Cold War America #3: Anti-Communism at Home

Major Topics:
- Domestic Containment
- House Un-American Activities Committee
- Julius and Ethel Rosenberg
- Civil Defense
- Nuclear Power
- Kitchen Debate
- The Nuclear Family
- Civil Rights
- Integration of the Armed Forces

How was the Cold War fought at home?

This lesson asks students to analyze how America fought communism domestically. Students will consider different events and ideas of containment, examine the ways in which gender and sexuality was a subtle but important element of containment, and consider the vexing problem of race as the government tried to fight Communism at home and abroad.

This lesson contains two main activities – conceptual analysis and historical investigation that requires students to develop a question of historical significance and support their own interpretation through a careful analysis of an extensive primary source collection.

Procedures

Step 1: Defining Domestic Containment (15 minutes)

Briefly review the idea of containment as it was applied to foreign policy and explain that containment was also important domestically, or within the United States. (Refer to George Kennan’s The Sources of Soviet Conduct, CWA 1.9 and President Truman’s Containment Doctrine, CWA 1.10 if needed). Although the word was rarely explicitly applied to domestic affairs at the time, historians looking back on the early Cold War Era have argued that the concept framed dominant attitudes held by politicians, government officials, and many regular Americans toward the possibility of internal subversion, about women’s roles, and toward minority rights, particularly for Black Americans. The teacher will tell students that in this series of lessons, they will be looking at ways to answer the question: How was the Cold War fought at home?

Distribute Defining “Containment” (CWA 3.1). The teacher will ask students to read through the excerpt from Homeward Bound, using the vocabulary list as needed. Working in pairs or groups of three, have students fill in the missing blanks to summarize May’s main points. Circulate around the room to make sure students understand the text and can understand the connection between containment abroad and containment at home. Once all students are on the same page, tell students that they will delve deeper into this topic by examining a variety of primary sources that document the role of the government, individual Americans, and popular culture in containing communism domestically in order to answer this lesson’s investigative question: How did the US contain communism at home?
Step 2: Domestic Containment Museum (200 Minutes)

Tell students that they will now design a customized museum exhibit that seeks to answer a significant question related to domestic containment. Specifically, students will consider four components of domestic containment: 1) **Containing Subversives (CWA 3.2.1 – 3.2.14)**, 2) **Containing Nuclear Power (CWA 3.3.1 -3.3.12)**, 3) **Containing Women, Sexuality, and Families (CWA 3.4.1 – 3.4.6)**, 4) **Containing the Race Problem (CWA 3.5.1 – 3.5.7)**. Each of the four components includes a secondary overview explaining how these efforts attempted to contain communism in the United States, followed by selected primary sources with detailed citations.

Organize students into mixed-ability groups of three to four. Distribute the four-page directions for **Containing Communism at Home, a Museum Exhibit (CWA 3.2)** to each student. Go over directions with the class in detail, answering any questions they may have. Next, distribute one full packet of domestic containment sources (CWA 3.2.1 through CWA 3.5.7) to each group, either in hard copy packets organized by the four containment strategies or online through a class wiki or shared files. Direct students to review each collection, starting with the secondary overviews (CWA 3.2.1, 3.3.1, 3.4.1, and 3.5.1). Circulate around the class, making sure that each group understands how each strategy was used to contain communism at home and answer any questions they may have.

Once each group has reviewed all the documentation, have them brainstorm a list of possible questions to center their museum exhibit. (See CWA 3.2 for specific directions). Circulate around the room, reviewing and approving their questions, making sure that they can be answered with the sources provided (or through minimal additional research), that they focus on the topic of domestic containment, and that they are not simplistic yes or no questions. Please also note that while their questions can center on one form of domestic containment (such as containing subversives), they do not have to focus solely on one of the four and could design an interesting and significant question that actually reflects two or more strategies.

Over the next couple of class periods, provide students time and guidance as they develop their museum exhibits, either online or hard copy, making sure that they include all required components (see CWA 3.2), including preparation of their cover sheets. Once they are ready, have each group present their exhibits to the class. Evaluate using the rubric provided.
CWA 3.1 – Defining “Domestic Containment”

Directions: Read the following excerpt from Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era (Elaine Tyler May (BasicBooks, 1988) pp. 13-14). In this excerpt, May first describes American goals and aspirations and then explains how these goals affect American policy, government actions, and popular culture. In your groups, review her argument in order to summarize her main points below.

...[Americans] wanted secure jobs, secure homes, and secure marriages in a secure country. Security would enable them to take advantage of the fruits of prosperity and peace that were, at long last, available. And so they adhered to an overarching principle that would guide them in their personal and political lives: containment. Containment was the key to security. The word was used only in its foreign policy version, first articulated by George F. Kennan, the American chargé d’affaires in Moscow, in 1946. The power of the Soviet Union would not endanger national security if it could be contained within a clearly-defined sphere of influence. But the term also describes the response to other postwar developments. The terrifying destructive potential of the atomic bomb would not be a threat if it could be contained, first in the hands of the United States and later through peaceful applications. If that atom were “harnessed for peace,” as the proponents of nuclear energy claimed, it would enhance, rather than threaten, our security. Domestic anticommunism was another manifestation of containment: if presumably subversive individuals could be contained and prevented from spreading their poisonous influence through the body politic, then society could feel secure.

In the domestic version of containment, the “sphere of influence” was the home. Within its walls, potentially dangerous social forces of the new age might be tamed, where they could contribute to the secure and fulfilling life to which postwar women and men aspired. Domestic containment was bolstered by a powerful political culture that rewarded its adherents and marginalized its detractors. More than merely a metaphor for the cold war on the homefront, containment aptly describes the way in which public policy, personal behavior, and even political values were focused on the home.

Security was important to Americans because it would _________________________________. To achieve security, Americans emphasized ________________________________, both in foreign policy and _________________________________.

Americans hoped to contain communism by controlling access to and use of ________________________________, limiting the influence of subversive individuals in the US, and _____________________________________.

adhered: followed
chargé d’affaires: a diplomat
sphere of influence: area of power or control
applications: uses
proponents: supporters
manifestation: example
subversive: undermining power or authority
body politic: the people of a nation, state, or society
bolstered: supported, helped
marginalized: treated as unimportant
metaphor: an idea or word representing something else
Overview: Working in groups of three or four, your task is to design a museum exhibit that explores domestic containment in an engaging and informative way. Each group will be given a total of four packets, each detailing a specific component of domestic containment: harnessing atomic energy for security, rooting out communists and subversives in American society, promoting certain notions of sexuality and the American family structure, and containing the race problem. Each packet begins with a short overview, followed by related primary sources. Each group will use these sources to design its own exhibit, which will be shared with the rest of the class. After each group shares their exhibit, all students will be asked to use this information to answer the following question: How did the US contain communism at home?

Specific Directions:

1. To begin, each member of your group should review each of the four containment source packets. Read the overview documents first – ask for clarification if you don’t understand the topic’s relation to containment.

2. Next, as a group, brainstorm a list of possible questions that could organize your exhibit around the theme of containment at home. These questions should be open-ended; yes or no questions aren’t appropriate. For example, “How were women affected by domestic containment efforts?” works; “Were women affected by domestic containment efforts?” does not. In addition, make sure there is enough evidence in the source packets to answer the question. Although you can do additional research on your own, the majority of your time should be spent analyzing your sources, not searching for them. Once your group has reached consensus, list your top two questions below for your teacher’s consideration. (Questions must be pre-approved).

   First question: __________________________________________________________________________________________

   Second question: ______________________________________________________________________________________

   Teacher approval: _____________________________________________________________________________________
3. Now you’ll need to prioritize your evidence. You can’t show everything to your audience – what is the best evidence you can find to answer your question in an engaging fashion? Each group should display eight to ten pieces of evidence to tell their story. As a group, decide what evidence meets each of the following criteria:

   a. What evidence most directly answers your question?
   b. What evidence will be of the greatest interest?
   c. What evidence tells a story without lots of needed explanation?

