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# EARL BROWDER AND THE FIGHT FOR PEACE

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**T**HE experience of the past several years shows that, beyond all doubt, the overwhelming mass of the American people are resolutely opposed to fascism and war. Whenever the issue of fascism has stood out clearly and sharply, the great majority of our people have categorically condemned it and, as regards the present imperialist war, their opposition to it is so steadfast that, as every poll of popular opinion demonstrates, it has not been broken down, even by the tremendous barrage of pro-war propaganda to which they have been subjected.

Nevertheless, although they are so generally and deeply opposed to fascism and war, the masses have not understood clearly the way to combat the insidious approaches of this twin menace. Consequently, they have been misled by the camp of warmongers slickly parading under slogans of peace and national defense and by fascist-minded reactionaries operating under the mask of democracy and Socialism. As a result, the people's fight for peace and democracy has by no means developed its great potentialities.

Setting the pace in this pro-war demagoguery is the Roosevelt Administration, supported by Willkie and the bulk of the Republicans. Under cover of a great to-do about democ-

racy and peace, Roosevelt is unblushingly obeying the dictates of Wall Street, forcing the country into the war and slashing the people's living standards to make them pay for it. With unparalleled demagoguery and hypocrisy, the present Administration has taken step after step into the war, in spite of the anti-war attitude of the people—all done under the pretext of keeping the country out of the war. Roosevelt, who notoriously cherishes the ambition of writing his name down in American history as a great liberal President, is instead, in order to force the unwilling American people into this war, piling up a record as the most reactionary President this country has yet known.

The social-reformist leadership is doing its full part to involve the United States in the war and to facilitate the fascist-like reaction accompanying it. The A. F. of L. Executive Council and the Hillman forces in the C.I.O., blithely mouthing the British tory slogan that this is a war against fascism, are all out for the Administration's war program—in the name, of course, of peace, democracy and national defense. The Social-Democratic Federation leads the pack in openly whooping it up for the war. The Socialist Party, with its leader, Norman Thomas, supporting all-aid-

to-Britain and the project of an anti-Soviet war, is unable to hide its pro-war position behind its fig-leaf of isolationism. The recent split-off from the Socialist Party, Altman, Niebuhr & Co., together with a smattering of so-called liberals and renegade radicals, under the name of "Union for Democratic Action," have made their bid for services to the Administration's war program, adding to it a few radical phrases. The Lovestoneites have long since dissolved their discredited grouplet and gone over to the war party. And the degenerate Trotskyites, in their May Day manifesto, single out Hitler as the enemy to fight, let British and American imperialism escape condemnation, and virtually accept the war.

Meanwhile, the so-called isolationists are also maneuvering to confuse and defeat the peace-loving masses. The liberal wing of the America First Committee — the Nyes, Wheelers and LaFollettes — accept, although with some reservations, the Administration's aid-to-Britain policy, and their imperialist program, with hostility toward the Soviet Union and calling for the domination of Latin America, a course that is a sure road to war and reaction. The reactionary wing of the America First Committee, the Lindberghs, Hearsts, Coughlins, Johnsons, etc., are essentially fascist, mostly pro-Nazi, and their pretense of defending American peace and democracy is an utter sham.

In the midst of the drive of the United States Government, aided by many tricky pseudo-peace movements, to force the unwilling Amer-

ican people into the war, the Communist Party has stood out as the most clear-headed and resolute fighter for peace. It has militantly fought the warmongers of all stripes at every step of the road. And its most effective spokesman is its General Secretary, Earl Browder. His brilliant challenge to the warmakers, in so far as it has been reduced to cold type, is contained in his four latest books—*The People's Front* (1938), *Fighting for Peace* (1939), *The Second Imperialist War* (1940) and *The Way Out* (1941). These volumes—a running account in speeches, reports and articles of the developing war situation—constitute an enormously important historical documentation. They also comprise, as a whole, an anti-war policy which, if adopted by the American people, would have saved our country from its present critical situation.

### *The Struggle to Prevent the War*

The Soviet Government, the Communist International and the Communist Parties the world over fought intelligently and resolutely to prevent the outbreak of the present, the second imperialist world war. As early as the summer of 1928 the Comintern, at its Sixth World Congress, in view of the gathering war clouds in Europe, made the fight against the war danger a central point on the congress agenda—an action for which it was denounced by liberals and Social-Democrats everywhere as conjuring up, for factional advantage, a non-existent peril of war.

