

PARTY BUILDER

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WESTERN SUBSCRIPTION TEAM REPORT

by Mike Arnall, Seattle Branch

The Western subscription team toured for the thirteen weeks of the fall 1971 sub drive in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas and Missouri. The team sold 2,017 *Militant* subscriptions and 148 *ISR* subscriptions at 32 universities, colleges and junior colleges.

A. Team Procedure and Division of Labor

Very quickly we established a procedure for efficiently exploring the sales possibilities at each new school. Our daily time schedule was vigorous, but consciously planned knowing that we would be selling subscriptions for an extended period of time. All four original team members had planned to continue throughout the drive, and correct pacing was important in successfully maintaining that perspective.

Important for setting the tone each day was an early start. With few exceptions we were on campus and selling by 9:00 AM. When first arriving at a new campus, one comrade would search out antiwar, women's, Third World, gay and GI groups. That comrade would try to sell subs to the individual activists and one to each group. We would also ask the groups to sponsor our request to the administration for a literature table. A second comrade would go to the campus newspaper for an exchange sub and to get the names of any radical professors and student leaders. The newspaper office was a good place to get a general feel for the campus and to find out about any current or recent campus struggles. The remaining two team members headed for the campus cafeteria, student union, cross walk, free speech area or other student gathering area and began selling to individuals.

Usually we were able to get permission for a literature table, most often sponsored by a Chicano or antiwar group and sometimes by the student government. Occasionally there were not significant enough concentrations of students to warrant maintaining a table, and we all would sell by directly approaching tables or clusters of students.

Throughout all of our activity we inquired about the possibility of free housing for the team. In places where we had no contacts this proved to be a difficult undertaking. However if we had approached new subscribers more boldly, we would have done better. Future teams, armed with lists of YSJPers will have less problems in this area.

At some point in the day, one team member would try to sell to the school library and another would survey professors' offices to sell them subs or discover their office hours. While selling to professors takes more time and patience, we found that our percentage of sales was high, especially for the *ISR*. Only in a few backward areas were professors not interested in articles by prominent Marxists like George Novack and Ernest Mandel. We highlighted Evelyn Reed's articles, pointing to them as essential to an understanding of anthropology, the

history of the family and women's liberation. Many professors valued the *ISR* for its presentation of the documents of the most important groups on the left today, and all were impressed by its broad range of authors and the careful documentation of its articles.

Additionally, selling to professors gave us the opportunity to distribute Pathfinder promotional literature, talk about CoDEL, look for potential sympathizers and contributors and vary our usual selling routine. Because they influence new students every year, professors should continue to be a focus for selling teams. The best departments for sales are anthropology, political science, history, communications and journalism, sociology, ethnic studies and women's studies. We found that sovietologists in particular took time to discuss our ideas and publications.

At about 2:00 PM the student population usually dispersed. Sometimes the team used this slower time to meet with student groups or contacts. (One of our team spoke Spanish and had lived in Cuba, and she was in great demand by Chicano and foreign student groups.) More often we would rest and take care of personal affairs until about 6:00 PM. This block of rest time was essential to our being able to function at high intensity during the evening hours when we sold the bulk of our subs.

Until 9:30 or 10:00 PM we sold door-to-door in the dorms or off-campus student housing. We kept a room-by-room record of results on forms mimeoed for the purpose. On any given night only one-third to one-half of the students were at home, and without the forms we would have been unable to approach each room systematically. Door-to-door selling yielded the best results, and when the supply of dorms and apartments was exhausted, we moved on to the next school. The forms guided us in making this decision.

In the off-campus housing our sales were usually better than in the dorms. These areas were also easier to penetrate than the dorms, which were often "guarded" by officious resident assistants and an occasional hostile student.

Each evening we would take care of the necessary record-keeping responsibilities. One comrade was in charge of the financial ledger and car maintenance. Another issued literature, kept a record of what was sold and made sure that the pamphlets and papers were stored so as not to be damaged. One team member kept daily and cumulative bar charts on the sales of each member and of the team as a whole. Another entered onto forms a listing by school of all political groups and contacts and a record of our activities and sales. Copies of these forms were sent to the regional center and the YSA national office.

B. Selling Technique—The Militant

While team members differed in their manner of approach to potential subscribers, we all used opening lines like, "Hi!

Have you heard of *The Militant* weekly newspaper?" or "Hi! Have you heard of the presidential campaign of Linda Jenness?" If the person has, ask what he or she thinks about it; if not, offer to tell him or her about it. Very few people are adamant about not wanting to be "bothered." During the ensuing discussion the potential subscriber is shown *The Militant* and canvassed on areas of political interest. The team member points to the advantage of receiving weekly a newspaper that tells the truth about the various political movements. Emphasize the fact that *The Militant* is the largest in circulation of the movement papers and has been published for over 40 years. After the student understands the paper and its advantages, the seller directly raises the question of buying a sub: "So if you are interested in the 1972 campaigns (the women's movement, etc.), one of the best ways to keep up on them would be to buy a subscription to *The Militant*. It is the largest nationwide newspaper reporting on antiwar and related news, and for only \$1.00 you can get 10 issues. Why don't you try it?"