4. After prioritizing your evidence, draw a flow chart that documents the path that visitors will take through your exhibit, starting with the question and ending with the feedback (see step 7 below). This one-page chart will serve as your exhibit map, detailing the basic steps visitors need to take to see your exhibit in the right order.

5. Finally, it’s time to construct your exhibit. The format of your exhibit is up to you – you can design either a virtual museum online at a dedicated website, an application for a tablet or smartphone, or create a hard-copy or actual display on paper. Whatever format you decide to use, pay attention to the following criteria, which will be used to evaluate the quality of your exhibit:

   a. Do the sources selected address the question directly?
   b. Do the selected sources tell the story on their own with minimal narrative, or do they require substantial explanation?
   c. Do the sources engage the viewer?
   d. Does the exhibit include multimedia? Specifically, does the exhibit include text, images, film, or other technology?
   e. Are the sources cited accurately and in sufficient detail?
   f. Does the exhibit help answer the question: How did the US contain communism at home?

6. After completing your exhibit, you’ll need to create a one-page flyer to advertise your exhibit. Be sure to include pertinent logistical details (when, where, cost, etc.), with your investigative question. Choose a creative and engaging design that will bring people to your museum.

7. Create a three- to five-question survey that participants will take after viewing your exhibit. Provide enough copies for the class to take the survey (or administer the survey online).

8. Before presenting your exhibit, complete the Containment Exhibit Cover Sheet, detailing your work, why you chose the selections you did, and other information your teacher will need to evaluate your exhibit.

9. If you’d like extra credit, consider designing an item for your gift shop. What would you sell and how would you incorporate your theme and / or one of your sources?
In no more than three sentences, answer your investigative question:
CWA 3.2 – Containing Communism at Home, a Museum Exhibit (page 4 of 4)

Is there anything else you’d like us to know about this exhibit?

Critical Analysis of Containment Museum Exhibit

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CWA 3.2.1 – Containing Subversives Overview

The federal government believed that an important way to influence public opinion away from Communism was for the American media to always provide a clear pro-American message. The Smith Act of 1940 made it a criminal offense to promote in any way the act of overthrowing the United States government – which eventually included supporting Communism. As a result, the House Committee on Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) had legislative grounds to prosecute people whose purpose seemed to be to advance Communism in the United States.

The Hollywood trials are a famous example of HUAC’s anti-Communism investigations. In 1947 HUAC held hearings to investigate whether Communists were creating films with pro-Soviet propaganda. HUAC interviewed “friendly” witnesses, like Ronald Reagan (president of the Screen Actors Guild) and Walt Disney, who both believed Communists were a threat in the film industry. HUAC also interviewed workers in the film industry who were believed to be associated with the American Communist Party – either currently or in the past. The “Hollywood Ten” (the ten Hollywood employees who refused to answer certain questions in front of HUAC) were “blacklisted” – put on a “do not hire” list and sent to jail to serve one-year sentences. These were only ten of hundreds of people barred from the industry throughout the 1950s and early 1960s. HUAC succeeded in creating a culture in which the film industry was afraid to produce any works that appeared to be anything but 100% American.

This Hollywood “witch-hunt” was in keeping with the larger Second Red Scare (the first scare came with the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917). This scare allowed for the success of Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy who, hoping to secure re-election in 1950 despite an undistinguished record, latched on to the idea to accuse the federal government of employing numerous Communists. He lied about the numbers, trying to create a sensation, and it worked. For several years McCarthy held popular support, and helped spread paranoia among citizens that Communists could be operating anywhere to spread their influence over American culture and politics.
This anti-Communism fear and paranoia was heightened in 1953, when Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were executed for giving atomic bomb secrets to the Soviets during World War II. Julius was accused of being a spy in the army. Historians now know that Julius Rosenberg did in fact run a large military spy ring during WWII (when the Americans and Soviets were allied) and for a couple years after the war, but at the time of his 1951 trial the jury only learned that Rosenberg passed to the Soviets tangential information about a lens involved in the construction of an atomic bomb. Rosenberg’s wife, Ethel, was not a spy but she knew that her husband was, and she refused to name names because of her Communist ideology and friends. Federal judge Irving Kauffman, who presided over the case, claimed that by helping the Soviets gain atomic power the Rosenbergs had committed a crime worse than murder, and sentenced them to death. Their case represents a high point in communist and atomic fear.

Fear of communism in the Cold War era also went hand-in-hand with fear of homosexuals. People that self identified as homosexual or were rumored to be gay were labeled “security risks.” Throughout the 1950s the federal government held a number of investigations to identify and eliminate homosexuals that worked for the government. Government officials worried that homosexuals posed a threat to national security, and therefore needed to be removed from their jobs.

In the end thousands of Americans lost their jobs due to a suspected affiliation with the American Communist Party, and hundreds of government employees were dismissed simply for being gay, alcoholic, or left political sympathizers. There was a narrow definition of acceptable political and social beliefs and behavior during the Second Red Scare of the 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s. Those whose actions were labeled outside these bounds were often afraid to express themselves for fear of retaliation.
CWA 3.2.2 – Containing Subversives (Rosenberg Mug Shots)

Ethel Rosenberg Arrest Photograph, August 8, 1950. From U.S. vs. Julius & Ethel Rosenberg and Martin Sobell, Government Exhibit 13, Photographs and mug shots of Ruth and David Greenglass, and Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, Department of Justice, Office of the US Attorney for the Southern District of New York. Source: National Archives and Records Administration, ARC Identifier # 596909.
CWA 3.2.3 – Containing Subversives (Rosenberg Mug Shots)

Julius Rosenberg Arrest Photograph, August 8, 1950. From *U.S. vs. Julius & Ethel Rosenberg and Martin Sobell*, Government Exhibit 13, Photographs and mug shots of Ruth and David Greenglass, and Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, Department of Justice, Office of the US Attorney for the Southern District of New York. Source: National Archives and Records Administration, ARC Identifier # 278758
CWA 3.2.4 – Containing Subversives (Lens Sketch)

Lens Mold Sketch. From *U.S. vs. Julius & Ethel Rosenberg and Martin Sobell*, Government Exhibit 6, Lens Mold Sketch, Department of Justice, Office of the US Attorney for the Southern District of New York. Source: National Archives and Records Administration, ARC Identifier # 278751
CWA 3.2.5 – Containing Subversives (Tubular Materials Sketch)

Sketch of setup to implode tubular materials, delivered to Harry Gold, March 12, 1951. From U.S. vs. Julius & Ethel Rosenberg and Martin Sobell, Government Exhibit 7, Department of Justice, Office of the US Attorney for the Southern District of New York. Source: National Archives and Records Administration, ARC Identifier #278752
CWA 3.2.6 – Containing Subversives (E. Rosenberg Testimony)

Editor’s Note: the following pages are excerpted from a transcript of Ethel Rosenberg’s August, 1950 Grand Jury testimony from Office of the US Attorney for the Southern District of New York. Source: National Archives and Records Administration, ARC Identifier # 2364090

ETHEL E. ROSENBERG, recalled and again duly sworn by the Foreman, testified as follows:

BY MR. LANE:

Q Now, Mrs. Rosenberg, you have again been sworn in and once again I want to advise you of your Constitutional rights, that is, you do not have to answer any questions the answers to which may tend to incriminate or degrade you, and the answers which you give before this body, this grand jury, are given voluntarily and they may be used against you in the event of a subsequent prosecution. Do you understand that? A Yes.

Q I believe you have had counsel? A Yes.

Q And you have been advised by your counsel as to your rights? A Yes.

Q That counsel is Emanuel Block, is that correct? A Right.

Q Think very carefully on each question and answer very distinctly. Are you a member of the Communist Party? A I decline to answer that question on the ground that this might tend to incriminate me.