The seizure of power in Germany by Hitler in 1933 obviously intensi-

fied the war danger enormously; hence, the Soviet Government doubled its efforts to preserve world peace. In 1934, joining the League of Nations, the U.S.S.R. sought to unite the democratic peoples in common action to hold the aggressors in check. In the ensuing years it condemned the aggressions of Germany, Italy and Japan in Spain, China and Ethiopia, and strove diligently to create an international peace front on the basis of collective security. But the imperialist governments of England, France and the United States wanted no part of this policy. They desired, instead, a strong Hitler, to stem the revolutionary forces in Europe, and as a check upon, if not the destroyer of, the rapidly growing Soviet Union. Therefore, supported by the Social-Democrats, they followed their "appeasement" policy, with the fatal results now apparent to all. Its peace proposals rejected, and a war between the great imperialist powers having become inevitable, the U.S.S.R., by its non-aggression pact with Germany in August, 1939, stepped out of the line of fire. Unable to preserve world peace, the Soviet Union decided to avoid the role of catspaw for imperialism and at least to keep its own people out of the war.

The proposal of the Soviet Government to preserve world peace by a policy of collective security was manifestly in the interest of the American people, as well as of all other peoples. Hence the Communist Party of the United States, with Browder at its head, militantly supported this program of the international peace front. The great crime

of the Roosevelt Administration against the American people, against the peoples of the world, was that it failed to collaborate with the U.S.S.R. in its resolute fight for peace, that it followed in the main a parallel policy to that of British imperialism. Thereby Roosevelt assumed major responsibility for the present murderous war.

Browder made a brilliant effort to awaken the American people to the vital importance to them of the international peace front as the way to prevent the outbreak of the present world war. The slogan he formulated—Keep America Out of War by Keeping War Out of the World,—was of historical importance. As no one else, Browder demonstrated that catastrophic consequences were inherent in the dastardly "non-intervention" policy in Spain, which gave Hitler and Mussolini a free hand to help Franco, while it denied the Loyalist Government access to arms. Browder, too, showed the folly of permitting Mussolini to overrun Ethiopia, and of giving Japan the munitions without which she would have been handicapped in the war on China. Browder's writings in this period, utilizing many precedents and traditions of our national life, teem with searching analyses and clear warnings of the disasters to come if the reactionary policies of Chamberlain, Blum and Roosevelt were continued.

Today the war implications of the infamous Munich agreement between Hitler, Mussolini, Chamberlain and Daladier to dismember Czechoslovakia are generally recognized. But, at the time, this monstrous betrayal of peace and democ-

racy was hailed by liberals and Social-Democrats as insuring world peace. The Communists, however, in the face of bitter attacks from such people, denounced the Munich Pact in unmeasured terms as an incitement to war. Characteristically, the French Communist Party Parliamentary Group, on October 4, only a few days after the signing of the pact, vigorously condemned the betrayal of Czechoslovakia and European peace. Commenting upon this, Comrade Browder, who was then in Paris, cabled the *Daily Worker*, on October 7, that the so-called peace of Munich was but a false peace, one which "can only be maintained by constantly more rapid surrender of the whole world to fascist dictatorship." A few weeks later, on November 14, speaking in New York, Browder declared that "The Munich pact was a treacherous betrayal of the republic of Czechoslovakia. But it was also far more than that. It opened the floodgates of reaction over Europe." The outbreak of the war, only nine months later, showed, all too soon, the correctness of Browder's analysis.

#### *The Fight to Prevent American Entry Into the War*

The beginning of the war in the fall of 1939 confronted the peace-loving masses of the United States with a new phase of anti-war struggle, namely, to keep the United States from becoming involved in the imperialist slaughter. Roosevelt, who, in connection with Spain, China, Ethiopia and the peace front proposed by the Soviet Union, had refused to take any steps to secure

world peace, began quickly to orientate American policy toward participation in the war on the side of Great Britain. Coming forth boldly as the spokesman of American imperialism and casting aside his previous New Deal program of reform, Roosevelt, to the growing applause of Wall Street, started systematically to develop an all-out "defense" with a view to the major war aims of American imperialism, including complete domination over Latin America, grabbing Canada and other remnants of the decaying British empire, seizing as much as possible of the Far East, preventing the victory of German imperialism, and, if possible, developing a general capitalist war against the Soviet Union.

This ambitious foreign policy strives for the conquest of world hegemony by American imperialism. The effort to realize it requires this country's full participation in the war, the maximum militarization of the American people, and the drastic reduction of the living standards of the masses and suppression of civil liberties. All these aims and implications of the program of American imperialism Roosevelt fully accepts. But to accomplish them has not been easy, because of the American people's stubborn refusal to accept the war as "the struggle to defend humanity, democracy, civilization and American national independence."

