



# Our Militant Paper Alone Has Told the Truth

By Murry Weiss

The members of **The Militant** staff have for some time been preparing for this 25th birthday of our paper, which coincides with the 25th anniversary of the Socialist Workers Party. Part of the preparation was to look through the files of **The Militant**. What an experience! Through these years **The Militant** has become a rich storehouse of Marxist treasure. The keenest revolutionary thinkers of the international workers movement provide some of their most lucid contributions to socialist thought in our pages. Leon Trotsky, for example, was a regular contributor from the period of his exile from the Soviet Union, (1928) to the day of his assassination by the Stalinists in Mexico on Aug. 21, 1940.

Students of Marxism will undoubtedly assemble all of Trotsky's writings for **The Militant** and publish them in more accessible book form. The **Militant** files also contain a comprehensive record of international working class struggles, particularly the great theoretical and political disputes in the workers' vanguard. This record likewise constitutes an invaluable tool for Marxist scholars.

While searching through **The Militant** files we became determined to bring to our readers some of these treasures of Marxism during the coming period. In these lines, however, we can deal only with some of the basic conceptions and principles that were formulated in the founding years of our paper and have remained our guiding principles to this day.

**STALINIST REVISIONISM**  
Volume 1, Number 1 of **The Militant** on Nov. 15, 1928, published the first installment of Leon Trotsky's fundamental work, "The Draft Program of the Comintern, A Criticism of Fundamentals." In this work, Trotsky demolishes the revisionist theory of establishing socialism in one backward country, a theory which means in effect abandoning the international revolution. He establishes that this reactionary, nationalist bureaucratic theory is a break from the whole theoretical tradition of Marx and Lenin.

Stalinism, like all revisionism, attacked the foundations of Marxist theory — in the name of Marx and Lenin! In this way it covered itself in the eyes of the workers with the authority of these revolutionary thinkers. Therefore, it was imperative that this fraud be exposed.

Trotsky showed how this theoretical departure from Marxism-Leninism could be the source of future betrayals of the working class and would lead inevitably to the degeneration of the Communist International. In a chapter entitled, "The Theory of Socialism in One Country as a Source of Inevitable Social

Patriotic Blunders," Trotsky traces the previous degeneration of the Second International from its revisionist roots to its collapse in the First World War. The root error of the Social Democracy was also to substitute the conservative national thinking of the labor bureaucracy for revolutionary internationalism. Trotsky said:

"The worker who clearly understands that the fate of the Soviet Republic and hence his own entirely depends on the international revolution will fulfill his duty in relation to the USSR much more energetically than the worker who is told that what we already possess is nine-tenths of socialism."

The subsequent course of history showed how the Stalinist line, based on the theory of Socialism in One Country, demoralized and defeated the working class in one country after another.

**WORLD PERSPECTIVE**  
In this first installment of a "Criticism of Fundamentals," the basic world perspective of Marxism in this epoch is explained. Trotsky brings to the center of his analysis the role of United States capitalism in relation to Europe and the world:

"It is precisely the international strength of the United States and its unbridled expansion resulting from it, that compels it to include world magazines throughout the world among the foundations of its structure — the antagonism between the East and West, the class struggles in Old Europe, uprisings in the colonial masses, wars and revolution. This on the one hand transforms the United States capitalism into the basic counter-revolutionary force in the present epoch, becoming constantly more interested in the maintenance of order in every corner of the globe, and on the other hand prepares the ground for a gigantic revolutionary explosion of this already dominant and still increasing world imperialist power."

Little need be added today to this remarkable analysis of the central axis around which capitalism is spinning to its destruction. American imperialism has grown like a monstrous tumor; it has already ruined the whole capitalist world. The revolutionary upsurge of the post-Second World War period has already destroyed every last vestige of historical stability for the capitalist system. Now the United States itself stands before the glowing prospect of a socialist transformation with depression and ruinous war the only alternatives the capitalists can offer.

