

## Guide to the Crisis

Earl Browder's new book brilliantly appraises the shifting forces in the American scene. The continuity of the Communist position. A review by Bruce Minton.

THE SECOND IMPERIALIST WAR, by Earl Browder. International Publishers. \$2.

**M**ARXISM, the science of guiding society in flux, seeks to release the forces of growth, to control and direct them for the benefit of the majority, for the liberation of the working class. In his latest book, *The Second Imperialist War*, Earl Browder applies this science specifically to the United States, bringing profound understanding to the solution of tasks arising out of material conditions. As Browder interprets and explains, Marxism is revealed as a weapon with which men are enabled to mold the world they live in to their own best advantage. Earl Browder, like Stalin and Dimitroff, Thorez and Palme Dutt, writes always in the light of the experiences of the party he leads, as spokesman of a movement much larger than any one man. And in the Foreword to the latest compilation of his speeches, articles, and reports, the general secretary of the American Communist Party stresses that the collection "is the product of closest collaboration among the whole leadership of the Communist Party of the United States, as well as among the brother parties of the Communist International."

*The Second Imperialist War* covers the period from March 1939 to May 1940. The few critics in the non-Marxist press who have discussed the book have expressed loud disdain for its approach and contents. Yet it is eminently safe to predict that this collection provides an analysis which future historians will be able to read without doubling up in derisive laughter—a quality lacking among so many contemporary commentators and so-called historians who proudly flaunt their ignorance and repudiation of Marxism.

### "INCONSISTENT?"

The future will judge Browder's interpretation for itself. Right now the fashionable and safe approach to *The Second Imperialist War* is to declare it "inconsistent," full of the shifts which, critics assert with bland insouciance, invalidate the Communist position. The charge is worth considering. What is "inconsistency"? Are American Communists without direction, devoid of stability?

Browder's book can be briefly summarized as follows: His speeches from March to August 1939 urge a Peace Front to resist fascist aggression and to prevent the horror of war from involving the whole world. At the same time, he condemns the betrayals of the people everywhere resulting from the Chamberlain policy of appeasement. The Roosevelt administration reinforced appeasement by refusing

to support democracy in Spain, by embargoing the loyalist government, and by subsequent recognition of the Franco fascist regime; by continuing aid to Japanese aggression against the Chinese people; and by sabotaging the building of an anti-fascist, anti-appeasement front of collective defense against war. From September 1939, when as a result of such policies war broke out in Europe, to May 1940, Mr. Browder no longer advocates collective security, but instead concentrates his attention on exposing the frantic attempts of the American ruling class to involve the United States in the war on the side of the Allies. He lays bare the imperialist character of the conflict, the fact that the struggle has as its purpose the redivision of the world. Though the people of America express a fixed determination not to be dragged into war, it is necessary to know the enemy. Mr. Browder explains—the patient explanation of the Communist—so that people shall understand. And until now, America has remained formally out of the war; the Communists, with Browder at their head, can claim proud credit for their contribution to the strong resistance by the people.

Wherein are the "inconsistencies" of which the critics complain? Before the imperialist war engulfed Europe, Communists fought to prevent it. Once war came, Communists perforce acknowledged the changed situation. With the outbreak of war, existing differences among ruling class groups became of second-



EARL BROWDER, Communist candidate for the presidency, discusses the critical issues facing the country in his new book, *"The Second Imperialist War."*

ary importance; the capitalists restored unity among themselves for the purpose of obtaining their main objective—to drag America into new imperialist adventures. And with war a terrible reality, the fight for collective security against war lacked content. To justify a corrupt war, which the imperialists were determined should be transformed into a united attack against the Soviet Union, would be to repudiate every end for which Communists have always struggled. The existence of war was itself evidence that the relationship of forces was no longer the same as it had been during the uneasy peace that antedated September 1939.

### SHIFTING FORCES

As Browder explains, Marxists must appraise the shifting forces, and adapt themselves to meet new situations. Each step that Communists take in their constant effort to meet the problems of an ever changing world "contradicts" the preceding position. "Far from wishing to hide these 'contradictions,' we would push them forward . . . as the highest lesson we have to teach—the cause of change, its technique, its timing. . . ." wrote Browder in the Foreword to *The People's Front*. In *The Second Imperialist War*, he again applies the dialectical method to the kaleidoscopic events of the past two years and thereby reveals "class relationships in all their nakedness—class struggle cutting through all the pretenses and sophistries of the bourgeoisie, the relations emerging, the real struggles developing, which will determine the fate of our country and of the world."

To be victorious, it is obvious that the strength of the foe must be considered. The initial strategy remains the same—to overcome opposition and so assure victory. But to achieve this, the approach must vary according to the moves of the adversary. The main strategy of the Communist Party is unaltered throughout these troubled times: to defend the gains already made under capitalism by the working class and its allies among farmers and the middle classes; to strive for peace, security, and a higher standard of living; to guide the advance toward socialism, no matter how confused this advance might still be in the minds of workers. But tactics shift, reflecting the movement of class forces. Rather than being guilty of the type of inconsistency which the critics are so anxious to magnify, *The Second Imperialist War* emphasizes the continuity of the Communist position, a continuity that can only be preserved by changing tactics. The change of tactics, made necessary by changing events, forwards the drive toward the fixed end. If this is inconsistent,

then a "consistent" party, having once decided its tactic, would continue to prosecute it no matter what new developments occurred in the nation and in the world, no matter if by such "consistency" the working class movement was betrayed, the struggle for liberation and socialism lost, and the end sacrificed for which the struggle had been waged in the first place.

Mr. Browder's brilliant analysis is tribute to the ability of the Communist Party to adjust its policies and actions to new conditions without losing sight of the goal. The critics see the parts, the Communists see the whole. The contents of *The Second Imperialist War*, all of which represent immediate response to events as they occurred—without benefit of hindsight—illustrate the capacity to meet and solve problems demanding prompt and lucid understanding; the direction that Communists must pursue is never obscured, never for a moment in doubt.

Marxism is the scientific instrument by which to win the future. Mr. Browder applies this science with profound skill. The party for which he speaks is not large. But it has direction and purpose. *The Second Imperialist War* adds to the growing, ever changing, ever consistent interpretation that serves as a guide for action. Mr. Browder clarifies the problems of a momentous epoch; he also prepares us for tomorrow. To fail to master this contribution by a great leader is to retard the struggle against war and hunger and fascist terror. Earl Browder has added to our knowledge and to our ability to go forward to a better world. **BRUCE MINTON.**

## American Negroes

THE NEGRO IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, by Herbert Aptheker. International Publishers. 15 cents.

WITH the publication of *The Negro in the American Revolution*, Herbert Aptheker gives us the third in his series of pamphlets on the Negro in American history. Like his two previous works, *The Negro in the Civil War* and *Negro Slave Revolts in the United States*, the new pamphlet is scholarly, well documented, the result of painstaking research. It is also very well written.

The theory of man's legal and political equality, the philosophical basis of the American as well as other bourgeois and bourgeois-democratic revolutions, had its impact also upon the Negroes in the Thirteen Colonies. Because they desired America's freedom and their own, the slaves and free Negroes rushed into every branch of the service. Crispus Attucks, Negro dockhand, a member of the Sons of Liberty, was the revolution's earliest martyr, the first to die in the Boston massacre. Negroes were seamen and pilots in the infant navy. They were at Lexington and Concord when the colonists fired the shot heard round the world. They froze at Valley Forge. They fought in great numbers at Bunker Hill. They helped Ethan Allen capture Fort Ticonderoga. They served at Saratoga and

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