Q Are you a member of the Young Communist League? A Again I decline to answer that question on the ground that this might tend to incriminate me.

Q Were you ever a member of the Communist Party? A I decline to answer on the grounds that this might tend to incriminate me.
Q Were you ever a member of the Young Communist League? A I decline to answer on the grounds that this might tend to incriminate me.

Q Are you or were you ever affiliated in any way with the Communist Party or Communist movement? A I decline to answer on the grounds that this might tend to incriminate me.

Q Have you ever attended Communist meetings? A I decline to answer on the grounds that this might tend to incriminate me.

Q Have you ever contributed money or your services to the Communist Party or Communist cause? A I decline to answer on the grounds that this might tend to incriminate me.

Q Do you know whether or not your husband is or has been a member of the Communist Party or Young Communist League? A I decline to answer on the grounds that the relationship that exists between my husband and myself is a confidential one, and this might tend to violate a confidential relationship.

Q Let me explain to you that you may refuse to answer questions on privilege as between husband and wife only as to conversations, not as to anything you may know. You may only refuse to answer that question on the grounds it may incriminate you, not your husband. What is the answer to that question? Do you know whether or not your husband is or was a member of the Communist Party?
A I decline to answer on the ground that this might tend to incriminate me.

Q Do you know whether your husband is or was in any way affiliated with the Communist Party? A I decline to answer on the grounds that this might tend to incriminate me.

Q Do you know whether your husband is or was in any way affiliated with the Soviet Union? A I decline to answer on the grounds that this might tend to incriminate me.

Q Do you know whether your husband ever attended any meetings of the Communist Party or the Young Communist League? A I decline to answer on the grounds that this might tend to incriminate me.

Q Do you know whether your husband ever attended any meetings of any agency or agencies affiliated with the Communist Party or Young Communist League? A I decline to answer on the grounds that this might tend to incriminate me.

Q Do you know whether your brother David was a member of or affiliated in any manner with either the Communist Party or Young Communist League or both? A I decline to answer on the grounds that this might tend to incriminate me.

Q Do you know whether your sister-in-law, Ethel Greenglass, was a member of or affiliated with either the
Communist Party or Young Communist League or both?
A Excuse me. I was Ethel Greenglass. Do you mean my sister-in-law?

Q Yes. Do you know whether or not your sister-in-law Ruth Greenglass was affiliated with or a member of either the Communist Party or Young Communist League or both?
A I decline to answer on the grounds that this might tend to incriminate me.

Q Were you active in the Communist Party movement?
A I decline to answer on the grounds that this might tend to incriminate me.

Q Do you know whether your husband was active in this movement? A I decline to answer on the ground that this might tend to incriminate me.

Q Do you know whether your brother, David Greenglass, and or your sister-in-law, Ruth, were active in the Communist Party movement? A I decline to answer on the grounds that this might tend to incriminate me.

Q Did you ever discuss with Ruth Greenglass the work which her husband was doing at Los Alamos during the war? A I decline to answer on the grounds that this might tend to incriminate me.

Q Were you ever present at a discussion with Ruth Greenglass during which the topic was the work which her husband, David Greenglass, was doing at Los Alamos during the war? A I decline to answer on the grounds that this might tend to incriminate me.
Rosenberg

Q. Did you ever hear your husband, Julius, discuss with Ruth Greenglass the work which her husband, David Greenglass, was doing at Los Alamos during the war?
A. I decline to answer on the grounds that this might tend to incriminate me.

Q. Did you ever discuss with David Greenglass the work which he was doing at Los Alamos during the war?
A. I decline to answer on the grounds that this might tend to incriminate me.

Q. Did you ever hear your husband discuss with David Greenglass the work which he was doing at Los Alamos during the war? A. I decline to answer on the grounds that the relationship between my husband and myself is a confidential one and I do not want to violate it.

Q. Let me explain to you again that when a third party is present during a conversation between you and your husband, the privilege of husband and wife is lost, it cannot be exercised, and the only reason you can decline to answer the question which has been put to you is on the grounds it may tend to incriminate or degrade you. Will you please answer the question? In other words, the privilege of husband and wife is only when the two of them are present; but when a third party is present the privilege is lost because it is overheard by a third party in your presence. Your ground for refusing to answer must be on the ground that the answer to the question which has been
put to you might tend to incriminate or degrade you.
A I'd like to ask advise of counsel at this point.
Q Where is your counsel? A At 299 Broadway.
Q What do you want counsel for? A I feel that I need legal counsel.
Q For what? For what reason? As to whether you should answer that question? A I have a right to ask for counsel.
Q For what reason? A Whatever the reason might be.
Q No; you have to give a reason for it. A Obviously, I want something clarified.
Q What do you want clarified? A I'd rather wait to discuss it with my counsel.
Q In other words, you want to discuss the answer to that question, on the grounds of privilege between you and your husband, is that right? A I would like the advice of counsel.
Q For what reason, Mrs. Rosenberg? Give us a reason for it. A I told you the reason. I feel that I need the advice of counsel.
Q For what reason? For what reason? You have declined to answer. I mean, do you want to answer these questions, is that why you want counsel? A I have a right to ask for counsel before I go --
Q You must give a reason for it. A Well, I have some questions to ask.
Editor's note: the following is an excerpt from federal Judge Irving Kaufman's statement upon sentencing the Rosenbergs to death for conspiracy to commit espionage on March 29, 1951. Kaufman was a judge for the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York.

Citizens of this country who betray their fellow-countrymen can be under none of the delusions about the benignity of Soviet power that they might have been prior to World War II. The nature of Russian terrorism is now self-evident. Idealism as a rational dissolves . . .

I consider your crime worse than murder. Plain deliberate contemplated murder is dwarfed in magnitude by comparison with the crime you have committed. In committing the act of murder, the criminal kills only his victim. The immediate family is brought to grief and when justice is meted out the chapter is closed. But in your case, I believe your conduct in putting into the hands of the Russians the A-bomb years before our best scientists predicted Russia would perfect the bomb has already caused, in my opinion, the Communist aggression in Korea, with the resultant casualties exceeding 50,000 and who knows but that millions more of innocent people may pay the price of your treason. Indeed, by your betrayal you undoubtedly have altered the course of history to the disadvantage of our country.

No one can say that we do not live in a constant state of tension. We have evidence of your treachery all around us every day—for the civilian defense activities throughout the nation are aimed at preparing us for an atom bomb attack. Nor can it be said in mitigation of the offense that the power which set the conspiracy in motion and profited from it was not openly hostile to the United States at the time of the conspiracy. If this was your excuse the error of your ways in setting yourselves above our properly constituted authorities and the decision of those authorities not to share the information with Russia must now be obvious . . .

In the light of this, I can only conclude that the defendants entered into this most serious conspiracy against their country with full realization of its implications . . .

The statute of which the defendants at the bar stand convicted is clear. I have previously stated my view that the verdict of guilty was amply justified by the evidence. In the light of the circumstances, I feel that I must pass such sentence upon the principals in this diabolical conspiracy to destroy a God-fearing nation, which will demonstrate with finality that this nation's security must remain inviolate; that traffic in military secrets, whether promoted by slavish devotion to a foreign ideology or by a desire for monetary gains must cease.

The evidence indicated quite clearly that Julius Rosenberg was the prime mover in this conspiracy. However, let no mistake be made about the role which his wife, Ethel Rosenberg, played in this conspiracy. Instead of deterring him from pursuing his ignoble cause, she encouraged and assisted the cause. She was a mature woman—almost three years older than her husband and almost seven years older than her younger brother. She was a full-fledged partner in this crime.

