

FOREWORD

THIS BOOK is concerned with the problems of war—the conditions of victory for the United Nations, and the problems of post-war reconstruction of the world, as these are necessarily involved in the winning of victory.

What good reason is there for “another book” on the war? There is already an abundant supply of war books, most of them threshing over the same straw, with merely differing motions of the flail. If “another book” is to justify itself to more than a specialized group, it must contribute something new to the material of the discussion or it must develop a point of view which cannot be ignored in any soundly-based judgment on the war.

This book justifies itself for the general reader under the latter head, as a systematic presentation of the point of view of the Communist Party of the United States.

Why should the general reader be interested in the point of view of American Communists, who constitute a very small minority of the American people?

The answer to this question is simple. American Communists are relatively a small minority party, but communism and its relation to current public questions play a decisive role, in one way or another, in public thought and debate. One's knowledge, opinion, and judgment about communism (and the Communists), determine how one

receives Hitler's propaganda, and affect very seriously one's stand on the most important and critical questions of the war. It has therefore become a duty, a responsibility, on the part of each member of the "general public," to inform himself about the Communist point of view. In wartime, more than any other, it is highly dangerous to base one's thinking upon preconceived ideas and misinformation.

In the *New York Times Magazine* of April 12, 1942, there is an article by Joseph E. Davies, former United States Ambassador to the Soviet Union, entitled: "Is Communism a Menace to Us?" Mr. Davies explains why he considered it important to write on this subject:

1. "We are engaged in a desperate war. Our situation is dangerous in the extreme."
2. "The objective constantly pressed home by Hitler's propaganda offensive was that because of the menace of the Reds, Hitler should be welcomed as the savior of Western civilization."
3. "There is so much misinformation and lack of knowledge" in the United States about communism that Mr. Davies found it necessary to deny at much length that "communism is a menace," because he found this idea "helps Hitler's cause, not ours."

But this idea which "helps Hitler's cause, not ours," is assiduously propagated throughout the United States, not only by Father Coughlin, the Christian Front, Father Curran, the German-American Bund, and similar individuals and groupings. This is also the particular and highly cultivated work of a special Congressional committee of the United States government, with a great apparatus of specialized servants trained to this work, and

paid out of the treasury of the United States—the committee headed by Martin Dies. And Congress, even this year, when our nation is officially at war against Hitler and his Japanese and other satellites, has again approved the work of Martin Dies in propagating the idea which "helps Hitler's cause, not ours."

This war is not "for or against" communism. It is Hitler's propaganda purpose to raise this issue in order to create confusion among his enemies. But that which will be destroyed, if Hitler and his Axis win, is not communism but the right of all nations to determine their own destiny, including that of the United States—it will be all civilization that falls. When Hitler and his thugs are crushed, it will not be communism that wins, but the right of every nation to determine for itself whether it shall be capitalist or communist or socialist or something else not yet labeled—it will be democracy that has won.

Any sane citizen, capitalist or otherwise, in the United States must understand this simple issue. Only the obsessed, the unbalanced, can seriously believe that this is a war between communism and anti-communism. But if one does not even know what the Communists really stand for, one is disarmed before this Hitler propaganda.

It is ignorance alone which makes it possible for a Martin Dies, a Father Coughlin, Laura Ingalls, Winrod, Elizabeth Dilling, Father Curran, *et al*, to argue that communism is the issue in this war; that we must fear a victory for our side because the Soviet Union is a member of the United Nations, and thus to sabotage our war effort. If the public were informed, such Hitlerist propaganda would not dare show its face in public places.

Thus it is clear that the issues of war, of life or death for our nation, are inextricably bound up with judgments

upon the general merits of communism, upon the Soviet Union as a great nation led by Communists, and upon those Americans who have organized the Communist Party.

No one can possibly think straight about any problem involving a judgment on communism if he has failed to give at least a minimum of attention to what the Communists themselves have to say. This book is an effort to provide an authoritative presentation of that point of view in relation to the war and post-war problems, written first of all with the "general public" in mind. By "general public" I mean those thinking individuals in all classes of the population whose collective judgments combine under a democratic order to shape governmental policy.

"Misinformation and lack of knowledge" about the Communists has already proved itself highly dangerous to American national interests. The Hitler-Dies propaganda about the "menace of communism" had been so successful in the United States that, in the middle of 1941, our nation was almost completely in the dark as to the true situation in the world. Americans believed things about the most vital questions of the war, things which have already been proved to have been fantastically false. As a nation we Americans did not know the most important things about the dangerous world in which we lived. How, then, could we possibly have had a correct policy to direct our course through this dangerous world?

When Hitler invaded the Soviet Union without warning on June 22, 1941, the highest military authorities of our country joined with an almost unanimous press to predict that the Red Army would be completely destroyed within a few weeks, or months at most; that the Soviet government would quickly disintegrate from within; that soon Hitler would occupy as conqueror the most coveted

territories, and would set up a puppet government in the rest of Russia. What American opinion had not expected in Western Europe, it did expect in the Soviet Union; but in both cases American opinion was flagrantly and completely wrong. Hitler conquered Western Europe in a few weeks, but in the Soviet Union he came up against the first serious resistance, was finally halted and thrown back on the defensive, losing enormously of men and materials, and was deprived at long last of the myth of invincibility. To the American nation, due to "misinformation and lack of knowledge," all this came as the most profound surprise, as something entirely contrary to all their previous "education," something inexplicable and miraculous. Americans as a nation had been living in a world of fantasies; we simply did not know the real world.

