

## INTRODUCTION

*by Robert Minor*

THIS book is an estimate of the present war and of the need for winning it as seen in the autumn of 1942 by the foremost leader of the Communist Party.

It is a war in which the issue is not communism but the survival of the nation. The reader's agreement or disagreement with Communist views in general is not the measure of the worth of this book to him. The measure is to be found rather in the clarity of the book's reasoning, the self-proving validity of its proposals and the power of its call to all men and women and youth to fight as men have never fought before in order that this America that we love shall not be destroyed.

For many years Earl Browder has been an exponent of a definite line of foreign policy. On this subject he has probably made more public addresses, and made them in more cities of the United States, than any other man, and to larger audiences than usually listen to political leaders of lesser rank than the Presidency—an office for which he has twice been the candidate of his party. His spoken and printed words on the foreign policy of the United States have become the currency of speech from Alaska to the Argentine republic, and have been made into popular slogans not only in English but also in the Portuguese and Spanish of Latin America. In China his opinions on inter-

national relations—written and spoken in China and here at home about China—are quoted and respected as the words of a friend of unchanging loyalty.

Every American of normal mind and loyalty confesses now that the national independence and freedom of the United States, yes, the very continuation of its life as a nation, depends upon our participation in a coalition that will make us capable of crushing the Hitler-Japanese axis. Such a coalition now exists under the title of the United Nations and is committed to the war for world freedom. Among the first of all Americans, and, I assert, not less consistent than any in pointing out this necessity, was the author of this book. Every word and act of Browder for the past eight years has accorded with his advocacy of a foreign policy of coalition of democratic states to preserve the world's peace as long as there might be such a possibility and to crush and exterminate the international fascist reptile when peace could no longer be preserved. As early as 1934, when the Axis menace began to be manifest in the preparations of Nazi Germany for European war and in the aggression of fascist Italy against Ethiopia, Browder called for concerted effort to nip the coming world war in the bud, saying: "Fascism can be defeated only if *all* who suffer from it rouse themselves *now* to unhesitating, energetic united *action against fascism and war.*"\*

Throughout 1934, 1935 and 1936 Browder conducted a brilliant campaign for action of the United States in concert with England, France, and the Soviet Union to apply sanctions for the protection of Ethiopia. In June, 1936, when the Italian conquest of Ethiopia was being completed and new Japanese aggressions were developing against

\* *Communism in the United States*, p. 238, New York, 1934.

China, while the Hitler-Mussolini "insurrection" was to begin in Spain in three weeks, Browder warned that "the pack led by Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese militarists are getting ready to tear down civilization itself," and that the United States was by historic inevitability included amongst the peoples against whom they would direct "their mad attempt to perpetuate their rule and conquer the world." To circumvent the disaster Browder demanded "*one united international policy,*" around which should be rallied "the growing armies of progress and peace."\*

To this he added: "It requires the recognition of the role of the Soviet Union, and full utilization of this great power."† He sought American collaboration with the Soviet Union not only on the ground of that country's political and historic capacity for friendship with America, but to *utilize* "this great power" to *strengthen the United States*. This was something new. For twenty years Communists and the non-Communist trade unionists had defended the Soviet Union as a young socialist state that by its historic nature deserved their united protection; and indeed the far-from-Communist trade unions of Great Britain had by their threat of action in 1920 prevented a British war against the Soviet Union. But here was a reverse situation: The young socialist state had matured and had itself grown strong enough to become a powerful protection for democracy throughout the world.

It is now easy to see the havoc that Lindbergh wrought for Hitler with propaganda on the "weakness" and "inefficiency" of the Soviet Union. Now, since the Lindbergh theory has been destroyed on the field of battle and super-

\* *The People's Front*, p. 70, New York, 1938.

† Report to Ninth National Convention, *Ibid.*, p. 20.

ceded by General MacArthur's version that "the hopes of civilization rest on the worthy banners of the courageous Russian Army," it is easier to understand the proposal of a coalition of United Nations in which the United States and the Soviet Union furnish two great and unshakable foundation stones. President Roosevelt's famous Chicago speech in the autumn of 1937 for the "quarantine of the aggressors," Browder supported as the "only course that can save the world from a terrible catastrophe." The persistent call of Browder and the Communist Party—"The fascist war-makers can be stopped—they must be stopped—that is the task of all progressive humanity"\*—rang through the years of the Axis advance toward the twin crimes of June 22 and December 7, 1941. But for the printed record it would be almost incredible that Browder nearly four years in advance gave the name and place of the Japanese blow at Pearl Harbor, saying that a continuation of our ruinous policies would "surely convince the arrogant militarists of Tokyo that now is the time for them to take over the Philippines, Hawaii, Guam, and Alaska, as guarantees against the future, when the United States *might dare.*" †