Indeed the defendants Julius and Ethel Rosenberg placed their devotion to their cause above their own personal safety and were conscious that they were sacrificing their own children, should their misdeeds be detected—all of which did not deter them from pursuing their course. Love for their cause dominated their lives—it was even greater than their love for their children.
CWA 3.2.8 – Containing Subversives (Attorney General’s List)

Editor’s note: In Executive Order 9835, President Truman authorized the Attorney General to create a list of organizations that posed a threat to national security. What follows is an excerpt from the Attorney General’s 1950 list. The 1950 list cited 197 organizations as threats to national security, organized into three groups: Communist, Subversive, Organizations which have “adopted a policy of advocating or approving the commission of acts of force and violence to deny others their rights under the Constitution of the United States,” and Organizations which “seek to alter the form of government of the United States by unconstitutional means.” Source: The Attorney General’s List of Totalitarian, Fascist, Communist, Subversive, and Other Organizations that have “adopted a policy of advocating or approving the commission of acts of force and violence to deny others their rights under the Constitution of the United States” or “seek to alter the form of government of the United States by unconstitutional means.”

Communist
Abraham Lincoln School, Chicago Illinois
American Branch of the Federation of Greek Maritime Unions
American Council on Soviet Relations
American Jewish Labor Council
American Polish Labor Council
California Labor School, San Francisco
Civil Rights Congress and its affiliated organizations, including Civil Rights Congress for Texas and Veterans against Discrimination of Civil Rights Congress of New York
Communist Party, U.S.A.
Congress of American Women
Hawaii Civil Liberties Committee
Jefferson School of Social Science, New York City
Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee
School of Jewish Studies, New York City
...
Subversive
Communist Party, U.S.A.
Socialist Workers Party
...
Organizations which have “adopted a policy of advocating or approving the commission of acts of force and violence to deny others their rights under the Constitution of the United States.”
American Christian Nationalist Party
Ku Klux Klan
...
Organizations that have “adopted a policy of advocating or approving the commission of acts of force and violence to deny others their rights under the Constitution of the United States” or “seek to alter the form of government of the United States by unconstitutional means.”
Communist Party, U.S.A.
Industrial Workers of the World
Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico
...
Editor’s note: In February 1950, Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy gave a speech in West Virginia where he claimed to have a list of 205 communists working for the State Department. A few days later, he entered an edited version of the speech in the Congressional Record. An excerpt follows:

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” – that this is the time for the show-down between the democratic Christian world and the Communist atheist world?

... 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 thirty pieces of silver to steal the blueprints of a new weapon. We are dealing with a far more sinister type of activity because it permits the enemy to guide and shape our policy....
CWA 3.2.10 – Containing Subversives (Disney HUAC Testimony)

Editor’s Note: On October 24, 1947, Walt Disney testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), answering questions from Congressional investigator H.A. Smith. Video clips of his testimony are available online (search Disney HUAC testimony) and an excerpt of the transcript is reprinted below. Source: Congress, House, Committee on Un-American Activities, Hearings Regarding the Communist Infiltration of the Motion Picture Industry, 80th Congress, 1st Session, October 1947 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1947).

Mr. SMITH Have you ever made any pictures in your studio that contained propaganda and that were propaganda films?

Mr. DISNEY Well, during the war we did. We made quite a few—working with different Government agencies. We did one for the Treasury on taxes and I did four anti-Hitler films. And I did one on my own for Air Power.

Mr. SMITH From those pictures that you made have you any opinion as to whether or not the films can be used effectively to disseminate propaganda?

Mr. DISNEY Yes, I think they proved that.

Mr. SMITH How do you arrive at that conclusion?

Mr. DISNEY Well, on the one for the Treasury on taxes, it was to let the people know that taxes were important in the war effort. As they explained to me, they had 13,000,000 new taxpayers, people who had never paid taxes, and they explained that it would be impossible to prosecute all those that were delinquent and they wanted to put this story before those people so they would get their taxes in early. I made the film and after the film had its run the Gallup poll organization polled the public and the findings were that 29 percent of the people admitted that it had influenced them in getting their taxes in early and giving them a picture of what taxes will do.

Mr. SMITH Aside from those pictures you made during the war, have you made any other pictures, or do you permit pictures to be made at your studio containing propaganda?

Mr. DISNEY No; we never have. During the war we thought it was a different thing. It was the first time we ever allowed anything like that to go in the films. We watch so that nothing gets into the films that would be harmful in any way to any group or any country. We have large audiences of children and different groups, and we try to keep them as free from anything that would offend anybody as possible. We work hard to see that nothing of that sort creeps in.

Mr. SMITH Do you have any people in your studio at the present time that you believe are Communist or Fascist employed there?

Mr. DISNEY No; at the present time I feel that everybody in my studio is 100 percent American.
Mr. SMITH Have you had at any time, in your opinion, in the past, have you at any time in the past had any Communists employed at your studio?

Mr. DISNEY Yes; in the past I had some people that I definitely feel were Communists...

Mr. SMITH What is your personal opinion of the Communist Party, Mr. Disney, as to whether or not it is a political party?

Mr. DISNEY Well, I don’t believe it is a political party. I believe it is an un-American thing. The thing that I resent the most is that they are able to get into these unions, take them over, and represent to the world that a group of people that are in my plant, that I know are good, 100 percent Americans, are trapped by this group, and they are represented to the world as supporting all of those ideologies, and it is not so, and I feel that they really ought to be smoked out and shown up for what they are, so that all of the good, free causes in this country, all the liberalisms that really are American, can go out without the taint of Communism. That is my sincere feeling on it.

Mr. SMITH Do you feel that there is a threat of communism in the motion-picture industry?

Mr. DISNEY Yes, there is, and there are many reasons why they would like to take it over or get in and control it, or disrupt it, but I don’t think they have gotten very far, and I think the industry is made up of good Americans, just like in my plant, good, solid Americans.

My boys have been fighting it longer than I have. They are trying to get out from under it and they will in time if we can just show them up.

Mr. SMITH There are presently pending before this committee two bills relative to outlawing the Communist Party. What thoughts have you as to whether or not those bills should be passed?

Mr. DISNEY Well, I don’t know as I qualify to speak on that. I feel if the thing can be proven un-American that it ought to be outlawed. I think in some way it should be done without interfering with the rights of the people. I think that will be done. I have that faith. Without interfering, I mean, with the good, American rights that we all have now, and we want to preserve.

Mr. SMITH Have you any suggestions to offer as to how the industry can be helped in fighting this menace?

Mr. DISNEY Well, I think there is a good start toward it. I know that I have been handicapped out there in fighting it, because they have been hiding behind this labor set-up, they get themselves closely tied up in the labor thing, so that if you try to get rid of them they make a labor case out of it. We must keep the American labor unions clean. We have got to fight for them…
CWA 3.2.11 – Containing Subversives (Lawson HUAC Testimony)

Editor’s Note: Playwright and screenwriter John Howard Lawson testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee on October 27, 1947. Lawson was the former head of the Screen Writers’ Guild and an acknowledged leader of the Hollywood Communist Party in the 1930s. Lawson was part of the Hollywood Ten, artists who refused to answer HUAC’s questions, arguing that it would violate their First Amendment rights. Video clips of his testimony are available online (search Lawson HUAC testimony) and an excerpt of the transcript is reprinted below. Source: Congress, House, Committee on Un-American Activities, Hearings Regarding the Communist Infiltration of the Motion Picture Industry, 80th Congress, 1st Session, October 1947 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1947).

Mr. LAWSON Mr. Chairman, I have a statement here which I wish to make—

The CHAIRMAN Well, all right, let me see your statement.

(Statement handed to the chairman.)

The CHAIRMAN I don’t care to read any more of the statement. The statement will not be read. I read the first line.

Mr. LAWSON You have spent 1 week vilifying me before the American public—

The CHAIRMAN Just a minute—

Mr. LAWSON And you refuse to allow me to make a statement on my rights as an American citizen.

The CHAIRMAN I refuse you to make the statement, because of the first sentence in your statement. That statement is not pertinent to the inquiry.