Team members differed most in the case when the answer to this question was "no." One member took a "no" as an exit cue and moved relatively quickly from person to person. Another would not take "no" for an answer and replied, "Are you interested in the antiwar movement? Yes? Well, *The Militant* is the only paper in the country with complete reports on the antiwar movement written by the activists themselves. And the same goes for the women's, Black and Chicano movements, ecology, and the political campaigns. And it's only \$1.00 for 10 issues. How can you resist?" More often than not this struck a humorous note and provided a basis for further discussion. About 10% of this comrade's sales were to people who originally had said "no."

Many times we would finish our initial rap and would get responses like: "No money"; "It looks biased"; "I'm not an activist"; "I'm not militant"; "That's a communist paper, isn't it?"; and "I can't read." Some of the replies we heard were:

"Why don't you borrow a dollar from your friend there? You don't want to miss out on this introductory offer."

"Split it with your roommate, and for only \$.50 you can get 10 weeks of the important political news at local and national levels."

"Well, if you had a paper that informed you about political events, you might decide to be an activist. Even if you don't *participate*, certainly you want to *know* about the antiwar and related movements, and there's no better or more widely-read paper in that respect than *The Militant*."

"Are you against the war? Yes? That's what we mean by 'militant.' If you are against the war, are interested in the movements for social change, and want to be informed, read *The Militant*."

"If by 'biased' you mean that we distort the news, that's not true. The bourgeois papers are the ones that do that. Look how they lie about the size of antiwar demonstrations and how they reported the Attica rebellion. The main establishment paper, the *New York Times*, didn't

even check to see if the stories about emasculation of hostages and the accusations blaming the inmates for the deaths were true. *The Militant*, on the other hand, sent a reporter to the scene to check it out, and printed the truth, not horror stories. That's quality reporting. And when it has an opinion, an interpretation of the facts, it clearly states it as such. There's no bias or distortion in *The Militant*, just the truth and intelligent opinion."

"When *The Militant* expresses opinions, they are socialist opinions. *The Militant* reports on the antiwar, women's, and Third World movements. It supports and participates in these movements, and it thinks that the aims of these movements will not be won short of a total reorganization of society along socialist lines. Even if you don't agree with that conclusion, you will find *The Militant* valuable because it's the only national paper reporting completely on political developments and the various movements. Many people have that opinion or *The Militant* wouldn't be the largest of the type."

"You can't read? Well, maybe your roommate would read it for you every week. No? Well, it was good talking to you and if you change your mind, here's an addressed sub blank, and you can send it in yourself. Thank you."

A serious, friendly, but tenacious approach achieves the best results. Especially on long sub tours, but also in more usual selling situations, it is important not to begin resenting the people who do not see the importance of reading a socialist paper and dismiss lightly all efforts to convince them. Sometimes a seller runs into 10 or more of these in a row. While it is tempting to let fly with a stinging analysis of their lack of perspective and contact with reality, the better response is a politely-worded withdrawal. A friendly, non-argumentative approach leaves the way open for sellers on the next sub drive and neutralizes hostile people who might try to get the team thrown off campus. At least as important, by being polite the team member will preserve the good humor necessary to maintaining efficiency and persistence.

C. Selling the ISR

Several weeks into the sub drive we had to move consciously to integrate *ISR* sub-selling into our presentations. Trying to sell as many *Militant* subs as possible, we wrongly all but eliminated mentioning the *ISR*. In correcting this error we discovered that, far from cutting into the number of *Militant* subs sold, introducing the *ISR* reinforced interest in the paper. Even when people did not want the *ISR*, they were impressed that we were offering companion publications—one a newspaper with some news analysis, the other a magazine with extensive analysis as well as historical and theoretical articles. We pointed out that, "Both are important, both are necessary to understanding political events." Our sales of both publications increased after we began introducing them as supplementary.

Team members tried several methods of integrating the *ISR* sub pitch into the *Militant* pitch. We finally de-

cided that it was best to incorporate a description of the *ISR* at the point just before we asked whether the person was interested in buying a sub. This brought the *ISR* to the attention of everyone who would speak with us at all. The most important variant way was to offer the *ISR* only to those who bought a *Militant* sub. This technique eliminated the significant percentage of subscribers who were interested in the *ISR* alone and did not give a true picture of the value of a combined subscription.

