

July 5, 1968

To All Organizers and NCers

Dear Comrades,

Reports from almost every branch indicate that the campaign around the French events to increase Militant sales has been very successful.

However, the campaign also highlighted a problem that we have been aware of for some time -- the disproportionate costs that various branches have to pay for their bundles if they are to arrive the Monday after publication. This difference is due to the different postage charges each branch must pay, as well as to the different rates we charge depending on the size of the bundle.

The two extremes are New York and Seattle. New York pays no postage charge, and has been paying 3¢ per copy because its bundle is over 1,000. Seattle has been paying a total of 13¢ per copy -- and consequently always runs a loss, no matter how much of their bundle they sell!

It would seem to be much fairer to reorganize charges so that every branch would pay the same amount per copy, regardless of the size of their bundle or distance from New York. The payment system as it now functions penalizes the small and new branches for their size and the West Coast and Southern locals for their location.

To rectify this situation, we are establishing the same flat rate per copy for each branch. This would include all postage charges necessary to get the bundle to every branch on Monday, with the exception of Twin Cities, which would receive their bundle on Tuesday. In other words, the business office would assume the cost of postage. All East Coast and Midwest branches would receive their bundles by special delivery, and all West Coast branches, by air freight.

For the rest of the summer we plan to publish eight-page issues of The Militant. We propose that beginning with the July 26 issue, the cost per issue to every branch be 7¢, regardless of bundle size. This means that every branch has to sell only 70 percent of its bundle to break even.

Enclosed is a chart for summer bundles, which contrasts the amount each branch would pay under the old rate with what will be paid under the new. The new flat rate of 7¢ per issue will mean that some branches will have to pay several dollars more for their bundles than at present, but it will lessen the excessive charges the West Coast has been paying.

However, it must be noted that this proposal will work only if the branches maintain as a minimum permanent bundle for sales approximately the size bundles estimated on this chart.

In his report to the Political Committee several weeks ago, Jack Barnes pointed out that the central organization gain of the propaganda around the French events would be the permanent increase in the circulation and weekly sales of The Militant and its integration as a regular part of the branch political activity.

While nothing like the current pace of a run of 20,000 copies a week can be maintained for any length of time, a big jump in bundle orders of what they were at the beginning of May is possible and will put the Militant's circulation much closer to what it should be relative to our other activities and the openings we see in the remainder of the election campaign.

The goal that was projected by the Political Committee was that each branch would triple the size of its permanent bundle, and the total press run would be in the range of 10,000. The responses we have received from the branches indicate that this is a realistic goal. We are asking all areas to seriously evaluate their suggested bundle size as indicated in the chart, and to let us know if it can be met -- or even surpassed!

As we enter the homestretch of the election campaign and begin the subscription campaign in September, we would like to resume publication of a 12-page Militant. However, because it costs more to print and mail a 12-pager, the 7¢ rate would not be feasible. Therefore we want to increase the selling price of the paper to 15¢.

San Francisco and Los Angeles have been selling The Militant for some time at 15¢ (to meet their airmail charges) and have found the higher price no obstacle to sales. They explain that all the underground and radical papers cost at least 15¢, and the people buying The Militant think nothing of paying 15¢. What convinced me even more was the realization that all the glowing reports about successful sales made in Los Angeles were about sales at the 15¢ price -- and this wasn't even mentioned. There is no doubt that if the paper can be sold just as easily for 15¢ on the West Coast, it can be throughout the country as well.

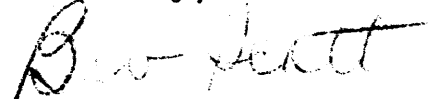
When we increase the selling price to 15¢, we will raise the cost to the branches to 10¢ per copy, again a flat rate for all branches, regardless of bundle size and including postage. Each branch will still have to sell only 70% of their bundle to break even.

You will find a chart enclosed comparing the costs to the branches for the 15¢ paper, to the present charges. It must

be understood however that the additional amount the business office will receive will cover only the additional cost of printing and mailing the larger paper. It costs us 50 percent more to print the 12-pager, and about 25 percent more to mail it.

Please write us as soon as you discuss your bundle size.

Comradely,



Bev Scott  
Militant Business  
Office