Consequently, to force the unwilling country into the war, the government and the warmongers generally have had to resort to the greatest campaign of trickery and deceit in the history of this coun-

try. Every conceivable device has been used to edge the United States into the war and to condition the people to accept as inevitable our entry into belligerency. With ever more bellicose slogans—"we are not neutral in thought," "all measures short of war," "full aid to Great Britain," "a bridge of ships to Great Britain," and "to make the United States into the arsenal of democracy," while cloaking itself with protestations of peaceful intentions, the Government has taken step after step deeper into the war. Cunningly, deliberately, it has inched its way toward the abyss. The lifting of the arms embargo, military conscription, the transfer of "obsolete" airplanes and destroyers to Britain, the seizure of Axis ships in American harbors, the mutual defense pact with Canada, the seizure of Greenland, the establishment of air bases in British colonies and Latin American countries, the passage of the "Lend-Lease" Act, the setting up of the patrol system, the studied hostility toward the Soviet Union, the growing assaults upon the civil rights of the people and the elaborate schemes to transfer the burden of the war costs to the masses—are all definitely war acts, and were so conceived by the Roosevelt Administration.

The Communist Party, led by Browder, has militantly fought every step of this drive by the Roosevelt-Wall Street Administration to push the peace-minded American people into the war. Undoubtedly, in the years to come, when the folly and criminality of the present war become so clear that all can see it, the war policy of the

Roosevelt Administration will stand out as perhaps the greatest crime ever committed against the American people by its government and the ruling class. And it will be to the lasting prestige of the Communist Party with Browder as its head, that it has thoroughly understood the war program of the government, disguised though it has been by a thick mantle of peace propaganda, and has actively opposed every phase of its unfoldment.

Within the narrow compass of this article it is quite impossible to do justice to the work of Comrade Browder in the historic fight of the American people to keep the United States out of the war. His writings and speeches in this period constitute penetrating analyses and exposures of the innumerable tricks and devices that have been used by the government to deceive the American people and to get the country into the war. Throughout the struggle, Browder has taken the lead in exposing the imperialist character of the war, and its origins in the decaying, moribund capitalist system, in pointing out the warlike character of Roosevelt's so-called measures "short of war," in mobilizing the workers to defend their economic standards and civil rights, in explaining to the masses that the road to peace and prosperity for the American people lies in cooperation with the Soviet Union and other democratic peoples. One of the many outstanding contributions of Browder during this period was his exposure of the Roosevelt-Willkie conspiracy to keep the peace issue out of the recent national elections. Browder's denunciation of the

peace-shouting Willkie as a warmonger has been strikingly borne out by the latter's present jingoistic course in demanding convoys to Britain.

The resistance of the American people to involvement in the imperialist war—although it has been marked by much ideological confusion among the masses regarding Great Britain's role in the war and misunderstanding as to the basic war character of the aid-to-Britain policy, and although it has not prevented the Government from plunging the country deeper and deeper into the war—nevertheless constitutes the greatest single struggle ever conducted by the great masses of the people against their exploiters. It has had an enormous educational and organizational effect upon the toiling masses. It has been carried on in the face of unprecedented betrayal by venal leaders of political, trade union, farm, and other mass organizations. And in this great fight no man has more ably and loyally defended the cause of the people than has Earl Browder.

#### *The Fight for a People's Peace*

The Roosevelt Administration, despite the peace wishes of the mass of the people, has already deeply involved this country in the war as a military ally of Great Britain and with diabolical cunning it is now taking one step after another to make us into a full-fledged belligerent. The fight of the people, therefore, against this final plunge into the war still goes on. But more and more the anti-war struggle now enters a third stage—the fight for a

just and lasting world peace, for a people's peace to end the present slaughter.

In the first world war the capitalist warmakers held forth many illusory peace hopes before the masses as the war dragged on its gory existence. Wilson proclaimed that it was the war to end all war and that his fourteen points would provide the basis for the organization of a free and democratic world; Lloyd George declared that post-war England would be a place fit for heroes to live in; and the powerful Social-Democracy in the European belligerent countries talked of the socialism that it would build when the war was over.

All these promises came to naught, however, as the people now well realize. Instead of a democratic world, we have one ravaged by fascism; instead of lasting peace, we have a still more dreadful war. In view of these fatal failures of capitalism, following the last war, to establish either peace or democracy, it is difficult, this time, for the warmongers to convince the people that these goals can be achieved through this war. This does not, however, deter them from trying again to deceive the people. Once again we hear the slogans of the capitalist governments on both sides about freedom and peace and national security. But they all sound very hollow and stale. Great Britain and the United States do not even dare state their war aims; the fascist New Order stands clearly exposed as a regime of permanent terror and war; and as for the Social-Democrats, one would have to be a political novice to be fooled by their

feeble talk about the socialism they say they will construct after the war, after the victory of their imperialist masters.

