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## The "Daily Worker"—Fighter for Peace

By William Z. Foster

THE *Daily Worker* is 30 years old. It was founded in Chicago on January 13, 1924, with J. Louis Engdahl as editor. The anniversary should be made a special occasion by the Communist Party and other Left and progressive organizations. For the *Daily Worker* and the week-end *Worker* constitute the sharpest journalistic weapon in the hands of the working class and by far the greatest press achievement ever accomplished by the labor movement in this country.

During the past century or more of class struggle, the workers, the Negro people, and the farmers have produced many notable journals—among them McDonnell's *Labor Standard*; Garrison's *Liberator*; Douglass' *North Star*; Susan B. Anthony's *The Revolution*; De Leon's *Daily People*; Debs' *Appeal to Reason*, and scores of others; but for loyal service to the working class and its allies and for a rugged battle for survival in the midst of a host of foes, the *Daily Worker* stands second

to none. The continued fight of the *Daily Worker*, with its unbroken publication over a period of a generation, is one of the real sagas of the American labor movement. It is a monument to the tireless support and boundless devotion of its readers and to the courage and ability of the men and women who have gotten out the paper all these years.

The *Daily Worker* was launched and supported for many years as an official organ of the Communist Party, but on August 1st, 1940, it was re-organized on an independent basis. The paper then passed into private hands, under conditions which allowed the editors full power to continue the paper along militant lines—as a fighting Marxist journal—which they have done ever since.

### A GENERATION OF STRUGGLE

The *Daily Worker* was born at a critical moment in the history of the labor movement. The unions were just recovering from the heavy de-

feats suffered in the employers' offensive of the early post-World War I period. The more progressive unions were heading towards a Labor Party, which the *Daily Worker* supported; while the more conservative among them were taking up the crippling B. & O.\* class collaboration policy, which the *Daily Worker* militantly opposed. The *Daily Worker* also distinguished itself in the great movements of the unemployed in the period of the deep crisis of 1929-33, and it was also in the forefront of the big organizing drives and strikes of the late 1930's which unionized the basic industries and founded the C.I.O.

One of the very greatest services of the *Daily Worker* was its leadership in the fight against Hitlerism during the 1930's and 1940's. No paper in this country had so clear a line as to what was taking place in the world and as to what had to be done about it. In this period the paper was a big factor in organizing the Lincoln Brigade, which fought so bravely in Spain against Franco and his Hitler-Mussolini allies. During World War II the *Daily Worker* was also in the forefront of the whole American labor press in clarifying the issues of the war, in advancing the no-strike pledge, and generally in mobilizing the workers for the world-important task of militarily destroying fascism.

The most glorious of all the many struggles of the *Daily Worker*, how-

ever, has been its all-out and tireless support of the cause of the Negro people. For years, while the great bulk of the labor press generally ignored the outrageous persecution, discrimination and exploitation of the Negro masses, the *Daily Worker* championed their fight uncompromisingly. Its struggles against lynching, against Jim Crow, against the poll tax, for admission of Negro workers into industry, into trade unions, and into housing projects, against all manifestations of white chauvinism, and its gallant battle in the Scottsboro, Martinsville, and countless other brutal frame-up cases against the Negro people, were invaluable contributions to the general struggle of the Negro masses. The *Daily Worker* has also actively fought against the insidious poison of anti-Semitism and other forms of racism.

From its inception, the *Daily Worker* has always been in the forefront of the mass struggles against the frame-up cases of labor fighters which have so often stained the pages of American history, most of which struggles, unfortunately, were largely ignored or sabotaged by the general labor press. MacNamara, Sacco and Vanzetti, Mooney and Billings, the Scottsboro Boys, Herndon, and Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, are only a few of the names of the many great labor cases supported with characteristic militancy by the *Daily Worker*. The hundreds of foreign-born workers arbitrarily deported by the government in the past decades, too, have always found an active

\* The Baltimore & Ohio R.R. plan.

champion in the *Daily Worker*. And especially vital are the services of the *Daily Worker* in the current struggles against the jailing of Communists and other Left-wingers under the Smith, McCarran, and other thought-control laws.

One of the very greatest achievements of the *Daily Worker* was its courageous and intelligent stand against the reactionary Korean war and for the establishment of an armistice. In the face of wild denunciation, the *Daily Worker*, together with the *Freiheit*, *People's World*, and a few other Left-wing papers, stood virtually alone in denouncing this imperialist war. Their stand came finally to be fully justified, however, by the hatred of the American people for this war which they called "utterly useless."