In the Nov. 15, 1928, issue of **The Militant** the Trotskyists counter the American Stalinist



These are some typical headlines in **The Militant** during the late twenties and the thirties. At the bottom is the historic first issue of Nov. 15, 1928, with its declaration, "For the Russian Opposition!" The Opposition was the militant workers in the Soviet Union who, under Leon Trotsky's leadership, fought

the Stalinist degeneration. Other headlines tell of the great strike victory of Minneapolis Truckdrivers Local 544 in 1934, the Trotskyist campaign calling for a working-class united front against Hitler, and Roosevelt's moves toward dictatorial power before World War II.

leading to the downfall of American imperialism. In the light of the above, the present economic depression must inevitably become the forerunner of a deep-going crisis. . . . The depression cannot be viewed merely as a 'normal' cyclical depression having only slight and passing effects. On the contrary, because of the qualitative changes which are taking place in American capitalist economy every such cyclical depression intensifies to the highest degree the contradictions of capitalism, undermines the deeper the entire structure

ganda for the overthrow of the government, the Fish Committee was in reality an expedient to distract attention from the misery of the unemployment crisis. . . . It is imperative to arouse the widest possible movement against this Fish Committee. . . . Elihu Root has already advanced the idea of creating a special secret federal police . . . to spy more effectively over the revolutionary workers . . . the coming storm and stress period in the class struggle will mark more and more vicious attempts to place heavier shackles on the labor movement. The Department of Justice will be more extensively subsidized and its stool-pigeon activities re-enforced. The industrial espionage system will be intensified. . . . The criminal syndicalism and sedition laws of the various states will be brought into more frequent play."

With the approach of World War II, the Federal Smith "Gag" Act supplanted the repressive state laws. It was used for the first time in 1940 to prosecute 18 Trotskyist and union leaders of Minneapolis and to jail them for their opposition to capitalist war. **The Militant** has waged a struggle for the defense of all victims of the witch-hunt persecution down through the years. From the struggle for the release of Mooney and Billings to the defense today of the Stalinist victims of the Smith Act trials, **The Militant** has fought for the basic principle of working-class solidarity in defense of civil liberties. The fact that the Stalinists systematically violate this principle, as they did in the Minneapolis trials, is one of the most

dammning proofs of the treacherous character of their party. The Trotskyist movement is a revolutionary movement. Therefore it has always been a movement of youth. On June 1, 1929, **The Militant** published the first letter from Leon Trotsky on "Tasks of the American Opposition." In this letter, he said: "Every member of the Opposition organization should be obliged to have under his guidance several young workers, boys from 14 to 15 up, to remain in continuous contact with them, help them in their self-education, train them in the questions of scientific socialism, and systematically introduce them to the revolutionary politics of the proletarian vanguard. Those who are afraid of rough work we don't want. The calling of a revolutionary Bolshevik imposes obligations. The first of these obligations is to struggle for the proletarian youth, to clear a road to its most oppressed and neglected strata. They stand first under our banner."

As we embark on the second 25 years of our fight for socialism **The Militant** will rally the working-class youth of the generation to the revolutionary banner. The youth of today are looking for a revolutionary philosophy and program. They are disgusted and repelled by the decay of the capitalist world which can offer them no better future than atomic war and depression. Our paper and the Socialist Workers Party will find a road to the worker and student youth with the socialist message of hope and struggle.

## THE MILITANT ARMY

Chicago Militant salesmen are warming up for the 25th Anniversary Militant Mobilizations to begin Nov. 8. Literature Agent Alice Wiley reports sales of 77 papers in the past week. "We feel we are making a good beginning for the national sub-campaign," she writes. "This week Bert, Mari and Jacki sold 14 Militants at an NAACP membership rally."

"Benny sold five copies at the University of Chicago. Elaine sold 13 copies at the CIO-PAC rally. And 25 copies were sold on one of the newsstands. In our work on the South Side slum area we sold 20 Militants, and one sub was sold."

"Comrades Dee, Mari, Bert, Alice, Dot, Benny, Bernie, Jacki and Elaine participate in this door to door work each Saturday afternoon. 'The Chicago slums, what to do about them?' and our program is our major talking point. We find this an excellent project which will eventually pay off in new recruits to socialist ideas."