Now, this is a congressional committee—a congressional committee set up by law. We must have orderly procedure, and we are going to have orderly procedure.

Mr. Stripling, identify the witness.

Mr. LAWSON The rights of American citizens are important in this room here, and I intend to stand up for those rights, Congressman Thomas.

Mr. STRIPLING Mr. Lawson, will you state your full name, please?

Mr. LAWSON I wish to protest against the unwillingness of this committee to read a statement, when you permitted Mr. Warner, Mr. Mayer, and others to read statements in this room.

My name is John Howard Lawson...

Mr. STRIPLING What is your occupation, Mr. Lawson?

Mr. LAWSON I am a writer.
CWA 3.2.11 – Containing Subversives (Lawson HUAC Testimony)

Mr. STRIPLING  How long have you been a writer?

Mr. LAWSON  All my life—at least 35 years—my adult life.

Mr. STRIPLING  Are you a member of the Screen Writers Guild?

Mr. LAWSON  The raising of any question here in regard to membership, political beliefs, or affiliation—

Mr. STRIPLING  Mr. Chairman—

Mr. LAWSON  Is absolutely beyond the powers of this committee.

Mr. STRIPLING  Mr. Chairman—

(The chairman pounding the gavel)

Mr. LAWSON  It is a matter of public record that I am a member of the Screen Writers Guild.

Mr. STRIPLING  I ask—

(Applause)

The CHAIRMAN  I want to caution the people in the audience: You are the guests of this committee and you will have to maintain order at all times. I do not care for any applause or any demonstrations of one kind or another.

Mr. STRIPLING  Now, Mr. Chairman, I am also going to request that you instruct the witness to be responsive to the questions.

The CHAIRMAN  I think the witness will be more responsive to the questions.

Mr. LAWSON  Mr. Chairman, you permitted—

The CHAIRMAN  (pounding gavel) Never mind—

Mr. LAWSON  (continuing) Witnesses in this room to make answers of three or four or five hundred words to questions here.

The CHAIRMAN  Mr. Lawson, you will please be responsive to these questions and not continue to try to disrupt these hearings.

Mr. LAWSON  I am not on trial here, Mr. Chairman. This committee is on trial here before the American people. Let us get that straight.

The CHAIRMAN  We don’t want you to be on trial.
CWA 3.2.11 – Containing Subversives (Lawson HUAC Testimony)

Mr. STRIPLING  Mr. Lawson, how long have you been a member of the Screen Writers Guild?

Mr. LAWSON  Since it was founded in its present form, in 1933.

Mr. STRIPLING  Have you ever held any office in the guild?

Mr. LAWSON  The question of whether I have held office is also a question which is beyond the purview of this Committee.

(The chairman pounding the gavel)

Mr. LAWSON  It is an invasion of the right of association under the Bill of Rights of this country.

The CHAIRMAN  Please be responsive to the question.

Mr. LAWSON  It is also a matter—

(The chairman pounding the gavel)

Mr. LAWSON  Of public record—

The CHAIRMAN  You asked to be heard. Through your attorney, you asked to be heard, and we want you to be heard. And if you don’t care to be heard, then we will excuse you and we will put the record in without your answers.

Mr. LAWSON  I wish to frame my own answers to your questions, Mr. Chairman, and I intend to do so...

It is absolutely beyond the power of this committee to inquire into my association in any organization.

The CHAIRMAN  Mr. Lawson, you will have to stop or you will leave the witness stand. And you will leave the witness stand because you are in contempt. That is why you will leave the witness stand. And if you are just trying to force me to put you in contempt, you won’t have to try much harder. You know what has happened to a lot of people that have been in contempt of this committee this year, don’t you?

Mr. LAWSON  I am glad you have made it perfectly clear that you are going to threaten and intimidate the witnesses, Mr. Chairman.

(The chairman pounding the gavel)

Mr. LAWSON  I am an American and I am not at all easy to intimidate, and don’t think I am.

(The chairman pounding the gavel)
CWA 3.2.11 – Containing Subversives (Lawson HUAC Testimony)

The CHAIRMAN  Mr. Lawson, just quiet down again.

Mr. Lawson, the most pertinent question that we can ask is whether or not you have ever been a member of the Communist Party. Now, do you care to answer that question?

Mr. LAWSON  You are using the old technique, which was used in Hitler Germany in order to create a scare here—

The CHAIRMAN  *(pounding gavel)* Oh—

Mr. LAWSON  In order to create an entirely false atmosphere in which this hearing is conducted—

*(The chairman pounding the gavel)*

The CHAIRMAN  Excuse the witness—

Mr. LAWSON  As they do from what I have written.

The CHAIRMAN  *(pounding gavel)* Stand away from the stand—

Mr. LAWSON  I have written Americanism for many years, and I shall continue to fight for the Bill of Rights, which you are trying to destroy.

The CHAIRMAN  Officers, take this man away from the stand—

*(Applause and Boos)*

The CHAIRMAN  *(pounding gavel)* There will be no demonstrations. No demonstrations, for or against. Everyone will please be seated....
CWA 3.2.12 – Containing Subversives (Hoover HUAC Testimony)

Editor’s note: the following transcript is excerpted from FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover’s testimony before the House Un-American Activity Committee. Source: J. Edgar Hoover, testimony, House Committee on Un-American Activities, Hearings on H.R. 1884 and H.R. 2122, 80th Cong., 1st Session, March 26, 1947.

The Communist Party of the United States is a fifth column if there ever was one. It is far better organized than were the Nazis in occupied countries prior to their capitulation.

They are seeking to weaken America just as they did in their era of obstruction when they were aligned [sic] with the Nazis. Their goal is the overthrow of our Government.

There is no doubt as to where a real Communist’s loyalty rests. Their allegiance is to Russia, not the United States....

What can we do? And what should be our course of action? The best antidote to communism is vigorous, intelligent, old-fashioned Americanism with eternal vigilance. I do not favor any course of action which would give the Communists cause to portray and pity themselves as martyrs. I do favor unrelenting prosecution wherever they are found to be violating our country’s laws.

CWA 3.2.13 – Containing Subversives (Standerr HUAC Image)

CWA 3.2.14 – Containing Subversives (Smith Act of 1940)

Editor’s Note: The Alien Registration Act of 1940, usually called the Smith Act because the anti-sedition section was authored by Representative Howard W. Smith of Virginia, was adopted at 54 Statutes at Large 670–671 (1940). The Act has been amended several times and can now be found at 18 U.S. Code § 2385 (2000). An excerpt from the act is copied below.


Whoever knowingly or willfully advocates, abets, advises, or teaches the duty, necessity, desirability, or propriety of overthrowing or destroying the government of the United States or the government of any State, Territory, District or Possession thereof, or the government of any political subdivision therein, by force or violence, or by the assassination of any officer of any such government; or

Whoever, with intent to cause the overthrow or destruction of any such government, prints, publishes, edits, issues, circulates, sells, distributes, or publicly displays any written or printed matter advocating, advising, or teaching the duty, necessity, desirability, or propriety of overthrowing or destroying any government in the United States by force or violence, or attempts to do so; or

Whoever organizes or helps or attempts to organize any society, group, or assembly of persons who teach, advocate, or encourage the overthrow or destruction of any such government by force or violence; or becomes or is a member of, or affiliates with, any such society, group, or assembly of persons, knowing the purposes thereof—

Shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than twenty years, or both, and shall be ineligible for employment by the United States or any department or agency thereof, for the five years next following his conviction.

If two or more persons conspire to commit any offense named in this section, each shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than twenty years, or both, and shall be ineligible for employment by the United States or any department or agency thereof, for the five years next following his conviction.

