

U.S. Foreign Policy

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The Great Fear Unleashed: The Cold War Comes Home

Postwar tensions with the Soviet Union bred a climate of fear and suspicion in the United States as Americans adjusted to peacetime conditions. The Truman administration's rigidity and militance in foreign policy were matched by the president's commitment to anticommunism at home. Beseated by mounting evidence of subversive activity, Truman moved to strengthen internal security amidst conservative charges of laxity, himself contributing to the rising paranoia. The result was an atmosphere of intolerance, described in your textbook as a scramble to find scapegoats for the nation's domestic and foreign problems. Before the hysteria subsided, American political culture became homogenized, while civil liberties suffered their most serious setback since the Great Red Scare of 1919. The documents that follow provide vivid evidence of the link between a Cold War foreign policy and intolerance on the home front.

It was not coincidental that nine days after the declaration of the Truman Doctrine, the president issued a loyalty order intended to root out subversives in government service. As you review his order, focus on Truman's justification for action and the grounds established for a person's removal from government employment.

Your textbook indicates that anticommunism had long been present in Congress, where the House Un-American Activities Committee became the focal point for efforts to explore subversion. No case was more dramatic than that of former New Dealer Alger Hiss, accused of domestic spying. Using the textbook account of the Hiss incident as background, analyze the excerpt from Whitaker Chambers's personal account of the affair. Be attentive to the theme of the

Chambers comment and what it reveals about the sources of anticommunism.

Equally dramatic were the 1947 HUAC hearings described in your textbook. Although labor unions and political dissenters drew the committee's fire, its attack on the entertainment industry caught the public imagination as did few others. The next group of documents explores the ramifications of HUAC's interest in the motion picture industry. Review FBI director J. Edgar Hoover's analysis of alleged communist infiltration of the media and its significance. An excerpt from the autobiography of film director Edward Dmytryk, who refused to cooperate with the Committee in 1947, reveals not only the presence of political radicals in Hollywood but also the constitutional issue raised by the Hollywood resisters. Both Dmytryk's recollection and the personal memoir of screenwriter/playwright Lillian Hellman document the insidious blacklist that was the film industry's response to anticommunist political pressure. Notice what these documents reveal about the personal, constitutional, and political implications of the anticommunist crusade.

The concluding documents record the climax of the red scare in the unparalleled demagoguery of Wisconsin senator Joseph R. McCarthy. As you review the excerpts from his Wheeling speech (1950) and sweeping attack on secretary of defense George C. Marshall (1951), identify the targets of the senator's criticism. Be also aware of the close linkage between foreign policy and domestic politics in the age of the Cold War. Try to assess the relationship between anticommunist hysteria and the Democratic party's decline, described in your textbook as the end of an era.

Questions for Analysis

1. What were the sources of anticommunism in the postwar United States? What evidence do the documents provide to explain domestic support for Joseph McCarthy and his predecessors? What was the basis for the anticommunist appeal?
2. What were the similarities and differences between the Red Scare of 1919 and the anticommunism of the Truman years? Consider the instigators, targets, duration, and implications of the two movements.
3. Using the loyalty program and the Hiss case as points of departure, evaluate the Truman administration as a carrier of the liberal social, economic, and political tradition. How did the demands of the Cold War domestic environment influence the prospects for reform? What did "liberalism" mean in the immediate postwar years, and how was it affected by the anticommunist crusade?
4. What do the documents reveal about the significance of presidential leadership at the onset of the postwar anticommunist movement? What was Truman's attitude toward the Soviet Union, and how did it influence the national debate over alleged internal subversion? What light does the evidence shed on the roots of McCarthyism?
5. Why did American opponents of communism focus their attention on the motion-picture industry between 1947 and 1951? In what way did the House Un-American Activities Committee hearings document the charges against Hollywood?
6. What were the constitutional and civil-liberties issues at stake during the second red scare? What evidence of these concerns can be found in the documents? How did the accused respond to the assault against them? With what results?
7. To what extent were class differences and socioeconomic divisions a factor in the clash over alleged internal subversion? What evidence exists that these conflicts played a role in the thinking of the communist-hunters?

