. It helps for the sales director to take an individual attitude toward the people who are having trouble selling The Militant, to talk to them about their sales technique.

Make it possible for this person to go out to a place where you know they'll sell a lot of Militants. Then have a top salesperson go out on the same team to let that person see that what really sells The Militant is persistence.

Lynn Foster--Boston: I wanted to speak on the financial side of sales and the importance of keeping current with The Militant business office. Boston had some success in that. Since the fall we had a large debt, and we've been able to pay it off and keep current by viewing Militant sales and the money from sales as part of the party's financial responsibilities.

The mechanics involved are that each week the sales director counts all the money for the two locals and the party itself and turns the money into the financial director, who sends it immediately each week into the business office. We build up a credit each month, and by the end of the month our bill is already paid. We only send in money up to the break-even point, and the rest of the money is used in our budget. We make a projection in our budget as to what our sales should be, and it's a part of our monthly budget. Sales of The Militant is used to finance other areas of our work. By sending in money weekly we found that it was one way to avoid just having money stagnate in the checking account. More likely what happened to the money was it didn't stagnate in the checking account, it got spent for some other item. The party financial director is always on top of where The Militant money is and how much is still outstanding. At any particular point in the week we can tell if we have the money to make the break-even point.

Joel Hodroff--Twin Cities: I want to talk about salespersonship. One of the most important things is the number of people you approach. A lot of times we have comrades who go out for an hour on sales, and they hang in the shadows for about 45 minutes of it, every once in a while jumping out at someone with a Militant. People have talked about using the issues in The Militant and using the campaign, and you can also integrate the election campaign right into your sales pitch. After you say a few things about The Militant, you can say that we're also running this socialist candidate against our ugly mayor that people are pretty familiar with.

Another technique I think we should encourage people to develop is sales ability. They should talk to people a while. If you say, "Would you like the latest issue of The Militant?", most people will say no unless you impress upon them that it is interesting, it's worth their quarter, and it's worth their time. And a couple of minutes of investment of time on your part explaining what it's about brings a response from them. Also people should always end their sales pitch with a subscription pitch--it's 25¢ and if you like it it's 12 for a dollar.

Dianne Shur--Brooklyn: I wanted to speak briefly on high school sales. We went on a campaign to establish summer school sales in Brooklyn, and we motivated this by explaining that mostly Black and Puerto Rican youth would be attending the Brooklynwide

summer school. We also stressed the fact that these sales were a form of contact work. The first time we would go to a high school we would take sample copies, back issues of The Militant and YS that were stamped sample copy and stuffed with the campaign platform for New York City. We knew of a high school hangout around one of the high schools, and we dropped off some of them there, and we used the rest to give out to students who claimed that they didn't have enough money. While it was rather difficult to organize summer school sales because the students weren't as likely to hang around as long as they do during the rest of the year, we found that organization was the key aspect. It involved getting comrades up earlier in the morning before they went to work to be in front of the high schools when the students went in. I think that over the last two months, we did a good job of establishing the reputation of The Militant and the YS at the high schools.

John Staggs--Cleveland: We sold about 150 papers on campus every week. One thing about having a high percentage of sales on campus was that we saw that we were actually getting something done with the sales campaign. That is, from the campus sales we got more campaign endorsers and contacts, brought people to forums from selling The Militant, and it just helped our process of reaching out. Technically, out of the 150, we sold 75 by campus fractions. And then about 75 were sold at night at commuter campuses. We have three commuter campuses in Cleveland, and we concentrated on two that were close to the headquarters. We tried to get out three teams of comrades who worked during the day to go to these commuter campuses at night. Each team sold about 30 Militants. We didn't go to cafeterias, we mainly just went to the classroom buildings, and wandered around through the halls to get people who were on a break or between classes. Out of talking to about 15 people you could sell about three to four Militants. It was not a real rush selling; you'd have a chance to talk to people, get them to endorse the campaign and they were really effective sales.

