

Earl Browder, Former U.S.

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By Jean R. Hailey

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Earl Russell Browder, 82, who was general secretary of the American Communist Party for 15 years and twice ran as a candidate for President of this country, died Wednesday in Princeton, N.J.

The headline creator of the 1930s and early 1940s died in relative obscurity at the home of a son, William, who is a mathematics professor at Princeton University.

Mr. Browder, who had been expelled from the American Communist Party in 1946 because he earlier had supported the policies of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, had suffered from a heart ailment for some time and had made his home in recent years with his son. He died in his sleep.

He had served two federal prison terms for clashes with the government, although neither term was ever linked to his activities as an avid Communist.

The first term came during World War I before Mr. Browder became a member of the Communist Party, although he had already as a young man shown leanings toward the left wing of Socialism.

The second term was served during World War II and efforts were made to blame its severity on his politics. The efforts died after Mr. Roosevelt, against whom Mr. Browder had run in the 1936 and 1940 presidential races, commuted his sentence.

But Mr. Roosevelt's action, which led Mr. Browder to pledge that his party would take a major place in the "great war effort" in order to increase national unity, eventually led also to Mr. Browder's downfall in his own party.

He remained on the Soviet government's payroll for three years after he was deposed as head of the American Communist Party, but the Soviets then decided to dispense with his services.

Mr. Browder, no longer a

Communist Leader, Dies

figure of importance to the Communists, still managed to have an effect on the American scene.

A composite picture of him and then veteran Sen. Millard E. Tydings (D-Md.), who was running for re-election in 1950, was held mainly responsible for Tydings' defeat.

A year later, following hearings in 1950 that had been headed by Tydings, Mr. Browder was put on trial for contempt of Congress but was acquitted by the judge hearing the case.

His last real brush with the government was in 1952, when he and his Russian-born wife were indicted on charges of making false statements on her citizenship application. The perjury indictment finally was dismissed in court in 1959.

Mr. Browder's beginnings belied the career that followed later. He was born in Topeka, Kan., one of 10 children in a family that had descended from settlers in Virginia in the 1680s. It was considered a "real American" family.

His father was a school teacher, but because of his father's ill health, Mr. Browder was compelled to quit school at the age of 9 and go to work as an errand boy. His parents continued to tutor him, but he gained most of his education later from reading books and taking correspondence courses.

By the age of 14, he was already a Socialist sympathizer. He became a book-keeper and then, with the advent of World War I, an outspoken opponent of the

draft.

As a result, Mr. Browder spent a year in Platte County jail in Missouri for resisting the draft and another two years in Leavenworth for conspiring to block the draft.

It was in prison, where Mr. Browder, once described as a "sweet-natured, almost wistful person," received from friends at the state library the books on economics that he requested.

The works of Marx and Engels, were made available to him, and he studied them by the hour. A week after he was paroled from Leavenworth in 1919, he joined the American Communist Party.

He plunged into the left-wing trade union movement and tied himself closely to its head, William Z. Foster. With Foster's encouragement, he traveled in Europe and especially in Russia, where he attended the Third Congress of the Communist International.

Mr. Browder spent two years in China, organizing the Communist movement there, and upon his return to this country became general secretary of the party here.

Mr. Browder built up Communist membership in this

country to almost quadruple its strength during his early years at the party helm.

He wrote prolifically and was available to speak every night of the week. Sometimes only a handful of persons were present to hear him, but he also could attract 25,000 people to Madison Square Garden.

When he accepted the Communist Party nomination for the presidency he said his party's platform "... alone, of all parties and platforms, gives the correct answer to all the most burning problems of the people ... The issue of the 1936 election is not a choice between Socialism and capitalism. It is a choice between progress and reaction, between democracy and the path towards Fascism."

Mr. Browder's campaign was stormy. He was locked out of a meeting hall in Tampa, Fla., and a later, open-air meeting was broken up by raiders. He was jailed in Terre Haute, Ind., on vagrancy charges when he attempted to speak there.

But he managed to run up 80,000 votes at election time.

He remained active and a figure of controversy during the next four years. In October, 1939, while he was a candidate for representative to Congress from New York, he was indicted by the federal government for passport fraud.

Harvard and Princeton universities immediately barred his scheduled speeches, but Yale University let him appear on its campus in the interest of free speech. Some students threatened to get out of hand and pelted him with vegetables, but were quelled.

Mr. Browder was convicted in January, 1940, of passport fraud. He was accused of using aliases in getting earlier passports and then denying it when he applied for a passport under his own name.