If there is to be a just and lasting peace following this war it must be a people's peace. That is, the great democratic masses of the world must take the matter in hand themselves, in opposition to their war-mongering capitalist rulers. The road to the accomplishment of this is the formation of vast popular fronts in the various countries and by joint action internationally with the Soviet Union, the peoples of China, India, Latin America and other lands, the oppressed peoples of the occupied countries, the awakening workers of the world. Only by the decisive action of these great popular forces can a democratic peace be achieved. The havoc and devastation of the war are gradually but surely laying the basis for such action by the harassed millions of the earth.

In the fight to prepare for a people's peace to end the present war Comrade Browder distinguished himself no less than in other phases of the anti-war struggle. As no other man in this country, he punctured the peace illusions now being fostered by the capitalists and their Social-Democratic tools. This is attested to by Browder's brilliant attacks upon the New Order of Hitler, the hypocritical war aims of the Anglo-American alliance, the encroachment of American imperialism upon Latin America, the "Union Now" scheme of the British-American imperialists, the "revolution by consent" theories of the British Social-Democrats, and the subservi-

ency of the Greens, Hillmans, Dubinskys, et al, to the war ideology of American finance capital. One of the last things Browder did before being jailed was to write his powerful attack upon Henry Luce's imperialist theory of the "American century," showing how disastrous it would be for our people to follow any such imperialist will-o-the-wisp.

On the other hand, if Browder ably attacked the current bourgeois peace demagogy, he no less capably pointed out the true path to peace. His writings abound with theoretical and practical guidance for building the united front of the working class, the people's front of the great masses, the establishment of peace and cooperation among the democratic peoples of the world. Especially did Browder analyze and popularize the socialist achievements of the Soviet Union, the hope of a war-stricken world.

#### *The People's Tribune Jailed*

It is an incontestable fact that the peace struggle conducted by the Communist Party, with Earl Browder as its outstanding spokesman, dovetailed, not only with the true interests of the American people, but also with their outspoken desires.

Regarding Spain, for example, repeated popular polls at the time showed that the great majority of the American people were against Franco and favored permitting the Loyalist Government to purchase arms in this country, as was its legal right under international law, and as the Communist Party urged. Yet the Roosevelt government violated

the will of the American people, applied the arms embargo, and helped Hitler, Mussolini and their stooge Franco toward their fateful victory.

In the case of China, too, the American people have always, with virtual unanimity, favored helping the nationalist forces, as the Communist Party proposed; but Roosevelt has nevertheless continued to furnish Japan with the munitions without which it could not have carried on its invasion of China.

Similarly, in the matter of the international peace front proposed by the Soviet Union to check aggression, there can be no doubt that the American people, like those of every other capitalist country, were in favor of it and would have backed it. But again Roosevelt successfully violated the people's will, and helped defeat this historic plan, with the present war as its tragic result.

And as for the financial side of Roosevelt's war policy, that is, making the masses carry the economic burden of the war, unquestionably the great masses of our people favor the Communist Party's program of placing the war costs upon the rich. If the Roosevelt Administration has been able to involve the country in the war in spite of the people's will for peace, it has been by systematically violating their peace mandate, by deluding them with an unprecedented deluge of lying propaganda that makes war policies look like peace policies, and by utilizing faithless reformist trade union, farm organization and "liberal" leaders to betray their followers into the hands of the imperialist warmongers.

Earl Browder led the Communist Party's fight to prevent this historic betrayal of the American people by the Wall Street-Roosevelt Administration and its many misleaders in the ranks of the masses. For this true service to our people Browder is thrown into jail for four years—and upon such a flimsy pretext as to make every honest non-Communist blush with shame.

Browder's able fight was a thorn in the side of the warmakers. It made much more difficult their work of confusing the people and forcing them into the war. This militant champion of peace had to be gotten out of the way. Moreover, inasmuch as the present war can bring only hardship, misery and tyranny to the American people and as the mass resentment is bound to grow against the men who are responsible for dragging them into it, the warmongers do not want the powerful voice of Browder to be heard when the people's anger begins to rise.

Browder opposed the first World War as a criminal imperialist slaughter and he was jailed for this offense against imperialism. But, long since, the American people have come to understand that the war was a useless one, that they were tricked into it. And already they know that the present war is not their war and they want nothing to do with it. More and more the rising mass demand for the release of Browder will show the growing appreciation of the correctness of his and the Communist Party's position in condemning this war as being against the basic interests of the American people.