

McCarthyism and *The Crucible*



The Second Red Scare



Throughout the 1940s and 1950s America was overwhelmed with concerns about the threat of communism growing in Eastern Europe and China.

Was this fear justified?

Well...yes and no...

Because the Communist Party in the United States helped to organize labor unions and was opposed to fascism, it gained a membership of about 75,000 members in 1940-1941.

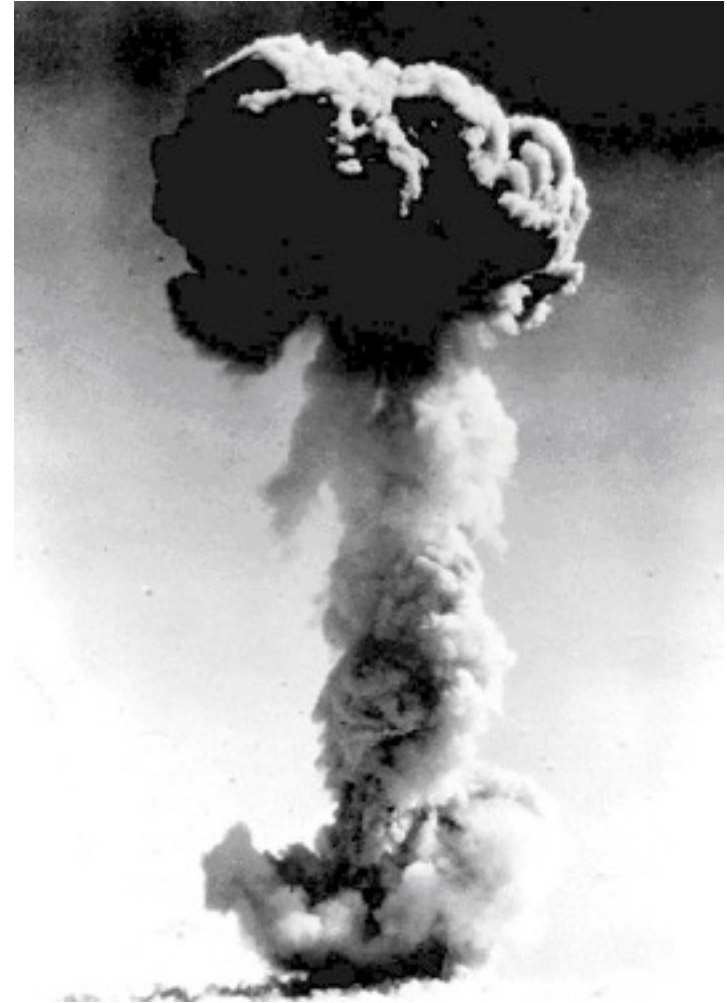
The Cold War

During WWII, the United States was allied with the Soviet Union. When we were fighting together, no one cared about communism.

After WWII, as the Soviet Union expanded its territory, the Cold War and fears of communism began again.

One thing that scared us...

The Soviet Union tested an atomic bomb in 1949, earlier than many analysts had expected.



Another scary thing...



That same year, Mao Zedong's Communist army gained control of mainland China despite heavy American financial support of the opposing Kuomintang.

And also...

In 1950, the Korean War began, pitting U.S., U.N., and South Korean forces against Communists from North Korea and China.



Who is Joseph McCarthy?

A Marine Corps veteran of World War II, McCarthy was elected to the U.S. Senate from Wisconsin in 1946.



1950 Joseph McCarthy speech

He leapt to national fame on 9 February 1950 with a speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, where he waved a piece of paper and claimed "I have in my hand" a list of known communist loyalists working in the State Department.

House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)

While the House Un-American Activities Committee had been formed in 1938 as an anti-Communist organ, McCarthy's accusations heightened the political tensions of the times.



HUAC Investigates Hollywood



The Committee began to subpoena screenwriters, directors, and other movie industry professionals to testify about their known or suspected membership in the Communist Party.

The Committee Wants to Know



“Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party of the United States?”



Among the first film industry witnesses subpoenaed by the Committee were ten who decided not to cooperate.

Real Life Repercussions

The ten were sentenced to 6 months to 1 year in prison for contempt of Congress. They were also blacklisted from working in the film industry in Hollywood, until the 1960's when the ban was lifted.

Whose Jail Sentence? Whose Future?

