

## TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT – 2009-2012

### *The Cold War: Anti-Communism at Home*

Grade: 11<sup>th</sup>

Length of class: 45 minutes

Inquiry (Essential Questions):

- How did Cold War fears manifest themselves in American society?
- To what extent were Constitutional freedoms infringed upon during the investigations?
- What were the unintended consequences of the nationwide hunt for “subversive” groups?
- To what extent were the actions taken justifiable?

Objectives (Content & Skills):

- Students will:
  - Analyze primary source materials
  - Identify rhetoric and arguments used to justify the hunt for subversives as well as defend personal liberties
  - Assess the evidence provided by each speaker
  - Explain the unintended consequences of the hunt for subversive groups

Materials:

- Senator Joseph McCarthy’s “Wheeling” speech
  - <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6456>

McCarthy’s “Wheeling Speech” has become one of the iconic American documents of the Cold War. In it the Senator made his famous declaration of a list of known communists within the U.S. State Department.

- Robeson, Paul “Statement on Civil Liberties in America.” Excerpted from: Schrecker, Ellen, ed. McCarthyism in America: A Brief History with Documents. Bedford St. Martin’s Press, 2002.

Robeson had planned to read his Statement on Civil Liberties in America into the Congressional Record during his testimony to the House Un-American Activities Committee, but was not allowed to. The statement alleges that the State Department is denying him a passport because of his work to advance civil rights, in addition to his political affiliations.

- Testimony from *Faulk v. Awaré*. Excerpted from: Schrecker, Ellen, ed. McCarthyism in America: A Brief History with Documents. Bedford St. Martin’s Press, 2002.

The case of *Faulk v. Aware* provides evidence of the unintended consequences of the hysteria surrounding loyalty and blacklisting suspected communists. In the testimony a member of a television production company explains how the need to run background checks on every potential employee has impacted the television industry.

#### Activities:

Students should work in groups of 3 or 4 students to read through and analyze the documents. Many of my students are familiar with the idea of a 10% summary, in which they must explain or highlight the key concepts of a document using only a fraction of the original document's length. After reading each document, the students should work together to create a 10% summary.

- McCarthy: summaries are approximately 140 words
- Robeson: summaries are approximately 90 words
- *Faulk*: summaries are approximately 80 words

Once the group has completed their summaries, the group must respond to the questions on the analysis worksheet. Each group is responsible for submitting a single analysis sheet, with evidence of each member of the group participating ("John thinks this means...")

The final facet of the lesson is an extended response to question 8 on the worksheet. Students have 2-3 typed pages to respond to the question of how the activities of HUAC and other anti-subversive groups infringed upon the lives of Americans and whether or not these infringements were justified, given the international and domestic state of affairs at the time.

During the lesson the teacher should circulate throughout the room and facilitate student decoding of the documents. Some students will need help getting through McCarthy's speech, others may need to have a more thorough explanation of why Robeson's activities in favor of African independence movements could have been perceived as dangerous.

#### Assessing Student Learning:

Each group will submit a completed document analysis sheet, with each student's contributions clearly identifiable. The analysis sheet will be scored for historical accuracy, as well as strength of evidence provided.

Each student will submit an extended response to the "Assessing the Documents" question in the analysis sheet. The short essay will be scored for historical analysis, insight into the content, as well as for the quality of argument presented.

#### Connecticut Grade Level Expectations:

- Standard 1.1
  - 2. Trace the evolution of citizen's rights
  - 3. Trace the changing role of U.S. participation in world affairs
  - 6. Compare and contrast various American beliefs, values, and political ideologies
  - 7. Analyze the influence of nationalism on American society
  - 9. Analyze the significance of the growing heterogeneity of American society

- 12. Evaluate the role and impact significant individuals have had on American society
- Standard 1.2
  - 14. Describe how major events in U.S. history have affected Connecticut citizens (Paul Robeson made his home in Enfield, CT)
- Standard 1.9
  - 43. Give examples of how individuals or groups have worked to expand or limit citizen's rights in the United States and other nations
  - 44. Analyze the tension between the need for national security and protecting individual rights
- Standard 2.1
  - 1. Find relevant and accurate information from a variety of sources to answer a history/social studies question
- Standard 2.2
  - 3. Cite evidence from a source to determine an author's purpose and intended audience
- Standard 3.1
  - 1. Use evidence to develop an interpretation of a historical event

## *Anti-Communism in the U.S.: National Security vs. Personal Freedom*

*Joseph R. McCarthy (1908-1957), a freshman Republican senator from Wisconsin, joined the anti-Communist crusade during February 1950, in a speech delivered in Wheeling, West Virginia. The speech excerpted below was read into the Congressional Record on February 20, 1950. The secretary of state whom he excoriated and caricatured was Dean Acheson; the individual whom Acheson refused to disown was Alger Hiss. Hiss, accused as early as 1948 of having been a Communist spy while in the government, had been convicted of perjury the previous month.*

### **Communists in the U.S. Government (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 it 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—a time of a great armaments race.