Minneapolis writes to increase their Militant bundle order in preparation for Anniversary sales. Literature Agent Helen Sherman writes, "This is a starter. We hope to increase it still more. Look for another extra order for the Militant Anniversary issue when the time approaches."

"The new sub sent in from the office last week was obtained by Millie from one of her regular customers at the Labor Temple. Consistent sales in front of a union hall make new readers for **The Militant** and new friends for socialism. Over a period of time, here in Minneapolis, Millie has made this record. She also brought from a militant convinced socialist friend who lives out of town." Helen reports good sales also of Fourth International, theoretical magazine of American Trotskyism.

Congratulations go to the com-

rades in Flint who sent in 16 Militant subs in the past two weeks. This response indicates good possibilities for the coming Militant mobilizations.

New York wound up its Militant sales and distributions in connection with the local election campaign this week. Literature Agent Murray Forbes reports that over 1,200 copies of the election campaign issue of **The Militant** were distributed to workers at street meetings, forums, and rallies this past week. He writes: "At many of these meetings the appearance of **The Militant** evoked a sympathetic response. Many workers who have never heard of **The Militant** before have become acquainted with it as a result of its widespread distribution, sales, and constant reference to it by our candidates over radio and TV. **The Militant** has become synonymous in the minds of hundreds of workers with a fighting party and a socialist program."

"Here is the week's roundup: Oct. 27, 800 papers were distributed at an ALP rally by Johnny T. Johnny A. Manny and Meryl. Oct. 28, a distribution by three comrades at a CIO rally for Wagner. Oct. 30, at an extremely well attended and highly enthusiastic combination rally of the Socialist Workers Party, celebrating the windup of its local election campaign and the 25th anniversary of the party, 60 copies of **The Militant** were sold. "Nov. 1, Pauline and Berta sold 10 copies at an election forum held by the Community Church. Here, as at previous meetings, **The Militant** was recognized by those attending the forum. On Oct. 30, David L. Weiss, appearing on Barry Gray's television show, had a chance to show the front page of the latest issue of the paper to the television audience. Once again this served as an indelible reminder that **The Militant** is a newspaper fighting for workers' demands and fearlessly expressing the truth."

### OUR MARXIST ANSWER

The Militant of Feb. 15, 1931 gives a Marxist answer to this ultra-left phrasemongering of the Stalinists:

"The crisis still continues in its downward sweep. . . . But to present this as the final crisis of American capitalism would be false. It is still the world dominant power within a declining capitalist imperialism."

Showing how the economic crisis, which put millions of workers on the breadlines, has become a social crisis of world capitalism the Militant made a realistic appraisal of the situation:

"There is not a 'widespread workers radicalization,' nor a 'revolutionary upsurge of the American masses' at the present time. To proceed from such a fictitious analysis can lead only to fundamentally false conclusions and isolation. . . . But the situation is full of promising potentialities for a rise in the labor movement, for its entering into a more active resistance and struggles for its needs."

This forecast of the coming awakening of the labor movement from its state of shocked helplessness in the depression to a new militant upsurge was constantly hammered at in the early years of **The Militant**.

The platform of the Communist Opposition (Trotskyists), published on Feb. 15, 1929, says:

"The main reservoir of labor militancy is the masses of unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the unorganized basic industries. . . . The party must turn its face to these unorganized masses, put itself at the head of their struggles and lead in the work of organizing them into new industrial unions. . . . In this protracted struggle on all fronts extending over a period of years the decisive break of the workers with the ideology of capitalism will be effected and the genuine class movement of the workers will be built."

These were the two points that the Trotskyists fought for from

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Speaker:  
George Lavan  
Militant Staff Writer  
Fri., Nov. 13, 8:30 P.M.  
Militant Labor Hall  
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The first issue of the Militant after Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, declared: "Defend the Soviet Union." It called for a revolutionary workers' defense of the nationalized property in the Soviet Union against Nazi capital-

ism. Other headlines tell of the Socialist Workers Party's fight against fascism in America, leading a series of huge demonstrations against native fascists, like Father Coughlin's Christian Front, from New York to Los Angeles in 1939.