As used in this section, the terms “organizes” and “organize”, with respect to any society, group, or assembly of persons, include the recruiting of new members, the forming of new units, and the regrouping or expansion of existing clubs, classes, and other units of such society, group, or assembly of persons.
In the years following the August, 1945 dropping of the atomic bombs Americans became increasingly concerned about what this new powerful weapon and technology would mean for the country and the country’s standing in the world. On the one hand the American military entered into the arms race with the Soviets Union to stay ahead of and compete with the Communists’ atomic capabilities. Between the late 1940s and 1960s, the American government and military spent a great deal of money and energy building, storing, and testing more deadly atomic weapons. But on the other hand, at home American citizens tried to develop different uses for nuclear technology, uses that would not necessarily involve weapons. This desire for peaceful uses of nuclear power stemmed from government investment in science and technology, as well as from a genuine desire to harness the power cultivated by this new technology.

One way to contain the threat of communism at home was to invest in technology and peaceful uses for nuclear weapons to keep Americans safe, independent, and prosperous. Naively unaware of dangerous health risks that came from exposure to radiation, journalists and scientists imagined and planned for atomic automobiles that could use a block of uranium to power a car indefinitely. According to the author of Almighty Atom: The Real Story of Atomic Energy, Americans could “[d]rive the car as long as it holds together, and you will never have to stop for refueling.”

Americans also hoped for nuclear powered airplanes, buildings, even vitamins to help fuel the country’s machinery and people. As fantastic and utopian as these uses for nuclear power sounded, many Americans came to believe that the power of the bombs would soon bring a wealth of productivity and protection at home. In reality, nuclear power did provide real sources for energy development; the first commercial nuclear power plant opened in 1958.
CWA 3.3.1 – Containing Nuclear Power Overview

In fact government investment in atomic power and related forms of technology did help drive American’s market economy, which had important implications in the context of the Cold War. For example, the development of the government-subsidized aero-space industry in the West convinced many educated middle-class Americans to move to western states in the late 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. Over these decades the population boomed in western suburbs. Americans found relatively high-paying work in fields related to atomic power and technology. And it was here that they tried to literally make peaceful uses for this atomic technology, fight the Soviets through investment in this technology, and simultaneously build up their own private fortunes in their suburban homes, which seemed to be the antithesis of communism where private homeownership did not exist. One of the first and most important architects of American suburbs, William Levitt famously said: "No man who owns his own house and lot can be a communist."

Nevertheless, as the “father of the atomic bomb,” J. Robert Oppenheimer explained to a group of businessmen in 1946: “The development of atomic energy for peace cannot be separated from its development for war.” In other words, as atomic power became a part of daily discussion, Americans had to come to terms with the very uncomfortable reality that weapons that could inflict unimagined disaster on a scale far greater than the bombs dropped on Japan were a central component of the Cold War. Living with this threat was simply a Cold War necessity; by building a stronger nuclear arsenal of weapons and technology, American leaders hoped the Soviet threat would be contained.
CWA 3.3.2 – Containing Nuclear Power (Atom Comic Book)

Editor's note: what follows are two pages from a comic book, Adventures Inside the Atom. Produced by the Atomic Energy Commission for General Electric in 1948, the comic book describes the “story of nuclear energy.” To see the full book, visit the National Archives, www.archives.gov and search for ARC Identifier 281568.
CWA 3.3.4 – Containing Nuclear Power (Civil Defense Fair)

CWA 3.3.5 – Containing Nuclear Power (Fallout Shelter)

CWA 3.3.6 – Containing Nuclear Power (Nuclear Reactor)

CWA 3.3.7 – Containing Nuclear Power (Civil Defense Poster)

Editor's note: the following public service announcement was produced by the Advertisement Council in 1953. Source: Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, National Archives, ARC Identifier 594366, http://arcweb.archives.gov/arc/action/ExternalIdSearch?id=594366.
CWA 3.3.8 – Containing Nuclear Power (Nuclear Reactor)

Nuclear Nursing - Chief Hospitalman Lee Jones, U.S. Navy, of Silver Spring, Maryland, demonstrates radiation survey instruments used to measure the presence of radioactivity, as part of the nuclear nursing course at the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland. The nurses left to right are: Lieutenant Commander Anne Check, Perth Amboy, New Jersey; Lieutenant Margaret M. Smith, Riverdale, New York, and Lieutenant Lina D. Murasheff, Richmond, California, 12/29/1958, Source: National Archives, ARC Identifier 521004
RESEARCH PROGRAMS

The application of atomic energy to peacetime pursuits involves the development of power applications. To this end Monsanto Chemical Co., operating Clinton Laboratories, has been charged with the development of a power pile in accordance with design of Barrington Daniels and associates at this Metallurgical Laboratory in Chicago. A number of other research contractors have been assigned duties in connection with the power program. Among these are Battelle Memorial Institute, Iowa State College, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, all of whom are contributing in chemical and metallurgical studies required for pile development. Another of the more important applications of the nuclear studies to peacetime pursuits lies in the isotope program with its myriad applications to biology and medicine. A number of laboratories and plants have been contributing research efforts in conjunction with their regular programs to the provision of isotopes for the benefit of the nation as a whole. Among these are the Argonne Laboratory, Fanford Engineer Works, University of California Radiation Laboratory, and Monsanto Chemical Company at Clinton Laboratories, who will act as the distributor if isotopes for the entire project.

The cyclotron work at the University of California was interrupted by the Manhattan District in order to provide personnel and the cyclotron magnets for research on the electromagnetic separation process. The Manhattan District has now released this personnel and equipment to the program of accelerating particles, which has contributed so greatly to the fundamental development of nuclear studies. The Manhattan District is assisting the University of California in completing the interrupted program of cyclotron
CWA 3.3.11  – Containing Nuclear Power (Levittown House)

CWA 3.3.12 – Containing Nuclear Power (Suburban Growth)

One of the most personal ways that Americans worked to contain communism was in their own homes within their own relationships and families. Proscribed gender roles and family structures became weapons with which the Cold War was waged. American leaders told ordinary citizens that their daily lives – everything from their household chores, marital relations, and child-rearing practices – distinguished Americans from the Soviet enemy.

After World War II many Americans were eager to begin this kind of lifestyle championed by the government. For the previous fifteen years, America endured a Great Depression and world war. These two crises made the birth rate stay very low, and made more unattainable the ideal of a stay-at-home mom and single breadwinner dad. But after the war ended, politicians, journalists, and advertisers began to glorify the nuclear family ideal as an example of the American democratic way, where women in particular were considered responsible for the integrity of the family. Many national forces encouraged women to stay at home and care for their husbands, children, and homes. Partly as a result, in the late 1940s the birthrate skyrocketed, producing the “baby boom.” Idealizing a stay-at-home mom served the interests of the business owners and the government in the post-war years: companies wanted women to leave their wartime jobs to open up jobs for men returning from war (though many women wanted to remain employed). As homemakers, women were encouraged to define themselves by consuming all of the new household goods and appliances that companies had developed by the 1950s. Women read in magazines, for example, that a “good” housekeeper had the latest gadgets and appliances to run an efficient household and that a “good” wife had nice clothes and kept herself looking attractive for her husband. While women did pursue education, college was encouraged mostly to “catch” a husband; as many as 60% of women dropped out of college to get married. Colleges catered to this trend by providing married student housing.