Carol DeBerry--Oakland/Berkeley: I want to make a few remarks about how we organize our sales committee. Our sales week begins on Saturday, and we have our sales committee meeting on Saturday morning. We continued this during the preconvention discussion. We discovered it was necessary to sell at least 150 papers on the weekend in order to make our 500 quota. We budgeted where we thought we were going to sell the 500. We would see how many we were going to sell at our regular places and then see how many were left over and work out places to sell these. Different comrades had specific assignments, and other comrades would take on the other sales, such as an emergency airport sales, a regional campus sale, or a particular demonstration that was coming up.

We would also take the branch list, to find anyone we felt needed to be personally contacted to get them involved in sales during the week. A comrade would volunteer to take the name and either speak to them personally at the branch meeting or call them. We would try to get every comrade involved in at least one sale and worked toward two sales a week. We were quite

successful, and we found that personal contact was extremely important.

We had a signup sheet which we passed out at the branch meeting on Monday night, and we follow this up with personal contact to make sure that comrades get their papers and that they would go out on their sales. We also had a problem with Militants being out and not there when we needed them. At one point we had a \$1,000 debt. We went into the campaign with a \$700 debt, and we were determined to change that. We remained current during the campaign, and with the profit we began to pay off the debt and we have paid it all off now.

EXCERPTS FROM THE FALL CIRCULATION CAMPAIGN PANEL (Aug. 9)

Kim Allen--San Diego: We had lost money on the ISR for the three months preceding June. We wanted to reorganize the ISR sales in order to break even and increase the sales of the branch. With the June bundle we were able to do that. Out of a bundle of 75, by the end of the month we had sold 76 or more. We sold out the bundle, and we also sold back issues. The sales committee met and mapped out the sales. When the sales sheet was passed out to the branch, everything on it was concrete and specific, so that people knew what they were signing up for. And that was spelled out a week in advance by going through the campus and various underground press to find out what the various events were. And all of those events were listed in the city letter.

Besides setting up a sales committee for the ISR, we had an ISR sales director who looked over the calendar of activities. For example, with the China issue, there were various activities on China around the city so that we would tailor the sales to the specific issue of the ISR. With the July/August issue of the ISR we have been going to meetings of Maoists and our opponents in San Diego. Each ISR was looked at, and we looked at what was happening during the week and that month and set up special sales of the ISR, so there would be three or four people there selling the ISR. With the "Cities in Decay" issue, there happened to be a meeting of city planners where one comrade sold seven and one sold three ISRs. It isn't by chance.

On every sale comrades carried a couple of ISRs with them. After they make a sale of The Militant, they asked people to buy the ISR. That was a major point of selling.

Dean Reed--San Francisco: I want to comment on the success we have had in the last year with sales at the San Francisco International airport. Other comrades might think of this as a place to try. We found that it's a valuable place to sell The Militant. In one or two hours comrades can sell a large number of Militants. And we think it's a politically useful place to sell. All of the airport workers know The Militant and get a chance to read it by buying it or picking it up. We get a chance to sell to GIs and people travelling to all corners of the country, who will join other YSAs.

Organizationally, it means organizing a team of four or five comrades with a car and a comrade assigned as a captain. And we try to have a leading member of the branch or YSA take responsibility for the team. At least one member of the team sold the YS, maybe more.

Now, we've had a problem which other branches could expect with this particular sale. We have a problem of legal harrassment. At the airport there are regulations concerning solicitation, which I'm sure every airport has. We have in the past year had cops cite comrades and threaten to arrest them. We demanded to appear in court, and we contacted the ACLU which wanted to fight this citation to get a constitutional ruling to throw this regulation out. But the cops didn't show up in court and the case was thrown out. The ACLU advised us to go along with the regulation on distribution of literature and not on solicitation, which means that we notify the airport authorities every week about when we are going to sell. We send them a little form letter with the information typed in. And comrades are trained to hold up the paper so people can clearly see that it costs 25¢ and describe the major articles. Most people hand over the 25¢ without asking any questions. If they do, we say we are giving it away, but we would like a donation to defray the cost. We found that they do have undercover cops, and they try to entrap us. We feel it's a valuable place to sell and urge other branches to sell at their airports.

