

— Browder's New Book

The Key to Postwar National Unity

By **GEORGE MORRIS**

In posing the problem of postwar national unity and the conditions desirable to labor under which strikes would be unnecessary, Harry Bridges stirred quite a discussion in the country. This is shown to be one of the very sensitive points in our postwar thinking.

Earl Browder examines this very question in his new book *Teheran—Our Path in War and Peace*, and he draws conclusions that are already influencing much thought in labor ranks.

In a special chapter "on labor unions in the national unity," Browder explains what is really meant by national unity. Those who depend on newspaper accounts to learn of Browder's views will be amazed at the power of distortion that the press possesses. It is those distortions that Lewis, the Trotskyists, Social Democrats and others like them, have made the most of in their campaign of incitement against Communists.

ON NATIONAL UNITY

Browder points out that national unity is not merely a formal under-

standing to cooperate. It involves a struggle to win the country for a policy under which such cooperation involving labor and capitalists, could work.

Browder says that "the key to the new features of labor's role in national unity that must develop in the postwar world lies in the new approach to the problem of raising wage standards." This is based on the fact that domestic purchasing power must be greatly increased if a market is to be maintained for the vastly increased productive power of America's industries. A high wage level, therefore, becomes a goal of national interest.

Browder points out that there is an actual possibility of winning decisive sections of the capitalist class for such a policy and every manifestation in that direction should be welcomed. As an example of the type of capitalist with whom labor can reach an understanding, Browder points to Eric Johnston, president of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce. He quotes extensively from Johnson's speeches and writings and cites his clear-cut invitation to labor to collaborate on a program

of full employment and maintenance of high production levels.

TEST SINCERITY

As to the ridiculous charge that he naively takes for granted an employer's word, Browder says:

"The only known way to test sincerity is the test of action. Let the labor movement accept Mr. Johnston's program and put it to the test. If it works, well and good. If not, the bluff will have been called and labor will at least be in a much better tactical and moral position than if it had unthinkingly followed PM and similar shallow minds."

And further along the same line:

"Of course, I cannot give any guarantee that labor unions will be accorded their proper place in postwar America. I cannot promise anyone with certainty there will not be a new 'open shop' and 'American Plan' drive to smash the labor unions after this war such as took place in 1919-1921. It will be the capitalists themselves, in the final analyses, who will make this decision. And if that happens labor must be prepared to defend itself. I am not a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, and his doctrine of non-resistance to evil will find no

serious converts in the ranks of labor."

But Browder goes on to point out that in its own interest labor should make clear that it does not desire postwar conflict.

"If a major class struggle in America is really inevitable after the war, to disrupt our hopes of peace and prosperity" Browder goes on, "let it be clearly established before the world that the responsibility does not rest with labor but with labor's enemies."

Browder draws a sharp distinction between a national unity that is based on high-sounding phrases and a national unity that is founded on an understanding and a program. He shows us how to distinguish between the receptive capitalist and the Sewell Avery type. He also points to those basic problems that must be solved under the agreed upon program.

In the light of Browder's conclusions, postwar national unity does not require labor to "give up" something. On the contrary, it is a condition under which labor receives definite guarantees that carry it further towards a better life and security.