D. *Integration of "Non-Selling" Activities*

Throughout the sub tour we had to fight the temptation to spend large blocks of time in activities other than selling. Talking to professors about Pathfinder, attending or addressing student meetings, helping to set up a campaign support group, talking at length with potential recruits to the YSA, getting endorsements for CoDEL, and working with students organizing for the fall antiwar and abortion actions were a few of the exciting and politically valuable alternatives. While at one point or another we did all these things, we had to prevent them from becoming the main activity. Early we realized that we could not substitute as Pathfinder reps, SWP candidates and regional organizers without detracting from selling the maximum number of subscriptions.

Any talk to a group was given with an eye to selling each listener a subscription, and a sub pitch was the central point of the talk. We did not talk at length to professors who did not want a sub, but rather took their names and addresses for future visits by candidates, campaign teams or regional travellers. Any apparently interested person was asked to help us sell subs. A campaign enthusiast was asked to staff the literature table. If an activity would not yield a possible sub, we did not do it.

E. *Personnel Dynamic*

One of the most challenging aspects of the sub tour was maintaining the physical and mental health of each comrade and preserving good working relations between

team members. The same four people were constantly together, with little personal privacy, doing essentially one activity, and isolated from the rest of the Trotskyist movement. The difficulties were heightened by the lack of a recent model for this type of political activity: we really did not know what to expect.

Organizationally we took several steps to mitigate the difficulties of this situation. The possibility of returning at any time to normal branch activity was emphasized; it was clearly a personal choice. The paced daily procedure outlined above was important. We took care to eat well and sleep regularly. From the beginning we all took a series of vitamin supplements. To the extent possible each went his or her own way during the rest periods, and any political activity was optional during these times. Occasionally we spent a moderate amount of money above our weekly expenses to vary our routine with some form of entertainment. Generally our selling week extended from Sunday night through Friday afternoon; on the weekends we took side trips to national recreation areas, visited cities with SWP branches, rested with friends who lived nearby, etc. Once in a while a team member would be excused from selling because of sickness or fatigue. We became convinced that flexibility with respect to individual differences and personal needs was key to achieving the political goals of the tour.

Equally important in preserving our efficiency and personal well-being was a realization of the exciting political gains to be made. At several points in the tour we reviewed our accomplishments and goals in a "mini-T&P." We found that the youth radicalization had extended into some of the most backward areas of the country. The reception to the publications was excellent, many students never before having seen a radical paper. Two YSA locals and several at-largers joined as a direct result of our tour, and many new radicals asked to be contacted by the campaign teams to follow. We helped introduce Trotskyist ideas to some of the key Chicano and women's groups in the Southwest. Using our most valuable propaganda tools—the press and campaign—we were able to help begin the growth of our movement in an important area of the country.

June 12, 1972

MILITANT SALES IN SEATTLE

by Dymphna Flavin, Seattle Branch

By establishing systematic sales in Seattle, we succeeded over the past year in making a small "profit" rather than taking a loss. We also now have more people participating in sales.

One of the problems we initially faced was that many *Militants* could not be accounted for at the end of the week. Comrades were careless about returning them and signing them in and out. We devised a very simple method which took only two steps. First, a small coin envelope with all the information printed on the outside was used — name, issue, number sold, amount, place, time selling, and comments. Second, a simple mimeographed sign-up sheet right next to *The Militants* was used. Comrades signed out *Militants* on the sign-up sheet and on the same sheet signed in the number sold and the money returned. They then filled out the envelope and dropped it into a locked money box next to *The Militant* table. At the end of several weeks most comrades were very conscious of following through this procedure and almost all *The Militants* could be accounted for at the end of the week. The sign-out sheet plus the envelope act as a double check when counting *The Militant* money each week. We also made a very large poster right next to *The Militant* table with simple directions for signing in and out. At each branch and local meeting we passed a sign-up sheet around with places to sell. Although most comrades remembered, we found that calling and reminding them the night before a sale was really helpful.

The next step was to get a larger participation of comrades selling and not rely on a few top salespeople. The way this came about was twofold. Because of erratic post office service, we often don't get the second half of our bundle until Friday or Saturday morning. This means that we have at least 75 *Militants* to sell in less than two days.

This made it absolutely necessary to have as many comrades as possible selling on Saturday. We found two shopping areas and the main avenue around the University of Washington to be quite good. We also have regular sales at the post office. Sales at political meetings on campus and campus sales in general were regularized this spring, along with campaign blitzes and sales at high

schools. Responses varied with each school, but at several schools we sold ten or fifteen *Militants* in the half hour before school began. In recent months we have sent pairs of comrades on two different shifts to sell in the Black community, where we have found the highest number of *Militants* sold each week. After a few successful Saturdays, comrades realized that if we have these weekly wrap-up sales, we can sell out our bundle or at least break even.

