

Browder Preaches Illusion

By Milton Howard

IN his articles running currently in the *New Republic*, Earl Browder's argument for American-Soviet friendship is not only directed to the big capitalists; it is also based on their upper class viewpoint.

It is like one member of the upper class arguing with another. His argument amounts to this, in effect: "This line will be profitable for us."

Now it is one thing for a member of the upper class to argue this way; it is favorable for progress that this argument should be made by liberal-minded capitalists. But it is quite another thing when an argument based on capitalist interests is offered to the working class by one who who pretends to be arguing on a workingclass basis.

A liberal capitalist arguing for American-Soviet friendship with his imperialist colleagues who scheme for war clearly aids peace; he is moving away from reaction.

But a pretended working class figure offering the same arguments as a basis of working class policy has moved over to the other class. He is, in fact, doing great harm to the cause of peace.

TO cite but one instance: his false estimate of the Truman government's present course (which he considers non-aggressive and non-imperialist) is based on a wholly false estimate of a fundamental Marxist question — the relations between a Socialist state and the surrounding capitalist states.

Here is the way he puts it:

"There is an idea widespread among the most diverse political circles, Right and Left, that the central difficulty in establishing a durable peace arises from the fact that the Soviet Union has a socialist system of economy whereas the United States is a capitalist nation, and that neither country entertains any serious thought of changing its system. It is assumed that the two systems are incompatible and that they cannot live in peace together in the same world, and that from this basic difference arises the difficulty in peace making."

"I challenge this whole concept, whether it is expressed in terms of the Right or Left, whether it is given a Tory or a Marxist coloration." (*New Republic*, Aug. 5.)

This passage is typical Browder distortion, both of fact and of theory, with typical pitfalls for the unwary, especially for Americans who ardently desire to oppose the policy of anti-Soviet gang-up now going on.

First, as a matter of fact, the Communist Party does not, never has, and never will preach the inevitability of an American-Soviet war. Only the pro-fascists like Bullitt, Luce, Hearst and Dorothy Thompson preach such a "theory." The fascists want such a war; they therefore serve up vulgar arguments about the differences between Socialism and "western democracy" (meaning imperialist capitalism,) which make such a war "inevitable."

The Communist movement, on the other hand, bases its entire theory and practice on the conception that such a war would be criminal, anti-national, anti-American in the truest sense, and must be resolutely opposed by the democratic groups in the nation.

Browder misrepresents the facts about Communist Party practice, as any reading of the Party press shows.

BUT even worse, Browder misrepresents the Communist theory concerning the contradictions between a Socialist state and the capitalist world.

He poses a false dilemma for public opinion. He argues: Either one must accept the theory of the irreconcilable contradiction between the Soviet Union's socialism and capitalism in the United States in which case one must view a war as inevitable—

Or, one must reject the idea of such a socialist-capitalist contradiction altogether, or else consider that its influence is unimportant in current international politics. For only by taking such a view can one fight in a practical manner for American-Soviet peace.

The heart and soul of Marxist thinking, however, is that one must reject both of these ideas as false. The either-or posed by Browder is a hoax. For the truth is that there is an irreconcilable contradiction between socialism in the Soviet Union and capitalism in the United States, and there is also nothing whatsoever in this contradiction that makes war between them inevitable.

The capitalist-socialist contradiction, and the working class fight for peace, exist and function side by side, simultaneously. The warning against capitalist encirclement and the tenacious fight for world peace are twin cornerstones of Soviet policy, for example.

The Browderite fallacy lies in the fact that he omits entirely from his analysis the decisive effect which working class action can have on history.

He omits the decisive conception that it must be the working class that will decide whether the so-

cialist-capitalist contradiction will be "solved" by Wall Street or by the working class — democratic forces.

Neither the Wall Street "solution"—which would be an effort to wipe out the Soviet Union—nor the working class solution (which would be the creation of a new government in the United States) is inevitable.

Neither an imperialist war nor a peoples peace is inevitable. Either could be the result of the evolution of the rising crisis within the capitalist system.

Either could result from the socialist - capitalist contradiction, depending upon what the American people do.

Imperialist war no more rises inevitably out of the socialist-capitalist contradiction than fascism arises inevitably out of the capital-labor class struggle. It is inevitable that the owning class will try both war and fascism as the way to serve their interests; but it is not inevitable that they shall succeed in their efforts. The counter-action of the people determines that.

Browder "answers" Bullitt in a non-working class way. He really accepts the Bullitt thesis that the socialist - capitalist contradiction makes war inevitable; to avert such a war, he implies that we must drop the Marxist idea of the socialist - capitalist contradiction.

But in doing so, he makes it all the easier for the Bullitts to do their work. For the existence of a socialist-capitalist contradiction is clear to everyone. It is the contradiction between a higher social system, Socialism, and an out-dated, inefficient, and inhuman capitalist system which cannot use the productive machinery for the common good. Capitalism produces wars, crises on an ever greater scale.

WILL there be a reactionary or a progressive solution to the socialist-capitalist contradiction? That depends not upon the Bullitts, nor upon Browder's persuading Wall Street that it pays to be peaceful. It depends on the kind of political line-up that is created in the United States by the action of the working class and its democratic allies.

The heart of Browderism is that it transfers the solution of political questions away from the arena of mass political action to the private council halls of the ruling class. It is a philosophy of trusting the rich, of persuading the imperialist trusts to be non-imperialists. That is what is called preaching illusion. Today that is worth much to the schemers of world domination.