

BROWDER: RENEGADE'S ROAD

By A. B. MAGIL

“BROWDER ACCUSES COMMUNIST CHIEFS OF FRAMEUP AND SLANDER.” “BROWDER SAYS COMMUNISTS FRAMED HIM, FORCING HIM TO GET A CAPITALISTIC JOB.” These headlines are from recent issues of the New York *World-Telegram*, Scripps-Howard newspaper, and the New York *Times*. They have a familiar ring. Substitute “Trotsky” for “Browder” and they are almost word for word the headlines you read eight or nine years ago during the Moscow trials. They emphasize how swift is the process of political degeneration once the abandonment of Marxist principles itself becomes a principle. The reactionary press has a keen nose for this sort of thing—keener than some progressives. And in the *World-Telegram* it is that minor preacher of the Goebbels gospel, Frederick Woltman, who wields the smear brush in behalf of the expelled former head of the Communist Party of the USA.

It is important to understand the role which Earl Browder is playing today and the meaning of the ideas he expounds. They must be understood in order to be fought. For Browder and Browderism find defenders in the reactionary press only because they are themselves the defenders of reaction. What is involved here is no “conflict of personalities” or doctrinal “hair-splitting.” The history of similar struggles in the international Marxist movement shows that the issues that divide Browder and the Communists concern the fate of millions. There would be no special need to deal with Browder and Browderism did they appear openly in their true colors. But just as Browder assumes the guise of injured innocence and professes to champion decisions and policies which he bitterly opposed, so his ideas—the ideas of repulsive monopoly capitalism—take on seductive garb and are sometimes embraced even by those who believe they have rejected Browderism.

Browder has distributed through the mails a printed appeal to the members of the Communist Party. This appeal actually was sent to a list of names which included members and non-members. It opens with a lie that is only one small part of a glittering structure of falsehood. Browder states that his expulsion by the Communist Party's National

Committee leaves him “the recourse only of appealing to the Party membership.” He knows that under the Party's constitution he still has the recourse of appealing to its national convention. He chooses instead to “appeal” to members and sympathizers—and to the capitalist press—only for the purpose of sowing political confusion and organizing a factional struggle against the Communist Party. That he is actually aiming to build a faction is further evident from the fact that he appeals for funds to finance his disruptive work.

Of course this public attack on the Party and its leadership is made in behalf of “the right of every rank-and-file member to raise his voice in criticism.” Every renegade from the Communist movement—Trotsky, Lovestone, Doriot, etc.—has sung that tune. It comes with particular irony from the lips of Browder. He who foisted his false, anti-Marxist theories on the Communist movement without permitting any dissent, who suppressed the letter of William Z. Foster criticizing those theories, is now metamorphosed into a simple rank-and-filer pleading for democracy and freedom of criticism!

Browder knows that the convention of the Communist Party last July was preceded by two months of the first truly democratic discussion the Party has held in years. He knows that he and his supporters were given full freedom to express their views. He knows that an overwhelming majority of the members rejected those views, which did not receive a single vote in the convention. And he also knows that it is an elementary Communist tenet, a root principle of democratic centralism, that, as Stalin points out in *Foundations of Leninism*, “after a discussion has been closed, after criticism has run its course and a decision has been made, unity of will and unity of action of all Party members become indispensable conditions without which Party unity and iron discipline in the Party are inconceivable.”

WHAT Browder actually demands is freedom to disrupt the Party's unity of will and action, freedom to overturn the decisions of the majority, freedom to spread within the Party and the working class his own perversions of Marxism which the membership re-

pu diated. This kind of “freedom” can only serve the interests of the capitalists. And Browder raises his demand at a time of world crisis when unity of the Communists is an indispensable condition for achieving the broader unity of the working class and its allies in the battle to save peace and democracy from the howling wolves of capitalist reaction.

Does Browder openly proclaim his hostility to the decisions of the convention at which he suffered such a stunning defeat? Perish the thought! He, the simple rank-and-filer, is laboring to rescue those decisions which have been “reversed by the leadership without consulting the Party.” Browder hams the part a bit, beats his chest a little too hard, but perhaps there are a few innocents who may mistake this writhing Iago for Othello.

Here is his “defense” of the convention decisions as he himself constructs it. The “central point” of the July convention resolution “could only be our estimate of the class and political groupings, and their political relationships within the country, their relationship to governmental policies at home and abroad and to the state power. Upon such an estimate every serious Party must base its strategy and tactics. . . .” The strategy embodied in the resolution, Browder states, was—and he quotes—“to weld together and consolidate the broadest national coalition of all anti-fascist and democratic forces, including all supporters of Roosevelt's anti-Axis policies.” The tactic adopted to advance this strategy was, according to him—and he quotes again—“that the American people resolutely support every effort of the Truman Administration to carry forward the policies of the Roosevelt-labor-democratic coalition.” He then charges that “these two key decisions” affecting strategy and tactics “have been completely abandoned” and replaced by “the opposite strategy of breaking up the Roosevelt-labor-democratic coalition, dealing with the Truman Administration as the chief enemy instead of as the governmental expression of the coalition of which we are part and support.”

Let's examine these charges a little closer. It is significant that Browder does not discuss the convention's fundamental political approach which he him-