We found that there were many comrades who felt that they could not sell or for one reason or another had hang-ups about selling. It was during these wrap-up sales on Saturday that we instituted another norm in Seattle. This was simply teaching new or shy comrades the art of selling by using the "buddy" system. Many comrades who thought they couldn't sell have since changed their minds. In fact, team selling is a regular feature of branch and local activities in Seattle. We try not to send new comrades out without a good salesperson. This is imperative for setting a good tone for the beginner.

Another feature of our sales effort was weekly reports at branch meetings. This way comrades are reminded and made conscious of how well sales are or are not going. Also, we pointed out which articles are helpful in selling. We found that if we stopped giving sales reports each week and only passed around the sign-up sheet, many comrades did not sign up and sales began to drop. Although the report need not be long, it seems to us that at least two reports a month are necessary to keep comrades conscious of selling each week.

We feel that another reason we have been able to sell at least 75 percent of our bundle is by not overestimating. It is very important to establish a realizable goal of how much a branch and local can sell. It is quite demoralizing for all comrades to hear a monthly report in which the branch has not even broken even on the weekly bundles.

These practices did not occur in one or two weeks, but were established over a period of a couple of months. We have now been able to continue with at least 50-60 percent participation and a few dollars profit each month.

July 14, 1972

SUCCESSFUL SALES OF THE *USLA*
REPORTER IN NEW YORK

by Sue Adley, Lower Manhattan Branch,
New York Local

About 1,000 copies of the March-April *USLA Reporter* were sold by New York supporters of the U. S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners. *Reporter* sales proved to be an aid in making *USLA* known and in involving more people in *USLA* activities.

People who are likely to be attracted to *USLA* and to the *Reporter* are usually among Puerto Rican or Dominican residents of New York, Latin American nationals who are studying or working here, professors whose fields are related to Latin America, and North Americans who have traveled in Latin America or for other reasons are especially sympathetic to the leftist movements there. Selling a large number of *Reporters* involved being alert to events where we could expect to find such people.

Beginning with the national SMC conference in February, the March-April issue of the *Reporter* was sold at antiwar and abortion demonstrations; panels and conferences on Latin America; showings of films and plays related to repression in Latin America; and a conference on Puerto Rican political prisoners.

Helping to sell 1,000 *Reporters* did not prevent us from carrying out other *USLA* work. During the same period, for instance, *USLA* activists were acquiring sponsors for the Argentina defense campaign, helping to organize a Latin American defense panel at a local campus, and building a benefit. *Reporter* sales were integrated with these activities. Each sales effort attracted prospective *USLA* activists and other contacts or resulted in inquiries and subscriptions. As the weeks went by, salespeople found that more and more people were familiar with *USLA* from having seen the *Reporter* at previous events.

Independents' participation in sales of *USLA Reporters* has been increasing. One independent took complete responsibility for a literature table at a City College panel on Latin America (which he had initiated). When the subsequent issue was released, it was an independent who sold the highest number of copies at a McGovern rally, and nine independents sold *Reporters* and leafleted for *USLA* at the Madison Square Garden rally for Angela Davis.

July 16, 1972

MINNEAPOLIS AND THE FALL SUBSCRIPTION DRIVE

by Louis Cobet, Minneapolis Branch

Planning

An important feature of why we were able to complete our subscription drive quota of 1,200 a few weeks ahead of schedule was the planning in advance of the beginning of the sub drive.

As soon as we got back from the party convention, we began planning out the subscription drive. We held a meeting of the sales committee, including the SWP and YSA organizers. In this meeting we developed a general plan for the subscription drive.

First we took note of the schedule of political events: the beginning of the election campaign; the antiwar action on November 6; and the national abortion demonstration on November 20. Minneapolis was one of the regional centers for the November 6 action. We concluded from this schedule that we would have to get the bulk of the subscriptions before we became tied up in the final preparations for the demonstrations.

Also as a rule students have a maximum amount of money and are more willing to get subscriptions early in the college year. We also expected to use the subscription drive to build the election campaign, and the antiwar and women's liberation movements. By putting in our maximum effort early, we would be able to build the demonstrations in the course of talking to people about *The Militant* and *ISR* and their coverage of these movements.

Finally, we felt the sales people would be most willing to participate in the drive at the beginning of the subscription drive rather than at the end after a very busy fall.

Our region here in Minneapolis is rather large, consisting of North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota and the northwest section of Wisconsin. We divided the region into two parts, the near region within three hours driving time and the far region beyond that distance. In the far region we planned to send special teams.

Another important point is that sales and subscription drive efforts must be headed by leading comrades. Leading comrades must be used to head up this area of work because the key to success lied in how well all the comrades are politically motivated. Here in Minneapolis we assigned a member of the branch Executive Committee for the party and the YSA assigned a member of the YSA exec to organize sales and subs for the fall.

Execution

One of the first things we did was to find out the schedule, opening, and size of the schools in the near region. We picked out the largest schools and planned at least one major mobilization a week to them. We saved the smaller schools for smaller mobilizations and for the time around the mass actions when we did not have as many sellers participating.