Today we can almost physically hear the mutterings and rumblings of an invigorated god of war. You can see it, feel it, and hear it all the way from the hills of Indochina, from the shores of Formosa, right over into the very heart of Europe itself....

We are now engaged in a show-down fight—not the usual war between nations for land areas or other material gains, but a war between two diametrically opposed ideologies.

The great difference between our western Christian world and the atheistic Communist world is not political, ladies and gentlemen, it is moral....

The real, basic difference, however, lies in the religion of immoralism—invented by Marx, preached feverishly by Lenin, and carried to unimaginable extremes by Stalin. This religion of immoralism, if the Red half of the world wins—and well it may—this religion of immoralism will more deeply wound and damage mankind than any conceivable economic or political system.

Karl Marx dismissed God as a hoax, and Lenin and Stalin have added in clear-cut, unmistakable language their resolve that no nation, no people who believe in God, can exist side by side with their communistic state.

Karl Marx, for example, expelled people from his Communist Party for mentioning things such as justice, humanity, or morality. He called this soulful ravings and sloppy sentimentality.

While Lincoln was a relatively young man in his late thirties, Karl Marx boasted that the Communist specter was haunting Europe. Since that time, hundreds of millions of people and vast areas of the world have fallen under Communist domination. Today, less than 100 years after Lincoln's death, Stalin brags that this Communist specter is not only haunting the world, but is about to completely subjugate it.

Today we are engaged in a final, all-out battle between communistic atheism and Christianity. The modern champions of communism have selected this as the time. And, ladies and gentlemen, the chips are down—they are truly down....

Ladies and gentlemen, can there be anyone here tonight who is so blind as to say that the war is not on? Can there be anyone who fails to realize that the Communist world has said, "The time is now"—and that this is the time for the show-down between the democratic Christian world and the Communist atheistic world?

Unless we face this fact, we shall pay the price that must be paid by those who wait too long.

Six years ago, at the time of the fist conference to map out the peace—Dumbarton Oaks—there was within the Soviet orbit 180,000,000 people. Lined up on the antitotalitarian side there were in the world at that time roughly 1,625,000,000 people. Today, only six years later, there are 800,000,000 people under the absolute domination of Soviet Russia—and increase of over 400 percent. On our side, the figure has shrunk to around 500,000,000. In other words, in less than 6 years the odds have changed from 9 to 1 in our favor to 8 to 5 against us. This indicates the swiftness of the tempo of Communist victories and American defeats in the cold war. As one of our outstanding historical figures once said, "When a great democracy is destroyed, it will not be because of enemies from without, but rather because of enemies from within."

The truth of this statement is becoming terrifyingly clear as we see this country each day losing on every front.

At war's end, we were physically the strongest nation of earth and, at least potentially, the most powerful intellectually and morally. Ours could have been the honor of being a beacon in the desert of destruction, a shining living proof that civilization was not yet ready to destroy itself. Unfortunately, we have failed miserably and tragically to arise to the opportunity.

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 our 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 worst....

When Chiang Kai-Shek was fighting our war, the State Department had in China a young man named John S. Service. His task, obviously, was not to work for the communization of China. Strangely, however, he sent official reports back to the State Department urging that we torpedo our ally Chiang Kai-Shek and stating, in effect, that communism was the best hope of China.

Later, this man—John Service—was picked up by the F.B.I. for turning over to the Communists secret State Department information. Strangely, however, he was never prosecuted. However, Joseph Grew, the Under Secretary of State, who insisted on his prosecution, was forced to resign. Two days after Grew's successor, Dean Acheson, took over as Under Secretary of State, this man—John Service—who had been picked up by the FBI and previously urged that communism was the best hope of China, was not only reinstated in the State Department but promoted. And finally, under Acheson, placed in charge of all placements and promotions.

Today, ladies and gentlemen, this man Service is on his way to represent the State Department and Acheson in Calcutta—by fare and away the most important listening post in the Far East....

This, ladies and gentlemen, gives you somewhat of a picture of the type of individuals who have been helping to shape our foreign policy. 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.

One thing to remember in discussing the Communists in our Government is that we are not dealing with spies who get 30 pieces of silver to steal the blueprints of a weapon. We are dealing with a far more sinister type of activity because it permits the enemy to guide and shape our policy....

It is the result of an emotional hangover and a temporary moral lapse which follows every war. It is the apathy to evil which people who have been subjected to the tremendous evils of war feel. As the people of the world see mass murder, the destruction of defenseless and innocent people, and all of the crime and lack of morals which go with war, they become numb and apathetic. It has always been thus after war.