And do we all now see the clear signs that Franco Spain is Hitler's lever with which to open his way to South America? Is it not ironical that Browder has only recently emerged from a prison term to which he was sentenced for "using" a perfectly authentic passport for a visit to Spain that implemented his warning that "a Franco Spain, puppet of Hitler and Mussolini, is one of the keys to fascist conquest of our Southern neighbors, and the encirclement

\* *Ibid.*, p. 334.

† *New Republic*, February 2, 1938.

of the United States"? \* We are glad that the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the United States is a man who has consistently called upon the peoples of Latin America, not only now but also in the Munich days, to insist upon the building of "an impregnable wall against Nazi aggressions in the Western Hemisphere."

A continuance of the Lindbergh theory persists in the assertion that for a time there was "an alliance between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany." Upon the basis of this lie the further false claim is made that the American Communists in condemning both sides of the war as imperialist in the months from September, 1939, to June, 1941, were not consistent enemies of Hitler. We reply:

First: If one could really debase one's mind to the point of imagining the great Red Army of Soviet Russia as an ally of Nazi Germany, is it not clear that two such mighty powers would long ago have conquered all the world with ease? No person could believe such an "alliance" ever existed unless he believed the Lindbergh lie that the Soviet Union was "weak." That basic lie formed the cornerstone of the Munich Pact that already has cost the world some ten million lives and brought the enslavement of Continental Europe, and it is now undergoing an underground revival that may cost the national lives of Great Britain and Eire and throw the war in full force across the narrow tropical Atlantic into Brazil and Argentina by inducing the American and British governments not to open the second front now while the decisive struggle is being fought for Continental Europe.

Second: When in the fateful days of August, 1939, the French and British governments rejected the Soviet

\* *Fighting for Peace*, p. 196, New York, 1939.



Union's proposals for military action against Germany by the Red Army with a right-of-way through Poland and the Baltic states, Earl Browder was neither inconsistent nor mistaken in his judgment in saying this refusal of the "Munich" governments of London and Paris proved them incapable of organizing the collective defense of Europe; his judgment was confirmed when the then governments of Paris and London, after formal declaration of war in September, 1939, deserted Poland and for seven months made no war but strove only to "switch the war" to a war of Germany against the Soviet Union. Only those will say that Browder was inconsistent who still do not understand Munich—even now when the life of the United States may be lost by another failure to fight on the continent of Europe now when the decision is being made.

But may not this consistency be a mere accident and due to his seeking the welfare of a foreign state with which our own happens momentarily to coincide?

To which the simple reply is that a foreign policy is always a policy of choosing friends and identifying enemies among foreign states. The test is whether we have chosen friends capable of fighting effectively on the same side with us against enemies whose identity we foresaw; or whether, on the contrary, we are shown to have risked the life of our country on a policy of estranging our friends and appeasing our enemies. A sadly large number of Browder's critics of today are men who wanted to stake the life of the United States on the "peace in our time" that was brought back by Mr. Chamberlain from Munich. They asked our country to rely for its safety upon Hitler's hegemony over Europe, that of the Japanese over Asia, based upon the treaty of Germany, Italy, France and Great Britain for the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia—

a treaty directed against the Soviet Union and China, and, by historic logic, inevitably against the United States.

It has always been the fate of democrats, in choosing to align their countries with neighbors recently revitalized by revolutionary experience as against reactionary states, to be accused of "subordinating the interest of their country to that of a foreign power." The classic example is Jefferson, who rightly held that America's national interest lay in friendly co-operation with the new French Republic that arose in 1792. The profound faith of the young Lafayette in the republican cause of Washington and Jefferson was not a false guide when it led him to believe that France could find her best friend in the American republic; and in reaching this opinion Lafayette was all the more a French patriot. It is strangely interesting to hear persons who gloried in Chamberlain's selling of Czechoslovakia to Hitler, questioning the patriotism of Earl Browder because he favored rapprochement with Russia.