Jon Teitelbaum--Pittsburgh: I'm very excited about selling the ISR, particularly subs, which I think are the most important part of selling ISRs. It's very important that people read more than one issue to get a real feel for the ISR and the positions of our movement. The ISR, like The Militant and YS, is aimed at a general audience, primarily at radicals. That means we can sell it where we sell other publications. People are used to buying magazines. People read magazines that cover some of the same articles as are in the ISR, but written by real hack writers. It's a very attractive magazine with readable articles.

It's important to sell it around specific articles. I usually carry a variety around with me of several different issues, so if I find someone interested in something in particular, I can sell it to them. Some of the articles I find easiest to sell are on women's liberation, on economic underdevelopment, on the colonial revolution, and on our general program. ISRs like the "Program for Revolution" was great to sell, and was the all-time best seller in our branch. You just sell it on the basis of how our society can be changed by winning people to a radical program. Also, there is a lot of interest in the workers' states. People find that whatever they are excited about they can sell.

When I was on the YSJP team last fall, I made the rounds going to professors at the different schools. This can be used during the fall sub drive, and it has to be organized fairly well. I would find the office hours of every professor in economics, sociology, and the political science departments. Then I would make a schedule for myself of the hours I would visit these professors, and I would make the rounds. If a professor was busy, I would make an appointment to come back and see them.

And when you come back and see someone, you know you've got a sub, and generally you sell a sub to every professor you see if you are persistent enough. You talk with them for five minutes. You take four magazine and go over them.

It's important to get the ISR into people's hands, and also get the sub blank into their hands. That's like magic. They look at the sub blank and they reach for their pen. It adds a little psychological pressure.

To sell a sub, you've got to talk about the ISR after you've sold a Militant sub. I have found that people buy ISR subs who bought Militant subs the day before, and I know the reason they didn't buy an ISR sub was that they really weren't asked.

Joe Johnson--Denver: We had a team for every night of the week. The value of the teams cannot be overestimated. If you have a middle-size branch, you get a situation where it's impossible for one sales director to be able to call and relate in any direct way to any large number of comrades. On the other hand, a team leader can do precisely that. We had a situation where comrades were premanently signed up with one of these teams. (if their situation changed, they could find another day or another team area to work in), but by and large for a length of time they were assigned to one particular team. The team leader would know exactly who was on their team, and the comrades on the team would know they signed up for, say, Monday. They had that night free, and so on. That could be worked out regularly, directly, and simply. And it worked. It is a lot easier and simpler, and you get a lot of sales.

It took us a long time and now we understand the value of getting a regular sustainer from all the comrades. Prior to getting a regular sustainer, we would have drives, once or twice a year. Everybody would pledge money and so on, and we would finance the party. But the sustainer system is on another organizational and political level over that way of doing it. Moving into that also for sales was one of the things we tried to do. Every comrade has a duty to finance the party; you have a duty to help sell its press. Something reasonable, nothing super-unreasonable, just like on finances. A reasonable amount.

We took the number 10. This was a reasonable amount to expect on the average from every comrade every week. Obviously some weeks you do much better and some weeks poorer. Generally that was the reasonable amount that was expected. And that is going to make a fantastic difference in my opinion, if that regular approach can be done. Once you've done that, if there's some special issue, some special situation, like the attack on the Crusade in Denver, you say, "Look, this is an important situation. Go out twice, three, four times." Without afterwards dropping way back down, but just to the regular 10 a piece.

Ben Harris--Nashville: Right now I'm the only YSAer in a fairly large city. There are some things that I've picked up in single copy sales that really helped me. I was selling about 10 a week, and during the sales campaign I got up to 40 a week.

The three days before the convention I managed to sell about 90 Militants in about three hours.