However, the morals of our people have not been destroyed. They still exist. This cloak of numbness and apathy has only needed a spark to rekindle them. Happily, this spark has finally been supplied.

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, 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.

*By the mid-1950s, Paul Robeson (1898-1976) had earned international acclaim for his talents as an actor and singer, but it was his commitment to political and social concerns, such as his support for the Communist Party, the Soviet Union, and African independence movements, that attracted the notice of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). HUAC, intent on ridding America of Communists, called Robeson to testify before them in 1956. As part of his testimony he prepared this statement, which he was not allowed to read before the committee.*

### **Statement on Civil Liberties in America (1956)**

It is a sad and bitter commentary of the state of civil liberties in America that the very forces of reaction, typified by Representative Francis Walter and his Senate counterparts, who have denied me access to the lecture podium, the concert hall, the opera house, and the dramatic stage, now hale me before a committee of inquisition in order to hear what I have to say. It is obvious that those who are trying to gag me here and abroad will scarcely grant me the freedom to express myself fully in a hearing controlled by them.

It would be more fitting for me to question Walter, Eastland, and Dulles than for them to question me, for it is they who should be called to account for their conduct, not I. Why does Walter not investigate the truly “un-American” activities of Eastland and his gang, to whom the Constitution is a scrap of paper when invoked by the Negro people and to whom defiance of the Supreme Court is a racial duty? And how can Eastland pretend concern over the internal security of our country while he supports the most brutal assaults on fifteen million Americans by the white citizens councils and the Ku Klux Klan? When will Dulles explain his reckless irresponsible “brink of war” policy by which the world might have been destroyed?

And specifically, why is Dulles so afraid to let me have a passport, to let me travel abroad to sing, to act, to speak my mind? This question has been partially answered by the State Department lawyers who have asserted in court that the State Department claims the right to deny me a passport because of what they called my “recognized status as a spokesman for large sections of Negro Americans” and because I have “been for years extremely active in behalf of independence of colonial peoples in Africa.” The State Department has also based its denial of a passport to me on the fact that I sent a message of greeting to the Bandung Conference, convened by Nehru, Sukarno, and other great leaders of the colored people of the world. Principally, however, Dulles objects to speeches I have made abroad against the oppression suffered by my people in the United States.

I am proud that those statements can be made about me. It is my firm intention to continue to speak out against injustices to the Negro people, and I shall continue to do all within my power on behalf of independence of colonial peoples of Africa. It is for Dulles to explain why a Negro who opposes colonialism and supports the aspirations of Negro Americans should for those reasons be denied a passport.

My fight for a passport is a struggle for freedom—freedom to travel, freedom to earn a livelihood, freedom to speak, freedom to express myself artistically and culturally. I have been denied these freedoms because Dulles, Eastland, Walter and their ilk oppose my views on colonial liberation, my resistance to oppression of Negro Americans, and my burning desire for peace with all nations. But these are views which I shall proclaim whenever given the opportunity, whether before this committee or any other body.

President Eisenhower has strongly urged the desirability of international cultural exchanges. I agree with him. The American people would welcome artistic performances by the great singers, actors, ballet troupes, opera companies, symphony orchestras and virtuosos of South America,

Europe, Africa and Asia, including the folk and classic art of the African peoples, the ancient culture of China, as well as the artistic works of the western world. I hope the day will come soon when Walter will consent to lowering the cruel bars which deny the American people the right to witness performances of many great foreign artists. It is certainly high time for him to drop the ridiculous “Keystone Kop” antics of fingerprinting distinguished visitors.

I find no such restrictions placed upon me abroad as Walter has had placed upon foreign artists whose performances the American people wish to see and hear. I have been invited to perform all over the world, and only the arbitrary denial of a passport has prevented realization of this particular aspect of the cultural exchange which the President favors.

...There is not doubt that the governments of those countries [where Robeson had been invited to perform] and many others where I would be invited to sing if I could travel abroad, would have no fear of what I might sing or say while I was there, whether such governments be allies and friends of America or neutrals or those whose friendship for the American people is obstructed by Dulles and Walter and like-minded reactionaries.

My travels abroad to sing and act and speak cannot possibly harm the American people. In the past I have won friends for the real America among the millions before whom I have performed—not for Walter, not for Dulles, not for Eastland, not for the racists who disgrace our country’s name—but friends for the American Negro, our workers, our farmers, our artists.

By continuing the struggle at home and abroad for peace and friendship with all of the world’s people, for an end to colonialism, for full citizenship for Negro Americans, for a world in which art and culture may abound, I intend to continue to win friends for the best in American life.

