

Literature Sales in Party Work

The sale of literature to the public by a Marxist-Leninist Party is of utmost importance. This exercise not only brings the Party into direct contact with the masses, but also helps the dissemination of materials which explain the social situation, strengthens ideological, political and class consciousness, and strengthens the Party's roots with the people. It also serves as a source of funds and a high profile public relations activity.

Part of the work of activists of the People's Progressive Party, like that of most communist and workers' parties, is the sale of literature. Different countries and parties use different methods of organising such sales. These are some of the Party's experiences :—

One of the best activists in this field who is a Party Organiser explained how he goes about it. He sells literature every week at the pay office of the sugar estate in the area in which he works. He finds this easier than going house-to-house because the workers, with their pay packets in hand have the money to make purchases on the spot. When this practice first began, out of 25 copies of **Soviet Weekly** taken to the pay office, only 19 were sold. Now he sells up to 350 copies of **Soviet Weekly** every week at the same pay office. And from an initial 25 copies of **Thunder** he now sells 200.

The same activist also sells literature at the Parika Ferry Stelling. He goes there as often as possible and finds a good response. Sometimes too, he leaves literature at friendly shops in the district, which display them on the counter. All of this does not mean that the technique of going house-to-house is not used. It is, but it requires more time and organisation to get going. House-to-house campaigning has proved an effective method of widening literature sales and making direct lasting contact.

In the city of Georgetown, Party activists go out two or three afternoons per week to different factory sites. They arrive about 10 minutes before closing time and position themselves at various vantage points to display and sell their literature as the workers leave. This method has been particularly useful for the sale of the **Mirror**

newspaper, *Granma* and *Soviet Weekly*, all of which are popular publications. Sometimes, they go around work sites at mid-day, during the lunch hour. In this way, the units move all around the city and try to cover all places which employ workers.

WANING HOSTILITY

Another party activist reported that he generally gets together a number of the members of the Progressive Youth Organisation (youth arm of the Party) and they go house-to-house, talking to people, selling literature, and encouraging them to join the Party or the youth arm.

Are people ever hostile? Very seldom, is the answer. Even though they may have been hostile or unreceptive in the past the activist said, they now usually end up buying literature, and listening to the Party's point of view as explained by them.

He gave an example of one area which was recently covered on a house-to-house basis. Every single household bought literature! After investigating the reason for the 100% response, the young activist was informed that the People's Progressive Party, when in office some 20 years ago, had helped the people of the area. They said they could never forget what the Party had done for them. The comrades were asked to return more regularly to the area.

One activist who works at Linden, the bauxite mining area, where there is no bookshop, achieves the highest sales. His sales are not confined to newspapers and periodicals. He carries various books from the Michael Forde Bookshop, and introduces new titles on each selling tour. The amount of sales he makes is sometimes astounding.

Another Party activist, a worker at a factory cane scale, in the sugar belt averages \$45 per week in sales. He said that when he first began selling literature in 1972, he simply distributed a large amount to workers and left. Then he went back later to collect the money. Many had thought that the literature was free, but after he explained the matter to them, no one objected or refused to pay. He said this was how he introduced literature to the workers. Thereafter, he would distribute the literature, leaving for work earlier by bicycle, in order to have sufficient time to sell, before reporting for duty.

Party Groups take quotas of various publications for

sale. One Group, near the city, takes 500 copies of *Mirror* weekly. Two members go street-by-street in their area, using one hour on Saturday afternoons, and one hour on Sunday mornings, to sell out the 500 copies. The commission on literature sales, given to all agents, is passed on to the Group.

Literature is also sold at public meetings, solidarity rallies (as for example, on El Salvador,) when there are demonstrations, picketing, etc., and at fairs and fund-raising events. Some non-political groups holding fairs, allow our Party to put up book stalls. At these stalls there is generally brisk business.

In the hinterland and riverain areas, where transportation is difficult and people have little ready access to reading material, Party activists go by small boats and sometimes by horses. The literature taken is carefully covered in plastic to protect it from rain (and possible boat mishaps). For these areas, prices are fixed very low, because of the poverty of most settlers. On many occasions literature for free distribution is carried because of the low income of the people.

Besides these methods of distributing and selling literature, the Party has set up a number of district libraries for Party and Youth Groups and to facilitate study classes. Supporters living overseas usually send books to stock these libraries. This has been organised through our Party's support Groups in various countries, which work among Guyanese emigrants, and also among the non-Guyanese in the relevant country.