1. President Truman's Loyalty Order, 1947

Executive Order 9835

Prescribing Procedures for the Administration of an Employees Loyalty Program in the Executive Branch of the Government

Whereas each employee of the government of the United States is endowed with a measure of trusteeship over the democratic processes which are the heart and sinew of the United States; and

Whereas it is of vital importance that persons employed in the federal service be of complete and unswerving loyalty to the United States; and

Whereas, although the loyalty of by far the overwhelming majority of all government employees is beyond question, the presence within the government service of any disloyal or subversive person constitutes a threat to our democratic processes; and

Whereas maximum protection must be afforded the United States against infiltration of disloyal persons into the ranks of its employees, and equal protection from unfounded accusations of disloyalty must be afforded the loyal employees of the government:

Now, therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and statutes of the United States, . . . it is hereby, in the interest of the internal management of the government, ordered as follows:

Part I—Investigation of Applicants

1. There shall be a loyalty investigation of every person entering the civilian employment of any department or agency of the executive branch of the federal government. . . .

Part V—Standards

1. The standard for the refusal of employment or the removal from employment in an executive department or agency on grounds relating to loyalty shall be that, on all the evidence, reasonable grounds exist for belief that the person involved is disloyal to the government of the United States.

2. Activities and associations of an applicant or employee which may be considered in connection with the determination of disloyalty may include one or more of the following:

a. Sabotage, espionage, or attempts or preparations therefor, or knowingly associating with spies or saboteurs;

b. Treason or sedition or advocacy thereof;

c. Advocacy of revolution or force or violence to alter the constitutional form of government of the United States;

d. Intentional, unauthorized disclosure to any person, under circumstances which may indicate disloyalty to the United States, of documents or information of a confidential or nonpublic character obtained by the person making the disclosure as a result of his employment by the government of the United States;

e. Performing or attempting to perform his duties, or otherwise acting, so as to serve the interests of another government in preference to the interests of the United States;

f. Membership in, affiliation with, or sympathetic association with any foreign or domestic organization, association, movement, group, or combination

of persons, designated by the attorney general as totalitarian, fascist, communist, or subversive, or as having adopted a policy of advocating or approving the commission of acts of force or violence to deny

other persons their rights under the Constitution of the United States, or as seeking to alter the form of government of the United States by unconstitutional means. . . .

2. Whittaker Chambers Hears the Voice of the People, 1952

. . . Those were the forces—Thomas Murphy, Richard Nixon, the men of the F.B.I.—who, together with the two grand juries and Tom Donegan and the two trial juries, finally won the Hiss Case for the nation. It is important to look hard at them for a moment . . . For the contrast between them and the glittering Hiss forces is about the same as between them and the glittering French chivalry and the somewhat tattered English bowmen who won at Agincourt. The inclusive fact about them is that, in contrast to the pro-Hiss rally, most of them, regardless of what they had made of themselves, came from the wrong side of the railroad tracks. . . .

No feature of the Hiss Case is more obvious, or more troubling as history, than the jagged fissure, which it did not so much open as reveal, between the plain men and women of the nation, and those who affected to act, think and speak for them. It was, not invariably, but in general, the "best people" who were for Alger Hiss and who were prepared to go to almost any length to protect and defend him. It was the enlightened and the powerful, the clamorous proponents of the open mind and the common man, who snapped their minds shut in a pro-Hiss psychosis, of a kind which, in an individual patient, means the simple failure of the ability to distinguish between reality and unreality, and, in a nation, is a warning of the end.

It was the great body of the nation, which, not invariably, but in general, kept open its mind in the Hiss Case, waiting for the returns to come in. It was they who suspected what forces disastrous to the na-

tion were at work in the Hiss Case, and had suspected that they were at work long before there was a Hiss Case, while most of the forces of enlightenment were poolpoohing the Communist danger and calling every allusion to it a witch hunt. It was they who, when the battle was over, first caught its real meaning. It was they who almost unfailingly understood the nature of the witness that I was seeking to make, as I have tested beyond question whenever I have talked to any group of them. And it was they who, in the persons of the men I have cited, produced the forces that could win a struggle whose conspicuous feature is that it was almost without leadership. From the very outset, I was in touch with that enormous force, for which I was making the effort, and from which I drew strength. Often I lost touch with it or doubted it, cut off from it in the cities, or plunged in the depths of the struggle. But when I came back to it, it was always there. It reached me in letters and messages of encouragement and solicitude, understanding, stirring, sometimes wringing the heart. But even when they did not understand, my people were always about me. I had only to look around me to see them—on the farms, on the streets, in homes, in shops, in the day coaches of trains. My people, humble people, strong in common sense, in common goodness, in common forgiveness, because all felt bowed together under the common weight of life.

