

BROWDER ON TV CITES CP CONTRIBUTIONS OF HIS DAY

By DAVID PLATT

Earl Browder, former head of the Communist Party of the U.S., was interviewed by Mike Wallace on his "Nightbeat" program last Tuesday night at 11.

It was an interesting half hour of give and take.

Wallace started the ball rolling immediately by asking whether the Communist Party was a legitimate political party or a conspiracy to overthrow the government by force and violence.

The expelled party leader replied that during the 15 years that he headed the Party there was no such conspiracy at any time. Moreover, he said, the Communist Party systematically "clarified and educated" all those who came into its ranks on the question of opposing force and violence. The Communist Party, he continued, was indeed a political party, but a special kind of political party—an American political party operating independently, but in consultation with other Communist Parties, especially with the Soviet Communist Party.

"But we made our own policies," he said, "and this was understood and accepted in the Communist International."

Browder challenged Wallace's suggestion that when he was leading the American Communist Party he was serving Russia and not the U.S.

"I was serving America first of all and in every sense," he said, revealing that President Roosevelt had expressed approval of his services to the country directly to him. He said in reply to a question that he had exchanged messages with FDR through Josephine Truslow Adams.

In answer to Wallace's question, "In what sense do you feel you have performed a service for the USA?" he replied that the Communist Party under his leadership made the first proposals in the nation for social security, unemployment and old age insurance. He said the Wagner Act which Congress passed in the 30s was sparked by the communists.

America, he said, will never understand its own history until it fully understands and accepts the fact that, in the 30s, Communist participation in the affairs of the country was not an alien thing but sprang from the soil and the conditions here.

Browder said that during World War II the Communist Party made valuable contributions to the war effort.

"Wasn't it more for Russia than the U.S.?" Wallace interrupted, and Browder replied that the Party did serve Russia but at a time when it was necessary to serve Russia in order to serve the United States. He pointed out that the

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U.S. recognized this when it contributed 11 billion dollars in aid to the Soviet Union during the war.

"Certainly no one," he added, "stated that thought in a more positive fashion than General MacArthur, who said 'the hopes of mankind rested upon the banners of the Russian army.'" Browder said he "never went that far himself."

In answer to other questions, Browder denied any knowledge of espionage except what he read in the newspapers. He said Elizabeth Bentley "lied" when she said he helped her contact people. He said he never heard of Alger Hiss until Hiss' case was announced in the press. He called Whittaker Chambers, author of the novel, "Witness," and of the "pumpkin papers," a "romantic with a very vivid imagination who translated some of Dostoevsky's novels into American terms with great fidelity."

When Wallace quoted a remark by Senator McCarthy that he had no "ill feeling" toward Browder because he had guts and stood up for his opinions, Browder commented that McCarthy has been a "damaging influence in America because of his obsession with communism as a source of all

evil." But, he added, "McCarthy helped the Communist Party greatly by making them the subject of persecution which served to cover up their political bankruptcy."

Asked whether he still calls himself a Communist, Browder said he hadn't called himself that in two years.

"I would say I am a socialist," he said, praising Norman Thomas as a man of "wisdom and great moral authority," but the Socialist Party, he observed was a "weak shadow of its former self," yet it has great traditions—"traditions which I respect—and it is possible that it might become again an influential factor in America." Browder was pessimistic about the ability of the present Communist Party to bring about Socialism in America.

When Wallace asked Browder whether he saw any other capable leaders in the country, he said he didn't, but that he had a great respect for some of the things done by Eisenhower, especially his contributions in turning America away from war and in realizing that peace is a practical problem. He said Chester Bowles "represents the kind of thinking very necessary in America now."

Asked whether he voted in the last election, Browder said no, as it was impossible for him to find anyone to vote for that would be an adequate expression of his opinions.