We also used certain visual aids. We made a 7-foot thermometer with the number of *Militant* subscriptions

we had on it. We put this thermometer in a place in our meeting hall where it would be the first thing people saw as they entered. We also made two charts, one for the number of times a week a person went out, the other for the number of subscriptions to *The Militant* and *ISR* they had. We emphasized that the way we would make the drive was for everyone to participate, but we also recognized that those who do good work by getting a lot of subscriptions should receive recognition for it. And we announced that we would award two prizes, one for maximum participation, the other prize for the person getting the most subscriptions.

We started the sub drive with a blitz to the University of Wisconsin at La Crosse, 150 miles away. Twelve salespeople went and got 70 subscriptions. We went to La Crosse Monday night of the Labor Day weekend. The following evening several people went to a local college and got 49 *Militant* subscriptions. Generally, that's the way we ran the subscription drive, one distant mobilization on a Sunday, one or two near mobilizations in the middle of the week.

We usually tried to leave within 10 or 15 minutes of the time set for the mobilizations. To do this we prepared the subscription kits in advance, figured out who would go in which car in advance, and decided where the cars would go in advance. We felt this was very important for the morale and effectiveness of everyone participating.

The following list indicates the total number of *Militant* subscriptions Minneapolis had each week in September and October: Sept. 1—10; Sept. 8—142; Sept. 15—300; Sept. 22—426; Sept. 29—540; Oct. 6—650; Oct. 13—735; Oct. 20—792; Oct. 27—870. By October 27 we had almost 75 percent of our quota.

The Far Region

At the end of October the preparations for the November 6 antiwar action were in full swing. The number of mobilizations declined and so did the number of those participating, as we had anticipated.

On November 7 we sent out a regional team of five that went through South Dakota, Nebraska and Iowa. This team sold 188 *Militant* subscriptions, 11 *ISR* subscriptions, 514 *Militants* and \$18.10 in literature table sales. The subscription drive committee raised \$270 out of the \$200 we projected raising for team expenses. The Iowa team spent only \$194, so we sent another team to North Dakota which sold 67 subscriptions.

Weaknesses

The major weaknesses of *The Militant* and *ISR* subscription drive was the low number of subscriptions for the *ISR* obtained in the course of the drive. We failed to motivate the salespeople adequately around the *ISR*, and by the time we realized this we had 792 *Militant* subscriptions and only 30 *ISR* subscriptions. We did better

during the rest of the drive but we could not recover.

Another weakness in the drive was that there were only two comrades assigned to the sales and subscription committee in Minneapolis. The small committee led to weaknesses in detail—sometimes the charts would lag, poor correspondence with the business office, etc.—although the committee was able to maintain sales during the drive. Our recommendation was to increase the size of the committee to four or five in the next subscription drive.

Results

We are still at the date of this report reaping results from the subscription drive. The far regional team was instrumental in setting up a women's liberation group in South Dakota. Many of our presidential electors were found through or were past subscribers to *The Militant* in the Dakotas or Iowa. Petitioners in Iowa ran into many people who had heard of our election campaign through *The Militant*.

July 16, 1972

UPPER WEST SIDE FORUMS

by Stacey Seigle, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local

Over the past spring the Upper West Side branch has been able to organize a forum series with an average attendance of 55, ranging from a low of 27 (with 5 independents) to a high of 125, with several forums of over 80 (each of which drew 35-50 independents). Forums have netted the branch an average of \$30/week income, and have been a primary source of both *Militant* and bookstore sales. Along with the campaign and sales, the forum series has helped the process of establishing the party within the political life of Manhattan's West Side, drawing occasional press coverage and enlarging our periphery (by ones).

A number of interrelated factors worked to help us build the forum series. The two most important were (1) audacious ideas and (2) planning forums at least a month in advance.

Topics for forums are available from a variety of sources. One of our best forum ideas (debate between *Militant* and *Guardian* on China) came from suggestion sheets we passed out at branch meetings. Comrades in general are the best source of ideas if encouraged to think about possible forums. In addition, local and neighborhood newspapers are sources for topics; civil rights cases, strikes, housing and high school struggles are all potentially excellent forums. On the West Side, for instance, two local leaders from the Communication Workers of America (CWA) spoke during their strike last winter. We have also utilized professors at Columbia and Barnard on several occasions with varying success. Professor types can round out a panel, though nonactivists have tended to be dull (in my opinion). On the other hand, a well-known name on a leaflet really helps draw crowds who are then exposed to our ideas. Finally, forum committees

can establish regular contact with a variety of groups who publish newsletters, often have speakers available and are more than willing to bring literature and people to forums on their topic. The North American Council on Latin America (NACLA), Committee For Free Mozambique, Student Organization for Black Unity (SOBU), Iranian Students Organization, Irish Republican Clubs and the Harlem Four defense committee are some groups with which the branch has worked. These organizations receive our forum mailings regularly. By contact with the IRC we were able to get Liam McMillan of the Belfast IRA, who spoke to 97 people; three radio stations taped that forum.