I think the two problems that I ran into were attitudes on my part. The first was that I was the only socialist in 300 or 400 miles. You're standing out on a street corner, and I'm sure it's easy to feel very embarrassed. The other thing that goes along with that is a very sectarian attitude in selling The Militant. The main way I got around that is to know the press. People don't read The Militant before they sell it. I always sit down and read the entire Militant before I go out. You want to be able to talk about any article to the person you're selling it to. That also gives you much more confidence in the attitude you develop to The Militant, which is you're not selling a newspaper, you're not selling somebody a bunch of facts about something that has happened. It's very easy for people to put you on the defensive with "I read that in the N.Y. Times," or "I read about it in the local paper." And you can very easily get depressed about that.

What you have to do is remember what The Militant really is, which is a newspaper that builds movements. When somebody says "I'm not a militant." You say, "Look, this press is building these movements and this is what people are in to. These are the kind of things we support." If you actually look forward to selling The Militant, the people you sell to will go away with a positive attitude. If you sell at a regular place, you're going to see the same people all the time. If you're nice, you're very positive, and you enjoy what you're doing, then the next night they'll say, "Well I didn't have any change last night, but here's the money."

Ed Jurenas--Twin Cities: On motivation, we found we had a problem in the branch and we are going to try and correct it this fall. After the tasks and perspectives puts forward a good orientation for the whole branch to be involved, we're going to have an educational in the branch on the history of the revolutionary press and the role of the revolutionary press in getting out and doing our general political activities. We're going to have a bulletin board up in the hall where we can have a revolving or changing display of the history of the revolutionary press in various countries and the latest developments about what sections around the world have been doing with regard to the press. In that way we will attempt to raise this consciousness about selling.

Also, on the question of finances and the analogy that if you pay your finances as a norm you should sell the press as well. I think if we individually sit down and talk to the comrades about this question, of every comrade in the branch going out and selling, we can analyze some of the arguments that come up. For example, the question of "I just can't do it." Anyone who's in our movement can learn to do things. If they can talk in the branch meeting and pay their financial sustainer, they can learn to sell The Militant, even if it's slowly at first and on a gradually increasing basis.

Tom Fiske--Atlanta: We have been very successful in Atlanta this summer in maintaining the momentum of the spring sales. One reason for our success is that we took very seriously the numerical goals we set ourselves. Our goal for the first couple of weeks of the summer was 250, and while we were petitioning for the campaign with two mobilizations a week, we cut it down to 200. We took these goals extremely seriously, and we were able to meet them each time. In the past four months or so we've always sold the number of Militants we set out to sell. That built up a momentum in the branch where comrades expect to sell the number of Militants they set out to sell, and it develops a great deal of pride in the branch and enthusiasm. If you reach a situation where you reach Saturday afternoon and only 100 Militants have been sold and your goal was 250, you can put out the call that we've only sold 100 and we have to sell another 150 Militants. And comrades really respond.

Secondly, we had developed a technique of selling in the Black community downtown. We were so busy in doing work in petitioning, in Black work, and in women's work, it became important for the comrades to be able to sell in the downtown Black community right around the corner from the hall. And comrades were forced to have a very aggressive sales technique accosting shoppers as they were walking down the street and pointing quickly to the important articles that were of interest to Blacks in the community usually on the back page of The Militant.

Finally, I want to describe the success of our sales to Black strikers in the strike wave in Atlanta. We have found that there is a great deal of receptivity to The Militant among Black strikers in Atlanta. The most important thing to establish when selling The Militant at a strike meeting, on the picket line, or at a demonstration is to establish Militant sellers as supporters of the strike. You find an extreme degree of receptivity once you're known as a supporter of the strike. At the Rich's strike in Atlanta, comrades were very active in the picket lines and at the strike meetings, and The Militant supporters became rapidly recognized as supporters of the strike and even builders of the strike. In one demonstration, three of the Black strikers asked to sell The Militant, sold 10 or 15 papers, and returned the money. They thought of it as being part of the strike movement even though that week it didn't have a particular article on that strike. In the different strikes that have occurred since the Rich's strike, we make a point of bringing The Militant to strike meetings and make a point of getting ourselves known as supporters of the strike.

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