A section of the press, relying on its readers' lack of knowledge of labor history, nourishes a fantasy to the effect that the Communist Party is a "creation of a foreign state," to-wit, of the Soviet Union. But serious students have no excuse for being ignorant of the fact that there were Communists in the United States long before there were Communists in Russia; that a great American \* had a creative share with Marx and Engels in the development of the communist world-outlook and that his work was published at the expense of the United States by Congressional appropriation; that the most prominent Communist leaders were commissioned by Lincoln as high officers of the United States Army and fought with distinction in our Civil War a quarter of a century before there

\* Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881), author of *Ancient Society*.

had come into existence in Russia any Communist movement at all. Earl Browder joined the Socialist Party (the left wing of which later became the Communist Party) ten years before there existed a Soviet Union; and if the occurrence of the Bolshevik revolution immensely stimulated his thought the Communist Party is nevertheless no more a creation of a "foreign state" than Thomas Jefferson's Democratic Party was the creation of the French Assembly, nor the Republican Party of Lincoln the creation of any of the European revolutions of 1848 by which Lincoln was so deeply stirred.

The undoubted fact that Earl Browder and the Communists of 1914-1918 bitterly opposed the participation of our country in the first World War is sometimes offered as evidence to disqualify the Communists as judges of this war. In fact it is a source of prestige of the Communist Party among the most patriotic masses of the people. The time has passed when wars can be fought in disregard of the question of "right or wrong." The *New York Daily News*, a brazen supporter of appeasement of Hitler, placed the United States in the *wrong* in the period of the development toward war with Germany and Japan. After the formal declaration of war that followed the attack of December 7, 1941, this newspaper, ostensibly revising its position, published an editorial that bore as its title the famous slogan of Stephen Decatur: "Our country! In its intercourse with foreign nations may she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong." The slogan, the paper announced, would be carried daily at its masthead "until further notice." But resentment piled up. The slogan could only mean that this country is *wrong* in its war. The paper suppressed the slogan.

The historic toast of Stephen Decatur was completely valid in its time. This young revolutionary republic, the

baby giant of world democracy, in its time, could only be *right*. The young democracy was supported by all enlightened men; "our country" was "in the right" regardless of the "right or wrong" of a particular quarrel. All that impeded or endangered what Karl Marx later called "the only popular government in the world" stood athwart the path of progress and had to be cast aside.

But the era of Stephen Decatur came to its end. On a January day of 1848, when the young Congressman Lincoln from Illinois pulled his ungainly legs from under a desk in the Congress and arose to denounce the war being then conducted by his own country against Mexico, the era of Stephen Decatur faded into the era of Abraham Lincoln. It was the first time an American had ever questioned from the point of view of historic progress the *justness* of a war conducted by his own country. Against Lincoln in Congress raged the oratory of "right-or-wrong"—and most eloquently from the mouth of Senator Jefferson Davis of Alabama. Against Lincoln, Davis raised Lincoln's own slogan of the people's "right to rise up and shake off the existing government, and form a new one that suits them better."

But the Lincoln who had asserted the right of the people to ask "is this a just war?"—the same Lincoln who asserted the right "to dismember or overthrow" this or any government as a revolutionary right *belonging solely to the patriotic forces of human progress*—was the Lincoln who destroyed with fire and sword those who invoked the right on behalf of retrogression and slavery.

Wars can never again be won "right or wrong."

This book is a voice that says about the present war what Lincoln said about the war of 1861: that it is a *just* war, worthy of all the blood and tears that men and women

can give to win it; that it is a war of survival, that if we do not win it, not only our rights, our prosperity, our happiness will disappear, but the very life of the nation itself will vanish in oblivion, that government of the people will "perish from the earth."

This book is no mere homily in the ethics of the war. In it is the fierce realism of the call of the Great French Revolution: "*La patrie est en danger!* That this American fatherland unless fiercely fought for will be lost, its people enslaved to foreign conquerors, and its very economic structure dismantled like that of France is the assertion of the spokesman for a political party that lives no soft life.

Earl Browder reflects the realities of history in calling for vast and fearless adjustments necessary to win the war.

To British soldiers who sing "There Will Always Be an England," history replies: "Not necessarily, but only as a result of bold and skillful war!" To an America that speaks of its wealth and steel and machinery and gold and manpower, history replies: "That is exactly why you will be the surest struck down by the robber." For Americans and Englishmen who may continue permitting the greatest battles of all time to be fought without throwing our full weight into the center of decisive conflict, history has no promise that it did not give to Carthage.

It is *that* kind of a war.

To India and Chile and Argentina history reads the story of China and of the Philippines. To all nations of the world it says the fate of all mankind depends upon this People's War.

To the American labor movement, a man of wide prestige calls for that contribution that can come from no other source and which must be given without stint of blood or sweat—or even of fearless thinking.