Not all forums work, even ones that seem good ideas, but few weekly events can expect 100% success. In general a certain aggressiveness in thinking out possibilities—anyone is free to say no to speaking at a forum—and *persistence in following through* on ideas increases success percentage.

By thinking out and organizing initial contact work on forums a month (or even two) in advance it is possible to avoid crises when things have to be switched around, as they invariably do. Forums should be set by the beginning of the month. That means by the beginning of, say, June, July forums are being planned. It is helpful to make initial contacts by mail, describing the forum series and giving one or two dates, followed up by a phone call. We electrostenciled a "West Side Militant Forum" stationary to use. If people confirm a speaking date over the phone, write them a letter along the lines of "as we agreed over the telephone on, . . ." giving them details again. Finally, call speakers a week in advance to re-check with them. Comrades giving forums need little push-

es and reminders as well.

Publicity is greatly facilitated by advance planning. We are able to send a month's schedule to the forum mailing list (not to mention to comrades) at the beginning of each month. We also utilize free publicity in weekly newspapers with calendars of events, as well as public service announcements on some radio stations. A little bit of research into press revealed half-a-dozen papers willing to give free weekly listings. Especially important is listing forums in *The Militant*: people most likely to be interested in the forums read it! In addition, we have a list of stores (bookstores, especially near campuses, but also grocery stores and restaurants as well as supermarkets with big bulletin boards) in which we post forum leaflets regularly. We do weekly mailings to the forum mailing list (which preferably is mailed a full week before the forum). Outside speakers often like to send out leaflets to their friends, and should receive some as far in advance as possible. Finally, special building can be done for particular forums. For a forum on "The Future of the Nuclear Family" the women's liberation fraction did a mailing to New York women's groups and dropped leaflets off at places like the New York Women's Center.

In addition to building publicity, we sent out a press release for those forums which we thought might attract news coverage. We electrostenciled press release stationary

for the West Side Militant Forum to use. This needed following through with telephone calls to achieve any success. We found it too easy to slight the internal organization of forums. Rotating assignments can be made to all branch and local comrades, which include hall clean up (*very important*) and set up and door. A chairperson should be chosen well in advance; we have a mimeoed chairperson memo, which is filled in week by week.

Finally, contact work at forums must be systematic. Where consciousness is low about speaking to contacts and independents, selling *The Militant*, etc., a team can be assigned (through the campaign, for example) to speak to all new people, as well as to YSA and party contacts.

Thoughtfully carried out contact work is the culmination of the effort expended on building forums. Minimally, we want people to come back to future forums; the Upper West Side mimeoed a mailing list form, which also asks how information about the forum was obtained (to judge effects of different kinds of publicity). On one occasion three people endorsed the campaign in response to a team circulating after the forum. "Contact team" members should sell *The Militant* and *ISR*, distribute campaign material, and be ready to sell books from the bookstore in the course of speaking with forum attenders.

July 19, 1972

PHILADELPHIA FALL SUBSCRIPTION DRIVE

by Lea Tammi, Philadelphia Branch

Philadelphia SWPers and YSAers conducted one of the most successful *Militant* and *International Socialist Review* subscription drives in the country last fall. We were able to go well over our *Militant* subscription quota of 1,000 and closely approach our *ISR* goal. In the eleven-week period, over twenty-five campuses were visited in the Philadelphia, central and eastern Pennsylvania, South Jersey, and Delaware region. This report includes methods and techniques which enabled our success.

Early consideration of the subscription drive

The goal to obtain 1,000 new *Militant* readers in the Philadelphia area was considered quite a challenge for the local and branch well before the drive actually began. We were a much smaller group in terms of experienced subbers; many members had transferred, more were working full-time in the mass movement offices, and a good percentage of our members were recent recruits, just beginning to become "sales conscious." Added to this was the fact that our quota was double that of past subscription drives. Consequently, the local leadership placed a good deal of emphasis on the importance of sales of our press and the necessity for completing our subscription drive quota during the fall Tasks and Perspectives discussions. The subscription drive was looked upon as an integral part of our fall offensive.

Organize for early success

We realized that starting the drive off with successful blitzes would be important to set the tone for the entire drive. Our first sub blitz was the most important factor in our triumph. A mobilization of all comrades was called so all would be present for explanations of selling techniques, and the organization and conduct of the subscription drive that was to remain the norm for the rest of the period. Enthusiasm was bolstered with a "pep rally" atmosphere; champion sales people offered their tried-and-true, never-fail methods of sales, and at the same time, careful instructions were given to ensure an efficient blitz.