Popular culture reflected these ideals, with women in movies mostly portrayed as either sweet, innocent, happy housewives or as women who sought husbands. Television shows like “Leave it to Beaver” and “Father Knows Best” also featured happy families with ideal mothers and wise fathers. In part, studios and the government promoted this ideal as a way to contain communism. Women who did not work outside the home represented the ultimate domestic sphere ideal, something that communists strongly opposed because they argued that there was a great deal of inequality in homes where only one spouse worked and earned wages outside of the home. In addition, stay-at-home moms could spend a great deal of time purchasing a wide variety of consumer goods, which was in sharp contrast to the lack of consumer goods and culture in the Soviet Union. Thus, as the Kitchen Debate illustrates, women who did not participate in this consumer culture were seen as implicitly undermining capitalism. Moreover, without stay-at-home moms, people worried that “subversive” influences could easily creep into the home and undermine the American family ideal.
Women who rejected the nuclear family model faced judgment and ridicule. If mothers chose to work outside of the home, psychiatrists argued against this model, claiming that their children were more inclined to become delinquents. Psychologists, writers, and advertisers scorned all women who challenged social norms by continuing their education, rejecting dominant beauty standards, or remaining single. However, while homemaking and motherhood were considered important by society, many women found this life intellectually limiting, and a number of suburban women did not feel fulfilled. And even if women did seek to stay at home while their husbands worked outside the home, only the middle and upper classes could realistically attain these ideals. Poor, single, and working-class women still had to work outside the home to survive economically. Despite their economic needs, these women were still criticized for not having the ideal American family. Thus, poor Americans, who were disproportionately people of color, were implicitly placed in the position of being considered “un-American” and potentially sympathizers with the communists.

Another group of Americans that was considered subversive and “un-American” were homosexuals. In the context of the Red Scare of the 1950s, fear of communism went hand-in-hand with fear of homosexuals. In fact, the two groups – Communists and homosexuals – were often conflated because Americans believed that both posed deep “security risks” to the nation. Psychiatrists and psychologists argued that both homosexuality and communism were diseases that often resulted from psychological problems. For example, early childhood development problems, particularly an overdependence on the mother, a sheltered life, or any childhood trauma could cause someone to be susceptible to the perceived illnesses of homosexuality and communism. As psychiatrist Edmund Bergler alerted Americans, “the ‘homosexual outlet’ is the predominant national disease, overshadowing in number, cancer, tuberculosis, heart failure, and infantile paralysis.” In part because of the very poor treatment homosexuals received during the Cold War, those that identified as gay were inspired to create the first sustained gay organization in the US, the Mattachine Society, which opened in southern California in 1950. At the time though Americans were once again told that by conforming with the norm of heterosexual Nuclear families, they would help fight the communist threat. As another psychologist emphasized in the 1950s, “Young people chose to marry early, to have several children in the early years of marriage, to live... nice neighborhoods, and to have cars, washing machines, refrigerators, television sets, and several other appliances at the same time.”
CWA 3.4.2 – Containing Women and Families (J. Edgar Hoover on Women)

Editor’s note: The following quote from J. Edgar Hoover (FBI Director) is taken from the November 9, 1956 edition of the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin.

“[H]omemakers and mothers” have a responsibility to fight, “the twin enemies of freedom – crime and communism...

“I feel there are no careers as important as those of homemaker and mother.”

CWA 3.4.2 – Containing Women and Families (Kitchen Debate)

Editor’s note: In 1959, the American government hosted an exhibition at Sokolniki Park in Moscow, as part of a cultural exchange designed to improve relations between the US and the Soviet Union. On July 24 of that year, Vice President Richard Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev toured the exhibit together. As part of the exhibit, a replica of an American house was built to showcase the latest American consumer goods. As Nixon and Khrushchev toured the exhibit, they engaged in a lively back and forth discussion, translated by their respective interpreters. American writer William Safire was there as a press agent for the company that built the model home. In a 50-year anniversary column for the New York Times, “The Cold War’s Hot Kitchen,” Safire recounted part of the encounter. Excerpts from Safire’s recollections are printed below. (You can also find video clips of it online by searching for Kitchen Debate).

Nixon: “There must be an exchange of ideas. After all, you don’t know everything –“
Khrushchev: “If I don’t know everything, you’d don’t know anything about communism – except fear of it.”
Nixon: “The way you dominate the conversation... if you were in the United States Senate you would be accused of filibustering.”

Nixon: “I want to show you this kitchen. It’s like those of houses in California. See that built-in washing machine?”
Khrushchev: “We have such things.”
Nixon: “What we want to do is make more easy the life of our housewives.”
Khrushchev: “We do not have the capitalist attitude toward women.”

Nixon: “Would it not be better to compete in the relative merit of washing machines than in the strength of rockets?”
Khrushchev: “Yes, but your generals say we must compete in rockets. We are strong and we can beat you.”
Nixon: “In this day and age to argue who is stronger completely misses the point. With modern weapons it just does not make sense. If war comes we both lose.
Nixon: “When we sit down at a conference table it cannot be all one way. One side cannot put an ultimatum to another.”
Khrushchev: “Our country has never been guided by ultimatums ... It sounds like a threat.”
Nixon: “Who is threatening?”
Khrushchev: “You want to threaten us indirectly. We have powerful weapons, too, and ours are better than yours if you want to compete.”
Nixon: “Immaterial... I don’t think peace is helped by reiterating that you have more strength than us, because that is a threat, too.”
CWA 3.4.3 – Containing Women and Families (Kitchen Debate)

Editor’s note: During the cold war, the Department of Defense commissioned Warner Brothers studios to produce an anti-communist film, Red Nightmare, starring Jack Webb and Jeanne Kelly. The short film details the dangers of communism and promotes responsible behavior. It was first produced for as an Armed Forces Information film, but later was renamed Red Nightmare and shown to public school children, starting in 1962. A still image from the film is copied below; the full video is available online (search Red Nightmare).


Q. Mrs. May Craig, Portland (Maine) Press Herald: Sir, you have been, and others have been very active in trying to wipe out discriminations which are based on race, creed, religion, and color. Why have you not been as active in trying to wipe out discrimination based on sex, namely, the equal rights amendment?

THE PRESIDENT. Well, it's hard for a mere man to believe that woman doesn't have equal rights. [Laughter]

But actually, this is the first time that this has come to my specific attention now since, oh, I think a year or so. And, really, I just can't answer your question this morning. I do know that in certain States, and probably in all, there are some things where women do not yet have what they believe to be at least their full rights.

And I am in favor of it. I just probably haven't been active enough in doing something about it.

Q. Mrs. Craig: Will you?

THE PRESIDENT. I will take a look at it.
Editor’s note: the following is an excerpt from a speech, “A Purpose for Modern Woman,” that Adlai Stevenson gave to Smith College graduates at their commencement in 1955. Stevenson was elected governor of Illinois in 1948, ran unsuccessfully for president in 1952, 1956, and 1960, and later became the American ambassador to the United Nations.

This assignment for you, as wives and mothers, has great advantages.

In the first place, it is home work, you can do it in the living-room with a baby in your lap or in the kitchen with a can opener in your hand. If you’re really clever, maybe you can even practice your saving arts on that unsuspecting man while he’s watching television!

And, secondly, it is important work worthy of you, whoever you are, or your education, whatever it is, because we will defeat totalitarian, authoritarian ideas only by better ideas; we will frustrate the evils of vocational specialization only by the virtues of intellectual generalization. Since Western rationalism and Eastern spiritualism met in Athens and that mighty creative fire broke out, collectivism in various forms has collided with individualism time and again. This twentieth-century collision, this “crisis” we are forever talking about, will be won at last not on the battlefield but in the head and heart....

Women, especially educated women, have a unique opportunity to influence us, man and boy, and to play a direct part in the unfolding drama of our free society.

... Western marriage and motherhood are yet another instance of the emergence of individual freedom in our Western society. Their basis is the recognition in women as well as men of the primacy of personality and individuality. ...
CWA 3.5.1 – Containing the Race Problem Overview

During the Cold War American racism was a problem not just for those that suffered because of it, but for the rest of the world as well. Coming out of World War II when news of the true extent of the Holocaust was revealed, people all around the world came to understand this genocide of Jews in Europe as a logical extension of racism. And after the war, especially when the United Nations formed and its charter contained a clause that promoted equal human rights for all people, across the world people came to believe that discrimination based on race, religion, or ethnicity should not be tolerated. This belief was certainly at odds with the segregation practiced in America. In the south, laws sanctioned segregation in nearly all realms of life: everything from restrooms to swimming pools to movie theaters to laundry facilities. In the north, suburbs, professional sports, and labor unions among many other organizations practiced segregation. While this kind of racial discrimination and the violence that accompanied it had been going on for years in the United States, the Cold War and America’s interest in anti-communism shone a new spotlight on racism in America.

