

THE CASE OF EARL BROWDER

By THE EDITORS

THE National Board of the Communist Party has voted unanimously to recommend to its National Committee the expulsion of Earl Browder. The board's resolution, on which the National Committee will probably have acted by the time this issue of NEW MASSES is off the press, states the reasons for this vote. It is important to understand these reasons.

The Communist Party is a voluntary association. It consists of people who band together because they agree with its principles and want to achieve its purposes. Under the Party's constitution only such persons are eligible for membership. The constitution also provides that any eligible person "who accepts the aims, principles and program of the Party as determined by its constitution and conventions," belongs to one of its clubs and participates in its practical work, is to be considered a member. The last convention of the Communist Party in July 1945, rejected Browder's approach to national and international problems as a revision of Marxist-Leninist principles and removed him from leadership. This action was taken after a two-month discussion throughout the ranks of the Party during which Browder and his small number of adherents had every opportunity to present their views. Under the Party constitution and in keeping with historic Communist practice Browder was duty-bound to accept the majority decision and help carry it out. This he pledged to do at the convention.

Instead, after at first remaining aloof, he later passed, in the words of the National Board's resolution, "from being a passive oppositionist to an active opponent of the Party." The board resolution cites a number of examples of this active opposition. We shall here confine ourselves to one aspect.

Recently reports have appeared in the commercial press that Browder had gone into business, had set up an agency to provide economic analyses for businessmen and was publishing a weekly trade paper called *Distributors Guide*. We have seen several copies of this publication. It is the most curious "trade paper" that has ever come our way. Each issue consists of one or more articles by Earl Browder on such subjects as American imperialism, President Truman's message on the state of the Union, the

strike situation, the struggle in China, the ousting of De Gaulle, etc. These are *political* articles. All are a defense and elaboration of Browder's anti-Marxist theories. They are a continuation of the role which Browder sought to play as leader of the Communist Party—the role of adviser to the capitalists on how to preserve their system and make socialism "unnecessary." And they contain attacks on the Communists, who are usually lumped with the reactionaries in such phrases as "cynics of both right and left."

It is clear that this so-called trade paper is a fraud. *The real business Browder is engaged in is the publication of factional political propaganda directed against the program of the Communist Party and serving the interests of American imperialism.*

For example, the whole of the January 19 issue of the paper is devoted to an article on what Browder calls "a new pattern of imperialism" as expressed in American foreign policy. Browder announces a great discovery: that American imperialism, as a result of its enhanced economic position, is seeking to beat down still further its already-weakened British rival by converting the latter's colonies into American commercial colonies. Browder notes the fact that this "new pattern" was already described by Lenin in his *Imperialism* which cited the relationship of Argentina and Portugal to Britain as examples of "countries which, formally, are politically independent, but which are, in fact, enmeshed in the net of financial and diplomatic dependence." But what Browder omits mentioning is that whereas Lenin characterized this pattern as reactionary, he, Browder, describes it as progressive; what Lenin branded as a form of imperialist oppression, Browder eulogizes as colonial liberation! (We regret we are unable to give you Browder's exact words since his publication forbids quotation except by special arrangement.)

THE full bankruptcy of Browder's position becomes clear when he tries to explain how it happened that at the San Francisco Conference, when the trusteeship proposal was discussed, the "liberator," US imperialism, sided with the colonial oppressor, Britain, against the goal of genuine liberation advocated

by the Soviet Union. Browder explains this abandonment of what he assures us is fundamental policy in terms of a single individual: the death of President Roosevelt and the resultant confusion. Concerning the subsequent "liberating" features of American policy: the use of American tanks, planes and guns against the Indonesian people, the brazen intervention in China on the pretext of disarming Japanese troops—an intervention curbed for the present not by the "progressiveness" of the American imperialists, but by the resistance of the Chinese Communists and other democratic forces and by the weight of Soviet influence in the Far East—concerning all this Browder remains understandably silent.

In the February 2 issue of his paper Browder writes with rapturous admiration of the statements on foreign policy in Truman's message on the state of the Union—the message in which the President reaffirmed his imperialist Navy Day speech. Browder also speaks glowingly of the domestic program in that message—carefully neglecting to mention the President's listing as the number one point in that program passage of anti-labor "cooling off" legislation. He describes FDR's pigmy successor as the authentic wearer of the Roosevelt mantle who has demonstrated his strength of leadership.

We have cited enough to indicate that while Browder's position may have something to commend it to those who seek liberal apologetics for imperialism, it has nothing in common with Marxism. It differs from previous efforts to dilute and revise Marxist principles in that it abandons even lip-service to the idea of socialism and frankly undertakes to patch up the predatory crisis-ridden monopoly capitalist system.

The National Board resolution reports that at a hearing given him in accordance with democratic procedure Browder refused to answer questions or reply to charges. It is clear that he has launched a struggle against the Communist Party, the most advanced sector of the progressive movement. One may deplore the fact that he is trampling on all that was best in his own past. But when a healthy organism develops a cancer, there should be no hesitation in applying surgery.