He was sentenced to four years in prison, but again was named Communist Party candidate for the

presidency. This time, he garnered only 47,000 votes.

After he had served 14 months of his term, President Roosevelt commuted his sentence. His Communist colleagues had worked unceasingly for his release.

The release reportedly was ordered because it was felt that Mr. Browder had been punished sufficiently, but it also was noted that the unusually long sentence had been imposed at a time when the American people were aroused because of the pact that had been signed by Stalin and Hitler.

Mr. Browder, who was always anti-Fascist but opposed to America entering the war at the time that he went to prison, came out of prison with a different view. By then the Germans had attacked Russia and he was solidly behind this country's war efforts.

He called for cooperation with capitalism in order to win the war and when he found opposition in his own party, formed the Commu-

nist Political Association to take its place.

In 1945, the group decided to go back to its American Communist Party identification, and Mr. Browder was out as general secretary. A year later the party expelled him, charging he had violated party discipline and had developed factional activity and had betrayed the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

Mr. Browder then went to Moscow where he was given a five-year contract as exclusive representative of all Soviet publishing houses in the United States. The Iron Curtain descended and his services were terminated abruptly three years later.

In 1950, Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy (R-Wis.) made his famous accusations that hundreds of Communists were working in the U.S. State Department.

One of McCarthy's chief targets was Owen Lattimore, an expert on the Far East but not an employee of the State Department. McCarthy, however, described him as chief architect of "U.S. policy in the Far East and a top Soviet agent here."

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee set up a subcommittee to investigate the McCarthy charges. It was headed by Sen. Tydings.

Mr. Browder was one of the witnesses called before the subcommittee. He said he had never known Lattimore but that he was convinced Lattimore did not have Communist leanings. Mr. Browder refused to answer a number of other subcommittee questions.

The subcommittee cleared Lattimore, but Mr. Browder's appearance before it was disastrous to Tydings, who was running for re-election as senator from Maryland, and to Mr. Browder, who later was indicted.

A composite picture showing Tydings and Mr. Browder in close proximity was passed off as having been taken at the hearings.

McCarthy also helped in the campaign against Tydings, who was defeated by



This is the composite picture widely credited for the defeat of Sen. Millard E. Tydings (D-Md.) in 1950 by John Marshall Butler. The picture showed Browder, left, and Tydings apparently listening intently at right. The picture was passed off as having been taken at Senate hearings that were chaired by Tydings.

John Marshall Butler. The picture was used in the Butler campaign.

Mr. Browder later was cited for contempt of Congress because he had not answered all the questions put to him by a subcommittee member. He had declined to say whether some of the other persons whose names were brought up at the hearing were ever Communists.

McCarthy charged that Browder's evasion of the questions had the "wholehearted approval" of Tydings in the conduct of what he called "operation whitewash."

Ironically, when Mr. Browder went to trial, McCarthy appeared as the sole defense witness.

After the District Court judge ordered an acquittal because the subcommittee never overruled the defendant's objections to the questions he was asked, Mr. Browder was asked if he was grateful for McCarthy's testimony that made this clear.

"Why should I be?" Mr.

Browder asked. "Mr. McCarthy demanded the citation for contempt, which was issued as the result of pressures he excited. When he got it, he denounced it as improper in appearing in this trial."

Mr. Browder's views had changed considerably over the years. Last month, in an interview with United Press International, he said that reality had come to make socialism "irrelevant."

He said many of the causes of the 1930s for which he had worked hard—equal rights for women, medical insurance for the poor and elderly and improved pay and working conditions—were now in effect.

He noted that there is still room today for a progressive force but that the Communist Party doesn't fit that role any more.