Materials

Several universities in the area were chosen that had netted a good number of subscriptions in the past. Maps of the campuses were provided and this was done whenever it was possible. All materials used throughout the drive were prepared and ready for the first blitz. These included motivational illustrations and words of wisdom located throughout the headquarters, which changed from week to week, a scoreboard with which comrades could keep up with individual tallies, and a large, very visible and attractive display indicating total subscriptions to date. Each subber was issued their ration of old *Militants* and *ISRs* enclosed in large manila envelopes. The "sub kit" also included subscription blanks, specially designed

leaflets describing *The Militant* and *ISR* publications, and materials prepared by the mass movement offices, campaign or forum committees for general distribution and posting. Appropriate back copies of *The Militant* and *ISR* were included in the kits for non-coed dorms or Black and women's campuses. A good front page on the abortion campaign, the antiwar offensive or the Black struggle helps immensely in the initial sales contact. When interest was aroused, but funds were lacking a sample *Militant* was left behind with the special leaflet so that a subscription could be sent in at a later date. The special leaflets were also left behind on bulletin boards and under locked dorm doors. We did receive approximately 10-20 "mail-in" subscriptions with this method.

Organization of a blitz

A carload of four or five comrades usually made up a sub team. Whenever possible, the driver was given careful directions to a campus so that time was not lost. Each team had one member responsible for collecting subscriptions and money, keeping a list of dorms covered, and reporting on the general reaction of the campus so a decision could be made as to whether to return. Each sales person was responsible for keeping a record of the dorms, floors, and rooms covered to assist future teams. When a campus is blitzed a second or third time, it is helpful if a sales person is included who has been on the campus previously and has learned the layout of the dorms and the location of untapped sources. New sales people often sold in pairs until they were confident of selling alone. Usually a pair would sell on the same floor, reporting results and encouraging each other as a floor was completed. The key to a successful and profitable blitz was in reaching the maximum number of people. Subbers should be encouraged to keep their sales pitch short and precise. Although it is hard to avoid prolonged political discussions and arguments, this cuts down on time and energy, not to mention numbers of subscriptions. A subber should always sell a copy of *The Militant* if a subscription sale cannot be made. Individual sales and our local bundle size substantially increased during the drive.

Consistent schedule is key

Our first night of sub sales netted over 100 subscriptions. This did much to enhance comrades enthusiasm and confidence. However, consistent work, not periodic booms, became the essential tactic that enabled us to go over our *Militant* quota. Certain evenings a week (two or three) were devoted to sub sales. Many times, only a fraction of expected salespeople attended. A sub blitz is never called off on account of rain, flat tire, or no quorum! Do not hesitate to send a team to a new, unfamiliar campus. Pioneering a Catholic or agricultural college can be in-

teresting and can often have gratifying results.

Our schedule of sales locations was flexible. On busy nights, subbers hit inner city schools. When evenings were freer, longer trips were made with more time devoted to sales. Commuter schools or campuses where sales in dorms are difficult provided sales locations for unemployed YSAers or others with time available during the day. Weekend blitzes were planned for schools several hours away. These were selected from the YSA regional traveler's schedule. We arranged either to meet up with the regional traveler, or to prepare the way for his arrival. It is helpful to contact a sympathizer on the campus to direct you to the best dorms, particularly first-year student residences. Fraternity weekends or a well-attended football game may not be the best time to find people in the dorms, so during off hours, sales people can pass the time by leafleting and posting antiwar, abortion, and campaign material. Many times we would visit an unfamiliar campus on a "good tip" from our traveler in the region. Incidentally, it was no coincidence that our traveler was out during the midst of the sub drive. He was able to sell a substantial portion of our quota with his consistent sub work.

Reports to the local and branch

Weekly reports to the membership included the up-to-the-minute count, an analysis of the week (eg. what types of campuses were visited, why the week was slow or extra successful), and any new inventive techniques which were discovered during the previous week's blitzes. We established a weekly goal of 100 *Militant* and 20 *ISR* subscriptions and the weekly report would include special acclamation to individual salespeople and teams who had obtained the greatest number of *Militant* subscriptions

with the appropriate number of *ISR* subscriptions (6-1). Naturally a complete report would include proper political motivation and a special emphasis on the *International Socialist Review*.

ISR

Because of our headstart in *Militant* subs, we were able to devote entire sub blitzes to the *ISR*. Usually we would return to a campus armed with *ISR* sub kits which had been previously blitzed with *Militant* subbers. Most of our *ISR* subscriptions were sold, however, when it was introduced along with *The Militant* as a special double deal. Also sales at our educational weekend and an effort at the end of the drive got us near our goal. Most salespeople remarked at the ease in selling the *ISR*; the magazine is attractive and sells itself, subbers just must learn to be conscious of it.

