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Cleveland, Ohio
June 11, 1968

Dear Barry,

After having been involved in street sales now for a couple of weeks, I thought I'd send in a little feedback from some of our new readers and a few thoughts of my own relating to format and content. Since I have no journalistic experience whatever, some of them are bound to be unworkable, but I hope that you will be able to use a few.

We have been selling in the downtown area, are exploring plant gate sales and are selling heavily in the black community. I think that it is vitally important to get the lessons of France to the black militants, but selling them the paper is only the first step. Next they have to be willing to read those sections of the paper that do not deal directly with the black struggle in America. To accomplish this a couple of things would be helpful.

First, definitional articles like the one in the June 14 issue on workers committees are a big help. It would have been good to have something similar on dual power since that concept was used in several of the articles in the same issue. If one read all the articles one could come up with a pretty good idea of what was meant, but we shouldn't make it hard on our readers. The Militant has to teach as well as report.

Second, the type size is too small, especially when the page isn't broken up with short articles and pictures. For a person with less than a college education, a full page of type is tremendously discouraging. I noticed that in the June 14 issue there were less of those kind of pages and that's a help. I remember being discouraged myself by a solid page of type in the old ISR format. This new Militant format gives the same feeling.

Third, Americanize the articles. Joe's article on "Worker Militancy in Big Paris March," is a good example of what I mean. Explaining what it means to say "We are all German Jews" in terms of the American scene helps bring the lessons home. Joe does the same thing several times in that article and each time it makes the picture clearer.

Fourth, many of the articles use too many big words. We don't want to send our readers to the dictionary to look up half to two-thirds of the words in an article when there are simpler ways to say the same thing and be just as clear and hard hitting about it. This is one complaint that many of the black readers have made to us, and it seems like one that something could be done about. George tends to do this especially when he gives in to his love affair with alliterative effects. Again, Joe's article in the June 14 issue was good in not falling into this trap. I understand that it was descriptive and not theoretical and that this makes it easier to be simple, but if people were conscious of the problems maybe it would help.

Fifth, it helps to sell the issue when there is a headline on the black struggle. Getting stuff from Paul on France and putting it on the front page would be even better. The little article on Julius Lester was good, but it's buried inside the paper.

I hope that this has been some use to you. I know you guys are short staffed and I'm not trying to take pot shots from my reading room in the field where everything is perfect, just trying to contribute something to making the Militant more readable.

Comradely,

Dave Wulp, Organizer
Cleveland SWP

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Excerpted from a Letter by Peter Camejo - June 12, 1968

I do not think your ad for YSA recruitment is very good. You say too much on it and the picture is not the right one. A picture of a YSA convention would be better. And rather than join the USA equivalent it should call for building a new world-wide student movement like the JCR, German SDS and all the others by building a socialist youth movement here. That may sound unclear but I think you know what I mean.

For Barry -- the lay out of the second French copy was bad. The last issue was quite good. But you need more in the same direction. For instance, run a full-page picture on the front if you have a good one. Try to have some short, exciting items boxed in or in larger print. By the way, the shade in the background can have the effect of people not seeing it -- skipping it (I think). And for goodness sake do not run two issues in a row with the same front page layout. A cartoon on the front page would help sell papers more than anything else. Barry, also, more breakers. In FRANCE IN REVOLT issue you ran Mandel's article without any breakers. Also, Hansen's and Roberts and Frank's. So the paper looks like a mass of print -- scares anyone.

A much more difficult problem is the style based on who we are reaching with the paper. But this I cannot explain in a letter except to say -- please remember that the students who are reading the paper know almost nothing about politics -- the word popular front means nothing to them -- it has to be explained and it shouldn't be in the headline.

By the way, the response to our newsstands has been excellent. We can really up the circulation of the Militant on a permanent basis.