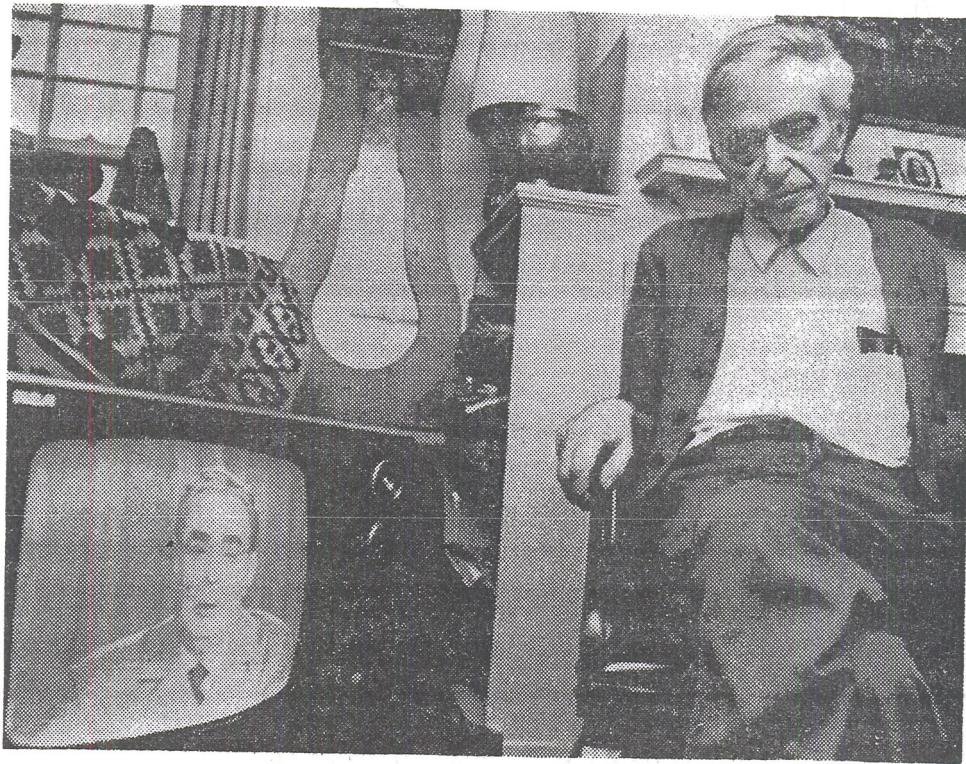
The party's years of decline in this country started after his expulsion. In an article in 1960, he accused Stalin of ruining the American Communist Party.

He said that after his break with the Russians, he made a basic re-examination of Marxist theory and wrote, "I followed Marx's footsteps with the declaration: 'I am not a Marxist.'" He noted how the Cold War had broken the old patterns of thought and called it a calamity for the entire world.

Mr. Browder added that the Cold War could be justified by no consideration of theory and that he hoped new talks being carried on with Khrushchev, who was then in power, could lead to a new line of action to which America could respond.

Such hopes are, however, tempered by years of disillusioning memories, which remind us all that it takes two sides to make a peace," Mr. Browder wrote.

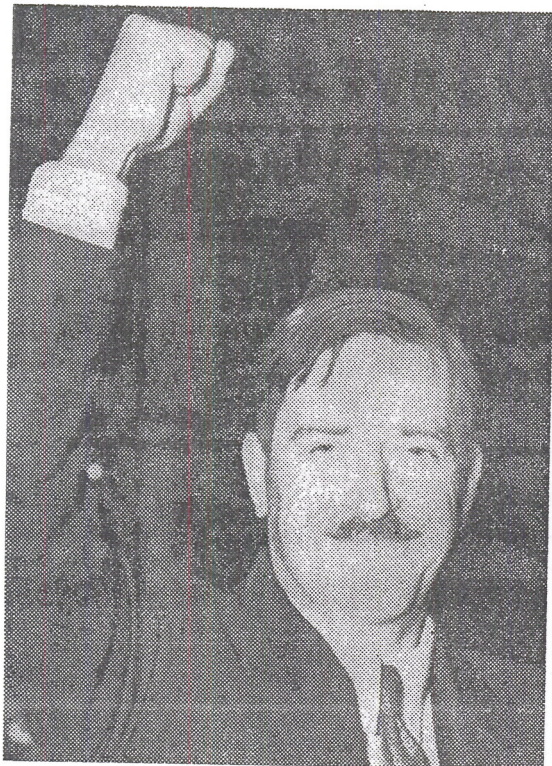
In addition to his son, William, he is survived by two other sons, Felix, of Chicago, and Andrew, of Providence, R.I., and a sister, Nina Turner, of Los Angeles.



United Press International

Earl Browder, who last month said in an interview that Socialism was "irrelevant" and the Communist Party no longer was

a progressive force, is pictured last Sunday at his Princeton, N.J., home watching Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev on TV.



United Press International



Associated Press

Earl Browder campaigning for president in 1936; jailed as a vagrant to prevent him from speaking



Associated Press



Harris and Ewing

in 1936; on platform with William Z. Foster, left, in 1940; and appearing before a Senate committee in 1953.