And at the very end of the Hiss Case, I heard their speaking voice, like themselves, anonymous, and speaking not to me as an individual, but to me in the name of all those who made the struggle. . . .

3. J. Edgar Hoover Notes the Communist Interest in Hollywood, 1947

. . . The party has departed from depending upon the printed word as its medium of propaganda and has taken to the air. Its members and sympathizers have

not only infiltrated the airways but they are now persistently seeking radio channels.

The American Communists launched a furtive

attack on Hollywood in 1935 by the issuance of a directive calling for a concentration in Hollywood. The orders called for action on two fronts: (1) an effort to infiltrate the labor unions; (2) infiltrate the so-called intellectual and creative fields.

In movie circles, Communists developed an effective defense a few years ago in meeting criticism. They would counter with the question, "After all, what is the matter with communism?" It was effective because many persons did not possess adequate knowledge of the subject to give an intelligent answer.

Some producers and studio heads realized the

possibility that the entire industry faces serious embarrassment because it could become a springboard for Communist activities. Communist activity in Hollywood is effective and is furthered by Communists and sympathizers using the prestige of prominent persons to serve, often unwittingly, the Communist cause. The party is content and highly pleased if it is possible to have inserted in a picture a line, a scene, a sequence conveying the Communist lesson and, more particularly, if they can keep out anti-Communist lessons. . . .

4. Edward Dmytryk Recalls the Hollywood Ten in Washington, 1947

. . . Since *Crossfire* was a worldwide smash, my attack—as well as Adrian's, centered on the committee's ethnic bias and its attempts to limit freedom of speech in the area of national self-criticism. But none of our lawyers really expected that we would be heard, and the strategy was say nothing, hide under the possible cover of the First Amendment, and hope for a favorable verdict from the Supreme Court. "Taking the Fifth" was never considered, though it would have kept us out of jail; the implication of guilt was considered too dangerous. . . .

With all the public feeling in our favor, Bart Crum suggested that Adrian and I should testify freely, which we were perfectly willing to do. We felt it might serve to pull the committee's fangs. You'd have thought we were offering to atomize the Kremlin. The unanimity rule was invoked, and that was that. From their point of view, they were absolutely right. If we had answered any substantive questions at all, we would have been legally required to give names if we were asked to. If we refused to name party members, as, at that time, we certainly would have done, we would still be cited for contempt. If we had given the names, the other members of our group would have been in the soup. Eventually, that's where we wound up anyway, but at this point the battle had barely begun and our eyes were fixed on a liberal Supreme Court. With no argument, we put our suggestion aside and on the 27th of October, entered the chamber prepared to face the inquisitors.

The chamber was crowded; the real fun was about to begin. . . . Dore Schary sat beside me as we watched John Howard Lawson being sworn in. He was the leader and would set the tone of our attack. Unfortunately, Lawson was tone-deaf.

Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York. There, on November 27, 1947, the representatives of the motion-picture industry formally decided to fire any accused worker who would not freely answer all questions asked by the Un-American Activities Committee and who could not clear himself of charges that he was or had been a member of the Communist party. The

It started with the usual identification by name and address. Then Lawson requested permission to read a statement. After a bit of bickering, Thomas asked to look at it before making his decision. He was, as they say in court, making a record. The statement was handed over to the chairman, who made only a slight pretense of reading it, then ruled that it was irrelevant. Lawson started to argue; Thomas banged his gavel. The exchange got so hot that the chairman nearly forgot to ask what came to be called "the sixty-four dollar question": "Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist party?"

Now Lawson started shouting in earnest, trying to enumerate his reasons for refusing to answer the question. Between gavel poundings, the chairman screamed, "Answer yes or no!" Shouting and banging—banging and shouting. It was a miserable scene. I was hit by a feeling I had had once before, when a car skidded into me across a wet street. "This is it," I thought. I scrunched down in my seat and turned to Dore.

"What are my chances at the studio now?" I asked.

"You have an ironclad contract," he replied.

And so it went for the rest of the hearing. I could literally feel the listeners' sympathies oozing away with each shout from one of our group. Thomas had made a ridiculous show of himself with his shouting and free use of the gavel; now we were matching him shout for shout—it was a fight we couldn't win. . . .