The meaning to you of the Legal
Case of the Hollywood Ten
and
A Course of Action

Two years ago the 80th Congress was in full swing. It was full of Roosevelt haters out to destroy the New Deal, and set up an atom bomb diplomacy. It passed Taft-Hartley — started witch-hunts — voted your money for Greek Fascism but not for Veteran housing.

But two years ago Hollywood was still making some vital films. Do you remember **THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES** — **CROSSFIRE** — **GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT**? They were good films, thought-provoking, fine, adult entertainment. They were dedicated to a peaceful future.

Hollywood was therefore marked for attack.

How did that attack come?

By a phony investigation of Communism in Hollywood. Ten men (the Hollywood Ten) were hauled before the Committee on un-American Activities. These ten were writers, directors and producers who had made progressive films, supported progressive legislation, supported peace.

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE INVESTIGATION?

The Committee demanded that these ten men be fired from their jobs and black-listed in the film industry.

The Committee demanded that the film industry convert the screen into a war-inciting, red-baiting medium of propoganda.

The Committee demanded that all progressives be blacklisted in the film industry.

WHAT ELSE HAPPENED?

The Hollywood Ten denounced the Committee's attempt to investigate thought, to force declarations of political belief and affiliation.

They denied the Committee's right to censor the screen or blacklist film workers.

Arthur Miller and HUAC

Arthur Miller had already been named as a suspected communist by another suspect at the hearings. Miller (now married to Marilyn Monroe) applied for a new passport. The HUAC used this opportunity to subpoena him to appear before the committee.



Before appearing, Miller asked the committee not to ask him to name names, to which the chairman agreed but later ignored the agreement.

When Miller attended the hearing, he gave the committee a detailed account of his political activities (leaving out the fact that he was a communist party member).

Miller in trouble

- Miller refused to name others, saying "*I could not use the name of another person and bring trouble on him.*" As a result a judge found Miller guilty of contempt of Congress in May 1957. Miller was fined \$500, sentenced to thirty days in prison, blacklisted, and disallowed a U.S. passport. (sentence later overturned)

Banned Books

McCarthy examined authors for allegations of Communist influence. Yielding to the pressure, the State Department ordered its overseas librarians to remove these books from their shelves. Some libraries actually burned the newly forbidden books.



Memorial to burned books

A New Target

McCarthy's committee then began an investigation into the United States Army. McCarthy garnered some headlines with stories of a dangerous spy ring among the Army researchers, but ultimately nothing came of this investigation



Army-McCarthy Hearings

McCarthy next turned his attention to the case of a U.S. Army dentist who had been promoted to the rank of major despite having refused to answer questions on an Army loyalty review form. McCarthy's handling of this investigation, including a series of insults directed at a brigadier general, led to the Army-McCarthy hearings.

"STAND FAST, MEN --- THEY'RE ARMED WITH MARSHMALLOWS"



McCarthy Flops

The Army and McCarthy traded charges and counter-charges for 36 days before a nationwide television audience. While the official outcome of the hearings was inconclusive, this exposure of McCarthy to the American public resulted in a sharp decline in his popularity

McCarthy fall from popularity

In less than a year, McCarthy's position as a prominent force in anti-communism was essentially ended. On December 2, 1954, the Senate voted to censure Senator McCarthy by a vote of 67 to 22, making him one of the few senators ever to be disciplined in this fashion.

About three years later...

McCarthy died on May 2, 1957, at the age of 48. The official cause of death was acute hepatitis; it is widely accepted that this was exacerbated by alcoholism.



Victims of McCarthyism

The number imprisoned is in the hundreds, and some ten or twelve thousand lost their jobs. Some of those who were imprisoned or lost their jobs did in fact have some connection with the Communist Party. But for most, both the potential harm to the nation and the nature of their communist affiliation were tenuous.

Homosexuals targeted

McCarthy did not just go after suspected communists, he also targeted gays.

The hunt for "sexual perverts", who were presumed to be subversive by nature, resulted in thousands being harassed and denied employment.

The Crucible and McCarthyism

The play focused heavily on the fact that once accused, a person would have little chance of exoneration, given the irrational and circular reasoning of both the courts and the public.





What comparisons can you make between
McCarthyism and the Salem Witch Trials?

1950'S McCarthyism	SIMILARITIES	1692 Salem Witch Trials