

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Tuesday February 26, 2013

Contact: Pamela McLaughlin  
Phone: (315) 443-9788  
pwmclaug@syr.edu

## **Ray Smith 'Positions of Dissent' Lecture by Laura Browder on Communist Party USA leader**

Laura Browder, the Tyler and Alice Haynes Professor of American Studies at the University of Richmond, will present a lecture entitled *Hammer and Sickle, Stars and Stripes: The Odyssey of Earl Browder* on March 7 at 6:00 p.m. in the Peter Graham Scholarly Commons on the first floor of Bird Library. Her talk is the fourth in this year's Ray Smith Symposium, *Positions of Dissent*, organized by the Special Collections Research Center (SCRC) of Syracuse University Library. She will be introduced by Richard Breyer, co-Director of SU's Master's Program in Documentary Film and History.

Browder will also give a mini-seminar using materials from SCRC collections on March 8 at 10:00 a.m. in the Lemke Seminar Room on the sixth floor of Bird Library. To register for the mini-seminar, contact Barbara Brooker at [bbbroke@syr.edu](mailto:bbbroke@syr.edu) or 315-443-9763.

Laura Browder will talk about the life of her grandfather, Earl Browder, head of the Communist Party USA during its most influential period, the Great Depression. He coined the slogan "Communism is 20th-century Americanism" and ran for president twice against Roosevelt. During those years, he was tracked by both the FBI and the KGB, and in the mid-1990s, the VENONA project was published – a series of KGB cables that named him as a Soviet spy. His life epitomizes like few others what it was to be a radical in the USA. Earl Browder lived a transnational life in order to build a radical movement that would be both truly international and authentically American. He sought, through his activism, to redefine "American."

Laura Browder is the executive producer of the PBS documentary "The Reconstruction of Asa Carter" and is currently working on another documentary film called "Mothers at War". She is the author of *When Janey Comes Marching Home: Portraits of Women Combat Veterans*, with photographs by Sascha Pflaeging, for which she interviewed 52 women from all branches of the military.

Browder received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Brown University, Master of Arts degree from Boston University, and doctoral degree from Brandeis University.

The 2012–13 Ray Smith Symposium “Positions of Dissent” is grounded in the unique holdings of the Special Collections Research Center (SCRC) at Syracuse University Library. We believe that linking current scholarship in the humanities to tangible primary sources is of vital importance. Over the course of the academic year, the SCRC will host five renowned scholars, each of whom works on the issue of dissent in a different field.

*The Ray Smith Symposium Series was established in 1989 as the result of a bequest from the estate of SU alumnus Ray W. Smith '21 to support symposia on topics in the humanities in SU's College of Arts and Sciences. The symposium is named for the Auburn, N.Y. native who, after graduating from SU in 1921, was a highly respected teacher and administrator.*

###