The *Daily Worker*, in the true Marxist spirit of what a workers' paper should be, has not only led in all the strikes and other daily fights of the workers during the many stormy struggles of the past thirty years, but it has also carried on a ceaseless educational campaign in the elementary working-class principles. It has, in its consistent spirit of internationalism, carefully followed and supported the struggles of the world's workers for Socialism and it has tirelessly explained the experience of the Russian, Chinese, and other peoples in the building of Socialist regimes. There has been no interest of the working class—war, strikes, labor news, sports, education, or art, in which the *Daily*

*Worker* has not, through the years, devotedly concerned itself.

#### PRESENT ATTACKS UPON THE PAPER

From its inception the *Daily Worker* has had to face a violent barrage of capitalist attack. Never was this assault more severe, however, than at the present time, in the current rise of the McCarthyite pro-fascist, pro-war hysteria. The red-baiters in Washington have not dared to try to suppress the paper outright, although the McCarran Committee has already made such a threat. The witch-hunters, however, have surrounded the paper and its staff with a poisonous fog of red-baiting and persecution which, they hope, will finally kill the paper. The *Daily Worker* is in growing danger from their mounting assaults.

The viciousness of the attack against the *Daily Worker* is expressed graphically by the fact that its editor-in-chief, John Gates, has been in jail at Atlanta for over two years, framed up under the Smith Act, by professional perjurers, on the criminally absurd charge that he conspired to teach and advocate the violent overthrow of the United States Government. The *Daily Worker's* Pittsburgh correspondent, James Dolsen, likewise is in jail, under an outrageous sentence of 25 years for "sedition"; its Detroit correspondent, William Allan, is now on trial under the Smith Act; and the Philadelphia representative until recently,

Walter Lowenfels, awaits trial under that law. These persecutions make a mockery of the Constitutional provisions for freedom of the press.

Under all these fierce attacks, the *Daily Worker* and *The Worker* have suffered considerable losses in circulation. From 1949 to the present time, during the period of the most acute war hysteria and ideological terrorism, *The Worker's* weekly circulation has declined from 84,000 to 27,500, and the sale of the *Daily Worker* has dropped from 22,500 to about 10,000. These losses have been caused chiefly by the intimidation directed against distributors of the paper and against readers who buy the papers on the newsstands or have it sent to their homes through the mails. The people's freedom has sunk to such low levels now in the United States, that it is almost a crime in itself to be seen reading or receiving a Left-wing paper.

Most of the circulation losses, however, could have been avoided by a more skillful distribution of the paper. In earlier years, the Party circulated the *Daily Worker* and *The Worker* largely through its own organizational apparatus; but this sound method of circulation through readership apparatus has lately been much neglected. Newsstand and mail circulation is almost the sole reliance of the papers. These methods must, of course, be utilized to the fullest extent possible, but they should also be supplemented by a far more systematic and vigorous distribution through readers, partic-

ularly of the Party. This is a matter of the greatest importance for the survival of the paper under the attacks to which it is being subjected.

The *Daily Worker* is a rugged paper and it has surmounted dozens of financial crises, any one of which would have destroyed a bourgeois journal. Ordinarily, American newspapers derive up to 80% of their revenues from advertising, but of course this is but a minor source of income for the *Daily Worker*. It has to depend almost exclusively upon what it receives from the sale of the paper and from workers' donations. It is imperative that these sources of income, under the increasing assaults of reaction upon the paper, be greatly augmented. To do this requires, without fail, far better organized support from the Communist Party and from all other Left and progressive organizations, whose defender the *Daily Worker* is. The management's aim is to restore, in 1954, the average circulation of *The Worker* to 32,000 and of the *Daily Worker* to 11,500. These goals should be relatively easy of achievement, if proper Party support is developed for the paper, in the shops, the unions, and the neighborhoods.

#### THE VITAL POLITICAL STRUGGLES AHEAD

Never, in all its history, was the *Daily Worker* so keenly needed by the working class, the Negro people and other democratic forces as it is now. Particularly at this time, when the country is facing most crucial

problems, national and international, and when the reactionaries are saturating the political atmosphere with a deadly fog of thought control, warmongering, and ideological confusion and terrorism, is there the sharpest necessity for the clear-headed and courageous voice of the *Daily Worker* and *The Worker*.