A subscription consciousness was present in our everyday activities. Special subscription materials and displays were prepared for various political interventions. At large gatherings several comrades were usually assigned to "hawk" subscriptions and on a daily basis *Militant* salespeople were always encouraged to supply themselves with sub blanks to secure subscriptions when selling individual copies.

We feel that the key to our success in Philadelphia was to start out early with a bang—mobilizations to campuses where we were relatively certain of a good response provided the membership with an initial positive experience which helped to carry us through leaner times. In general, however, it is the massive radicalization of young people that has made our success possible—we just had to be well enough *organized* to take advantage of it.

July 17, 1972

LOS ANGELES DO-IT-YOURSELF BANQUET KIT

The Los Angeles branch has a long-standing history of holding successful banquets. For example, as part of Linda Jenness' tour an extremely successful banquet was held, both financially and organizationally. Approximately 160 people attended; we made money on the banquet and \$1,500 was collected in cash and pledges. All members of the branch participated in making the affair come off and the banquet was, in large part, responsible for the general good feeling about the tour as a whole and about what the branch, working as a team, could actually do.

Relationship to Periphery

An important aspect of the planning and motivation for a banquet is the tone that is set. The attitude should be, and is in Los Angeles, that we don't "sling hash." We consider the people who come to the banquet to be honored guests and we do not try to shortchange them. Especially important is quality, not only in food, but for example, in serving good refreshments. (People are willing to pay more and buy more when it's not going to make them sick.) We want people who come to our banquet to feel glad they came and be willing to return and bring friends. Sometimes it is necessary to forego a large cash return at one affair so that the next will bring more people and more money.

Initial Planning and Organization

While the initial projections for a party or banquet comes from within a fraction—be it campaign or women's liberation—an overall banquet committee must be organized which will involve the branch. On the committee should be: the YSA and SWP organizers, a fraction representative, a publicity person, a person who has functioned on banquets or socials before, and, if possible, a financial secretary. This committee functions as a steering committee and will be responsible for coordinating the banquet.

Publicity

It is essential that publicity begin many weeks prior to the event. Spot announcements for radio should be sought and all press people should be called and invited to the rally. Ads to *The Militant* and announcements in the calendar section should be sent in sufficiently in advance to appear in the issue which arrives two weeks before and in the week of the banquet. This should also be done for underground and movement newspapers. It is imperative that new *Militant* subscribers learn of the banquet. Leaflets for the affair should be prepared and taken on every intervention. The banquet leaflet should be distributed to radical centers, stuffed in *Militants*, and used for paste-ups on bulletin boards. A large mailing must be sent, but a mailing is not enough. A massive telephone campaign has to be organized so the entire branch has lists of people to call reminding them of the banquet one week prior to the banquet. This supposes that all of these people have already received a banquet leaflet in the mail

or have seen it in the press. The call serves to remind people of the banquet, to ask for definite or probable reservations and to determine the possible attendance. (Note: possible reservations that do not come through will about equal unexpected guests.) There will be friends who are not on some of the mailing lists or phone lists. Comrades should call all personal contacts even if they may be on someone else's list. (Some people who attended our last banquet reported that they had received as many as three calls inviting them to the banquet—and they came.)

Ticket Sales

The person assigned to make sure that tickets are sold must be a "hard-liner." Tickets must be numbered, distributed to all comrades who are then responsible for the tickets they have taken, which must be paid for or returned. Comrades should be persuaded to buy their tickets in advance and pay for those they have sold; this gives you working cash. After the banquet, tickets collected at the door should be sorted as to number and compared with the list and collected for.

Distribution of Tasks

In the distribution of tasks, the advice of those organizing capitalist campaigns should be heeded: Marsha Pinkstaff, Muskie "advance woman," says: "Assume that no one has done anything, nothing will go right, and no one knows anything." With that sort of attitude, the banquet committee is forced to explain exactly what must be done and also has the responsibility of constantly checking to see that it is carried out. *It is insufficient to send out assignments in the city letter and expect comrades to know what they are to do and when.*

Committees

Beside the overall steering committee and a publicity person, a working committee is necessary. The banquet committee, at this point, must consist of people who will be in charge of the actual work at the banquet. Of these people there will be those responsible for set-up, working food, serving, hospitality, clean-up, defense. Those doing set-up are to decorate the hall, put tables in order, etc. We no longer use a long-table banquet, but instead use six-person tables and a separate podium.

Banquet Proper

Hospitality: In order to ensure that no one gets "lost" at the banquet, there should be comrades assigned to welcome guests who will introduce themselves and other comrades. These comrades will also be introducing out-of-town comrades to those people from the center. Some of them can also be utilized to get orders for refreshments during the banquet. Many times people do not wish to get up, but will order from the table.

Actual banquet: The actual banquet must be broken down to its smallest part. Each piece of equipment, each