As America worked to find anti-communist allies around the world (especially in new nations that had previously been colonies), foreigners started to take notice of how the American government regarded its own minority population. After all, if America did not guarantee equality or protect its own non-white citizens, how could it promote those same rights for 40 million new potential allies inside those developing nations? Another problem the Soviets liked to point out was how could America promote to the rest of the world the importance of democracy and equality when it did not afford those rights to much of its own population? These and other contradictions that were repeatedly questioned by international observers caused American leaders to respond to the race problem at home with a different urgency; hence there was a new desire to contain the race problem. For example, in September, 1957 when President Dwight Eisenhower ordered federal troops to integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, he reacted as strongly as he did because of the international Cold War context. Foreign newspapers like the Soviet newspaper Pravda published pictures and cartoons that highlighted a white mob preventing young black children from simply entering their school. Reports of lynchings and racially-inspired violence also concerned American allies who worried that these incidents would undermine America’s reputation in the world.

While American presidents during the Cold War saw the importance of acting on the race issue if only to appease the rest of the world, some conservative politicians continued to call for segregation. And in hopes of discrediting the civil rights movement, these politicians began to argue that civil rights organizers were themselves communists. By branding civil rights organizers as communists, conservative politicians believed that the country would turn their backs on this movement for equality, much as they had done with Hollywood producers and actors who had been branded communists. Thus, containing the race problem for segregationists meant portraying civil rights organizers like Martin Luther King, Jr. as a communist. Segregationist politicians argued that the civil rights movement had radical elements in it that connected the entire movement with the Soviet Union and that these subversive organizers were out to upset a generally content segregated society in the south. In the end, containing the race problem was fraught with a number of problems for government leaders across the country. But in the 1950s and 1960s as the civil rights movement demanded to be heard, the government’s response to these protests and crises was very much motivated by its own Cold War agenda.
CWA 3.5.2 – Containing the Race Problem (Muhammad Ali)


“I never thought of myself as great when I refused to go into the Army. All I did was stand up for what I believed. There were people who thought the war in Vietnam was right. And those people, if they went to war, acted just as brave as I did.

...I made a stand all people, not just black people, should have been making, because it wasn’t just black people being drafted...

...Freedom, means being able to follow your religion, but it also means carrying the responsibility to choose between right and wrong. So when the time came for me to make up my mind about going in the Army, I knew people were dying in Vietnam for nothing and I should live by what I thought was right. I wanted America to be America. And now the whole world knows that, so far as my own beliefs are concerned, I did what was right for me.”

CWA 3.5.3 – Containing the Race Problem (MLK at Riverside Church)

Editor’s note: the following quote is taken from a speech that Martin Luther King, Jr. made at Riverside Church in New York on April 4, 1967. In his speech, King called for an end to the Vietnam War. Complete transcripts and pictures from his speech are available online (search Martin Luther King Riverside 1967)

“It became clear to me that the war was doing far more than devastating the hopes of the poor at home. It was sending their sons and their brothers and their husbands to fight and to die in extraordinarily high proportions relative to the rest of the population. We were taking the black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them eight thousand miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in southwest Georgia and East Harlem.”

CWA 3.5.4 – Containing the Race Problem (Four Lanes to Trouble)

Editor’s note: the following quotes detail a dispute between Washington, DC area restaurant owners, African diplomats, and the U.S. State Department in 1961 regarding some restaurants’ refusal to serve the diplomats. The dispute was highlighted in LIFE magazine’s December 8, 1961 edition in an article entitled, “From Washington to New York, Four Lanes to Trouble.”

“When I asked for coffee, the good woman said she could not serve me.” Malick Sow, the ambassador to the United States of the newly independent African nation of Chad, was explaining to a reporter in 1961 about his reception in a Maryland restaurant. “She said, ‘That’s the way it is here.’ I cannot say how I felt. I was astonished. I was so angry. President Kennedy himself has made deep apologies, but these humiliations are bad.” When asked for her side of the story, Mrs. Leroy Merritt of the Bonnie Brae Diner replied with what she considered evident common sense. “He looked just like an ordinary run of the mill nigger to me. I couldn’t tell he was an ambassador.”


“I am a patriotic American. But when people come around here from the State Department telling me what I can do in my place then I say this country is going communist. I’ll sell and move to Russia. There’s more freedom there.” – Clarence Rosier, Cottage Inn Restaurant

“We don’t have a colored problem around here. What we have is a white problem. People don’t like pressure from anybody – including the State Department. But I do say when it does happen it must happen for everyone the same day, the same hour. Then it wouldn’t hurt trade. This is bound to come. Things have got to change. But it has to be done gradually. It has to be done by everyone, not just one person. It hurts me not to serve those people. It hurts me here [putting hand to heart]. But if I did serve them it would hurt more here [slapping his wallet]” – Earl Kammerer, Aberdeen Restaurant

CWA 3.5.6 – Containing the Race Problem (To Secure These Rights)

Editor’s note: the following excerpt is taken from To Secure These Rights, The Report of the President’s Committee on Civil Rights. Established in response to President Harry Truman’s Executive Order 9808, the committee was created “…to inquire into and to determine whether and in what respect current law-enforcement measures and the authority and means possessed by Federal, State, and local governments may be strengthened and improved to safeguard the civil rights of the people.” The report was published in 1947. To read the full report and order, visit the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum website, www.trumanlibrary.org, and search for “civil rights.”

“It is impossible to decide who suffers the greatest moral damage from our civil rights transgressions, because all of us are hurt. That is certainly true of those who are victimized. Their belief in the basic truth of the American promise is undermined. Their belief in the basic truth of the American promise is undermined. But they do have the realization, galling as it sometimes is, of being morally in the right. The damage to those who are responsible for these violations of our moral standards may well be greater. They, too, have been reared to honor the command of “free and equal…” All of us must endure the cynicism about democratic values which our failures breed.”

Truman speaking at conference of National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, June 29, 1947.

Executive Order

ESTABLISHING THE PRESIDENT’S COMMITTEE ON EQUALITY OF TREATMENT AND OPPORTUNITY IN THE ARMED SERVICES

WHEREAS it is essential that there be maintained in the armed services of the United States the highest standards of democracy, with equality of treatment and opportunity for all those who serve in our country’s defense:

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States, by the Constitution and the statutes of the United States, and as Commander in Chief of the armed services, it is hereby ordered as follows:

1. It is hereby declared to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin. This policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible, having due regard to the time required to effectuate any necessary changes without impairing efficiency or morale.

2. There shall be created in the National Military Establishment an advisory committee to be known as the President’s Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services, which shall be composed of seven members to be designated by the President.

3. The Committee is authorized on behalf of the President to examine into the rules, procedures and practices of the armed services in order to determine in what respect such rules, procedures and practices may be altered or improved with a view to carrying out the policy of this order. The Committee shall confer and advise with the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Navy, and the Secretary of the Air Force, and shall make such recommendations to the President and to said Secretaries as in the judgment of the Committee will effectuate the policy hereof.

4. All executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government are authorized and directed to cooperate with the Committee in its work, and to furnish the Committee such information or the services of such persons as the Committee may require in the performance of its duties.

5. When requested by the Committee to do so, persons in the armed services or in any of the executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government shall testify before the Committee and shall make available for the use of the Committee such documents and other information as the Committee may require.

6. The Committee shall continue to exist until such time as the President shall terminate its existence by Executive order.

Harry Truman

THE WHITE HOUSE,

July 26, 1948.
CWA 3.5.7 – Containing the Race Problem (Truman Desegregates Armed Forces)