In order to grasp the important need for the *Daily Worker* and *The Worker* in the present conditions it is necessary to bear clearly in mind the following basic elements of the world situation:

The first of these is to realize that Wall-Street imperialism is definitely orienting upon dominating the world. It pushes relentlessly on this course because, as the greatest of imperialist countries, it is pushed on relentlessly by inner forces to dominate the markets and raw materials of the world. It does not brook the competition of capitalist rivals, and the existence in the world of the U.S.S.R., People's China, and the European People's Democracies is intolerable to it.

The second basic element in the world situation is that the Soviet Union, and the other countries on the road to Socialism, are refusing, and will continue to refuse to yield to the domineering attitude of Wall Street. American imperialism, with its ruthless policies, has succeeded in setting up a partial and shaky hegemony over the capitalist world, but it cannot intimidate and subjugate the Socialist sector of the world by its political blackmail, economic boycott, and military threats.

The third elementary world fact to remember is that in order for it to break through the Socialist opposition, Wall Street is convinced that a third great war is indispensable. Therefore, they are orienting towards such a war. Another world war would be suicidal, and the Wall Street forces could not possibly win it; but they are gambling upon it nevertheless. There can be no other possible meaning than this to their A- and H-bomb diplomacy, the building up of an immense armed force here and among this country's allies, the dotting of the whole capitalist world with American air bases, and the insistent cultivation of war-breeding McCarthyism in this country.

The fourth important element to grasp in the international situation is that, more and more, American foreign policy is proving to be a failure, and the prospect of the Anglo-American war alliance walking willingly, as planned, into a war against the Socialist world, as fascist Germany, Japan, and Italy marched into World War II, is becoming more and more unlikely. This is because the pressure of the rising peace spirit among the masses in the capitalist countries, including the United States, is hamstringing the action of their respective governments and is making it more difficult for them to follow an obviously offensive war policy, however eager they may be to do so. One general consequence of this situation was the armistice in Korea, which was forced through by these peace-

loving masses in the face of determined efforts by Eisenhower, Dulles, and Company to keep the war going.

The fifth essential world element to bear in mind is the possibility that Wall-Street imperialism, which is basically resolved upon war, may, in the face of the rising peace sentiment in the world, try to precipitate the war and drag its unwilling allies into it, by provoking some incident as a pretext for launching a sudden general war. This is a terrible possibility, but it cannot be ignored, when we remember what desperate capitalist gamblers there are now dictating United States foreign policy. This putschist danger is all the greater because it is the stated program—the so-called “liberation” policy, of the Government to instigate civil wars in the Socialist countries. The June 17th “demonstration” in East Germany, organized by State Department agents, was such an attempt. Had it been successful it would have caused a great German civil war that could have expanded into a world war. This insidious incident indicates the reality of the danger that now exists of the world being suddenly plunged into war.

With the powerful forces of American imperialism pushing relentlessly towards war, the war policy of Wall Street carries in itself the profoundest dangers to this country and the world. To help to avert this grave menace, the *Daily Worker*, and such pro-peace papers as *The People's World* and the *Freiheit*, are imperatively necessary. It is a fact,

of course, that the American and other peoples of capitalist countries are making a certain resistance, in a rising degree, against the Wall Street warmongers. But this is far too hesitant and confused to be relied on. This is because the chief leaders of the trade unions, Negro organizations, farmers' and other mass democratic groups in this country are themselves following a red-baiting war policy which definitely feeds the pro-war moves of Wall Street and its political agents.

It takes a paper like the *Daily Worker* to analyze the war-fascist dangers, increasingly to make them clear to the masses, and boldly to take a stand against them. Contrary to the current madness of the war perspective of Wall Street, the *Daily Worker* must help teach the workers that the hope of the world is for peaceful co-existence between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. Any other perspective is sheer insanity. Now more than ever, the *Daily Worker* is indispensable.

Through the years, the *Daily Worker* has been built and maintained by boundless effort and sacrifice by its readers. This fine spirit must be continued and increased. But above all, the fighting *Daily Worker* must henceforth be given real organized mass support, from the Party and all Left and progressive organizations, far more than it has been getting for many years past. If this support is forthcoming, a new period of growth and effectiveness will open up before this greatest of all American working-class papers.