We made it back to Hollywood, basking for a short time in the light of what our leftist friends assured us was a fine and glorious victory, but the decision that would affect our lives was being made at the

following day, since Dore refused to be the hatchet man, N. Peter Rathvon called Scott and me into his office and asked us once more to recant and to purge ourselves. With hardly any sense of martyrdom at all, we refused. In that case, he informed us, we were no longer employees of RKO. So much for ironclad contracts. . . .



5. Lillian Hellman Defies HUAC, 1952

May 19, 1952

Honorable John S. Wood
Chairman
House Committee on Un-American Activities
Room 226 Old House Office Building
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Mr. Wood:

As you know, I am under subpoena to appear before your Committee on May 21, 1952.

I am most willing to answer all questions about myself. I have nothing to hide from your Committee and there is nothing in my life of which I am ashamed. I have been advised by counsel that under the Fifth Amendment I have a constitutional privilege to decline to answer any questions about my political opinions, activities and associations, on the grounds of self-incrimination. I do not wish to claim this privilege. I am ready and willing to testify before the representatives of our Government as to my own opinions and my own actions, regardless of any risks or consequences to myself.

But I am advised by counsel that if I answer the Committee's questions about myself, I must also answer questions about other people and that if I refuse to do so, I can be cited for contempt. My counsel tells me that if I answer questions about myself, I will have waived my rights under the Fifth Amendment and could be forced legally to answer questions about others. This is very difficult for a layman to understand. But there is one principle that I do understand: I am not willing, now or in the future, to bring bad trouble to people who, in my past association with them, were completely innocent of any talk or any action that was disloyal or subversive. I do not like subversion or disloyalty in any form and if I had ever seen any I would have considered it my duty to have reported it to the proper authorities. But to hurt innocent people whom I knew many years ago in order to save myself is, to me, inhuman and indecent and dis-

honorable. I cannot and will not cut my conscience to fit this year's fashions, even though I long ago came to the conclusion that I was not a political person and could have no comfortable place in any political group.

I was raised in an old-fashioned American tradition and there were certain homely things that were taught to me: to try to tell the truth, not to bear false witness, not to harm my neighbor, to be loyal to my country, and so on. In general, I respected these ideals of Christian honor and did as well with them as I knew how. It is my belief that you will agree with these simple rules of human decency and will not expect me to violate the good American tradition from which they spring. I would, therefore, like to come before you and speak of myself.

I am prepared to waive the privilege against self-incrimination and to tell you anything you wish to know about my views or actions if your Committee will agree to refrain from asking me to name other people. If the Committee is unwilling to give me this assurance, I will be forced to plead the privilege of the Fifth Amendment at the hearing.

A reply to this letter would be appreciated.
Sincerely yours,

Lillian Hellman

The letter that I sent the Committee on May 19, 1952, had been refused by letter on May 20. It was, therefore, necessary for me to do what I did not want to do: take the Fifth Amendment. The Fifth Amendment is, of course, a wise section of the Constitution: you cannot be forced to incriminate yourself. But the amendment has difficulties that are hard for a layman to understand. . . .

The opening questions were standard: what was my name, where was I born, what was my occupation, what were the titles of my plays. It didn't take long to get to what really interested them: my time in

Hollywood, which studios had I worked for, what periods of what years, with some mysterious emphasis on 1937. (My time in Spain, I thought, but I was wrong.)

Had I met a writer called Martin Berkeley? (I had never, still have never, met Martin Berkeley, although Hammett told me later that I had once sat at a lunch table of sixteen or seventeen people with him in the old Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer commissary.) I said I must refuse to answer that question. . . .

Was I a member of the Communist Party, had I been, what year had I stopped being? How could I harm such people as Martin Berkeley by admitting I had known them, and so on. At times I couldn't follow the reasoning, at times I understood full well

that in refusing to answer questions about membership in the Party I had, of course, trapped myself into a seeming admission that I once had been.

But in the middle of one of the questions about my past, something so remarkable happened that I am to this day convinced that the unknown gentleman who spoke had a great deal to do with the rest of my life. A voice from the press gallery had been for at least three or four minutes louder than the other voices. (By this time, I think, the press had finished reading my letter to the Committee and were discussing it.) The loud voice had been answered by a less loud voice, but no words could be distinguished. Suddenly a clear voice said, "Thank God somebody finally had the guts to do it." . . .