Everyone knows today that this is true. But how many have pondered upon the deeper meanings of this gigantic fact of world history, which changes the whole perspective of our own future as a nation? And how many have revised their old prejudices and habits of thought which had their foundations in that which is now demonstrated to have been wholly false?

Americans had become so habituated to an unconditional confidence in illusions and falsehoods that we could not see the reality anywhere. "Remember Pearl Harbor" is a good slogan, but most persons are not yet clear what they should remember about Pearl Harbor. The first thing that should be remembered is that the disaster of Pearl Harbor is a monument to the intellectual blindness of our nation—a self-imposed blindness, for we were insisting that we could see what our prejudices called on us to see, and we were denying the evidence of our own eyes when it went counter to our prejudices. Anyone who called

attention to reality was denounced as a "communist," a "menace" to be suppressed, a subject for investigation by the Dies Committee. We paid the price for our blindness and stupidity with our dead at Pearl Harbor.

Think back for a moment! It is less than three years ago that a very highly paid newspaper columnist, who boasts of being a "red baiter," cleverly called the attention of employers to the fact that some of their stenographers were boycotting Japanese silk, refusing to wear silk stockings and wearing cotton instead. "Beware," cried this columnist, "those who wear cotton stockings are Reds. They will betray your secrets to the enemy. Discharge all stenographers who refuse to wear silk stockings." And employers did exactly that, enough of them to spread a terror of being blacklisted, and breaking down the boycott of Japanese silk. And Japan, as a result, got more shiploads of scrap iron to make bombs to drop on Pearl Harbor.

Now the United States is engaged in a life-and-death war with Germany, Italy, Japan, and their satellites. At the eleventh hour, the United States, through the leadership of President Roosevelt, has taken the initiative to bring together the United Nations, at the head of which stands the Anglo-Soviet-American alliance. At last we have a policy which, when carried through energetically, gives promise of ending the lurid career of Hitler & Co.

Are we able and prepared to carry out our proclaimed policy? There are grave dangers that again our country will be diverted from the path of victory. That is so, because as a nation we still persist in the prejudices which brought to the world its present disasters.

This book is an effort to help break down those ancient prejudices and the misinformation which have been utilized by Hitler as his main "secret weapon" for conquest.

It may not be easy for the "general reader," that typical representative of the "general public," to bring himself to read this book, or if he reads it to weigh it with an open mind. In the first place, he has been thoroughly warned that the author is a "criminal," just released from the penitentiary, a man whose word cannot be trusted. Not long ago, the very eminent Mr. Mark Sullivan, for example, considered it necessary to warn his readers that "Earl Browder is a liar." Since the "general reader" has no means of independent judgment on this question, I can only appeal to his open-mindedness, ask him to judge the book on its merits as he finds them, checking its arguments against his own experience and common sense.

I will not, in this book, waste the reader's time and my own by dealing with my "terrible crime" which was supposed to discredit my own and my party's words and work. The only defense I need call up for the benefit of my "general reader" is a simple quotation from the brief to the Supreme Court, signed by the then Solicitor General Biddle, who has proved himself one of the most blind dupes of the "anti-communist" campaign. In order to uphold my conviction and sentence before the Supreme Court, the prosecution found it necessary to place its case entirely upon technical grounds, to classify the "crime" as one of those "acts not in themselves wrong," to admit that it "did not involve moral turpitude," "it was not a common-law crime; it does not injure the one to whom it is exhibited; and it does not directly injure the Government"; it "must be construed as having no implication of evil purpose." * Since the government itself—through the pen of Mr. Biddle—before the highest tribunal, at the moment

* See Document No. 287, *In the Supreme Court of the United States*, October Term, 1940, pp. 13-14.

it was most determined to send me to prison, conceded that it had no charges of evil purpose or moral turpitude against me, that is all I require before the "general public" to refute any attacks that have been directed against my personal character.

Upon my release from Atlanta Penitentiary on May 16, on commutation of sentence by President Roosevelt "in the interests of national unity" (an unconditional commutation), I was approached by a well-known publishing house with an attractive proposal to write a book for them to publish. Since I already had the present book in mind, I welcomed their proposal, hoping under such respectable auspices to reach a new and even wider audience. To my disappointment, I found that the kind of book they wanted was a sort of "Prison Memoirs of a Noted Criminal," and they seemed really frightened by the idea of publishing a serious political discussion by myself. Their audience was, they said, interested only in personalities. Since their conception was not in character for me, I turned again to my old reliable house, International Publishers. It is my hope to prove through this book that such a judgment on the American reading public is wrong. I believe that the American public is interested in something deeper than personalities. I am certain that this American public is interested today as never before in principles and policies. I expect to see this interest more and more working to break down all prejudice and to reach the hidden truth. If this book helps along in this great cause of our common humanity it is thereby sufficiently justified.

EARL BROWDER

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