*In the midst of the Red Scare, a blacklist was established to keep suspected communists from being able to perform on television and in movies. A company, AWARE, Incorporated was started to support the blacklists and to make sure that advertisers would boycott movies and networks if the blacklists were ignored. John Henry Faulk, a radio personality, sued AWARE for violating his rights. The case was heard in 1962, and the court ruled in favor of Faulk.*

**Testimony in *Faulk v. AWARE* (1962):**

[*Faulk's attorney, Louis*] *Nizer*: Now, did you when you selected various actors and actresses and even the names of technicians or the director or the assistant director, did you submit those names to anyone?

*Susskind*: Yes, sir, I had to submit the names of everybody on every show in every category to an executive of Young & Rubicam, and nobody could be engaged by me finally or a deal made and consummated, before a clearance or acceptance came back from Young & Rubicam....

...When I sold the program to the advertising agency, Young & Rubicam, for Lorillard cigarettes, the condition of the sale was that all names of all personnel in all categories on every program were to be submitted for political clearance by Young & Rubicam, and nobody was to be hired until they approved and said, "All right, hire such a person."...It generally took forty-eight hours. I was told that I should always anticipate a forty-eight hour delay on the approval or rejection of any name.

*Nizer*: Can you estimate how many names on this one program over the year that it ran that you submitted in this way for political approval?

*Susskind*: I must have submitted over the period of time about five thousand names, I would guess.... I would telephone the executives at Young & Rubicam. I would have had previously made tentative commitments to actors, writers, producers, directors, everybody on the program.... I would then call the advertising agency executive. I would submit the names. He would, as I say, reject or approve them in terms of their political acceptability....

...I said to Mr. Levy [advertising executive] that it is extraordinarily difficult to find the right actors for the right parts, the right writers for the right scripts, and the right directors for the right stories, that his rejections were making the program almost unworkable and impossible artistically, and that I could not accept the responsibility for the steady deterioration of the program when this practice was in vogue....

...I said,] "I know a great number of the people you have rejected. I know them socially and professionally and there is no question about their political reliability or their good citizenship or their loyalty to this country, and on all these grounds I beg you to confront these people with whatever you have on them and let them answer and you will find that they will be all right and you will have a much better show." And he (Mr. Levy) said, "I am helpless. We are helpless. This is the practice. We have no choice, and we have to pay five dollars for every clearance and two dollars for every recheck. Do you think we like it? It's costing us a bloody fortune." And I believe he said, "Cut down on the number of actors you submit, cut down on the number of directors and the number of writers, because you are breaking us. It's five dollars a throw, and two dollars a throw, and you give us eight actors for each role and then you give us three writers for each script, and then you give us four directors for each show. Somebody is getting rich. We're growing broke. Stop it. Narrow it down."

I said, "I can't narrow it down, because I have learned that your percentage of rejections is so high I have to have alternative choices to be prepared when you reject them politically"....

*Nizer*: When these names came back not approved, rejected for political reasons, what was your practice in dealing with the actors and actresses or director who was not approved?...

*Susskind:* ...When they came back rejected, as part of my instruction at the beginning of the program when I made the sale of "Appointment with Adventure" and subsequently "Justice" and many other programs, it was stipulated that I was never to tell any rejectee why he was rejected....

*Nizer:* Did you also submit the names of even of children on this program? Could you put a child on without getting clearance?

*Susskind:* Even children....

...In the course of "Appointment with Adventure," sponsored by Lorillard at Young & Rubicam Agency, we required the services of a, I believe, at least a seven- or eight-year-old girl actress, child actress. It was a backbreaking assignment to find a child who could act well enough to be in a professional program coast to coast. We went to all the established sources, the talent agencies. They did not represent children....

It was an extraordinarily difficult search involving going to the public schools system, the United Nations schools. We finally found a child, an American child, eight years old, female. I put her name in along with some other names. That child's name came back unacceptable, politically unreliable.

*Anti-Communism At Home: National Security vs. Personal Freedom*

**Sen. McCarthy's "Wheeling" Speech**

1. How does Sen. McCarthy frame the struggle with communism? Why does he approach it this way?
2. Why does McCarthy accuse the State Department of being traitorous? What evidence does he offer?

**Paul Robeson's Statement on Civil Liberties**

3. Why does Robeson lash out at the State Department in his statement?
4. Why does Robeson believe he is being targeted?
5. Which Constitutional protections does Robeson invoke (these may be implied) over the course of his statement?

**Testimony from *Faulk v. AWARE***

6. How did the blacklists complicate the work of the entertainment industry? Why was the industry willing to comply?
7. What Constitutional issues does Susskind raise in his testimony (these may be implied)?

**Assessing the Documents**

8. How did HUAC and other anti-communist measures infringe on the lives of Americans? Based on the international situation, were these infringements justified? Why or why not?