6. Joseph R. McCarthy's Wheeling Speech, 1950

Five years after a world war has been won, men's hearts should anticipate a long peace, and men's minds should be free from the heavy weight that comes with war. But this is not such a period—for this is not a period of peace. This is a time of the "cold war." This is a time when all the world is split into two vast, increasingly hostile armed camps

The reason why we find ourselves in a position of impotency is not because our only powerful potential enemy has sent men to invade our shores, but rather because of the traitorous actions of those who have been treated so well by this Nation. It has not been the less fortunate or members of minority groups who have been selling this Nation out, but rather those who have had all the benefits that the wealthiest nation on earth has had to offer—the finest homes, the finest college education, and the finest jobs in Government we can give.

This is glaringly true in the State Department. There the bright young men who are born with silver spoons in their mouths are the ones who have been the worst. . . . In my opinion the State Department, which is one of the most important government departments, is thoroughly infested with Communists.

I have in my hand 57 cases of individuals who would appear to be either card carrying members or

certainly loyal to the Communist Party, but who nevertheless are still helping to shape our foreign policy. . . .

As you know, very recently the Secretary of State proclaimed his loyalty to a man guilty of what has always been considered as the most abominable of all crimes—of being a traitor to the people who gave him a position of great trust. The Secretary of State in attempting to justify his continued devotion to the man who sold out the Christian world to the atheistic world, referred to Christ's Sermon on the Mount as a justification and reason therefore, and the reaction of the American people to this would have made the heart of Abraham Lincoln happy.

When this pompous diplomat in striped pants, with a phony British accent, proclaimed to the American people that Christ on the Mount endorsed communism, high treason, and betrayal of a sacred trust, the blasphemy was so great that it awakened the dormant indignation of the American people.

He has lighted the spark which is resulting in a moral uprising and will end only when the whole sorry mess of twisted, warped thinkers are swept from the national scene so that we may have a new birth of national honesty and decency in government.

7. McCarthy Attacks George C. Marshall, 1951

. . . How can we account for our present situation unless we believe that men high in this Government

are concerting to deliver us to disaster? This must be the product of a great conspiracy, a conspiracy on a

scale so immense as to dwarf any previous such venture in the history of man. A conspiracy of infamy so black that, when it is finally exposed, its principals shall be forever deserving of the maledictions of all honest men.

Who constitutes the highest circles of this conspiracy? About that we cannot be sure. We are convinced that Dean Acheson, who steadfastly serves the interests of nations other than his own, the friend of Alger Hiss, who supported him in his hour of retribution, who contributed to his defense fund, must be high on the roster. The President? He is their captive. I have wondered, as have you, why he did not dispense with so great a liability as Acheson to his own and his party's interests. It is now clear to me. In the relationship of master and man, did you ever hear of man firing master? Truman is a satisfactory front. He is only dimly aware of what is going on. . . .

What can be made of this unbroken series of decisions and acts contributing to the strategy of defeat? They cannot be attributed to incompetence. If Marshall were merely stupid, the laws of probability would dictate that part of his decisions would serve this country's interest. If Marshall is innocent of guilty intention, how could he be trusted to guide the defense of this country further? We have declined so precipitously in relation to the Soviet Union in the last 6 years. How much swifter may be our fall into disaster with Marshall at the helm? Where will all this stop? That is not a rhetorical question: Ours is not a

rhetorical danger. Where next will Marshall carry us? It is useless to suppose that his nominal superior will ask him to resign. He cannot even dispense with Acheson.

What is the objective of the great conspiracy? I think it is clear from what has occurred and is now occurring: to diminish the United States in world affairs, to weaken us militarily, to confuse our spirit with talk of surrender in the Far East and to impair our will to resist evil. To what end? To the end that we shall be contained, frustrated and finally fall victim to Soviet intrigue from within and Russian military might from without. . . .

It is the great crime of the Truman administration that it has refused to undertake the job of ferreting the enemy from its ranks. I once puzzled over that refusal. The President, I said, is a loyal American; why does he not lead in this enterprise? I think that I know why he does not. The President is not master in his own house. Those who are master there not only have a desire to protect the sappers and miners—they could not do otherwise. They themselves are not free. They belong to a larger conspiracy, the world-wide web of which has been spun from Moscow. It was Moscow, for example, which decreed that the United States should execute its loyal friend, the Republic of China. The executioners were that well-identified group headed by Acheson and George Catlett Marshall.

Chapter 27:

Document Set 2 References

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