THE ANTICOMMUNISM CRUSADE ACTIVITY

How did the anticomunist crusade deprive certain Americans of their civil liberties and create an atmosphere of fear?

Background: The Cold War encouraged a culture of secrecy and dishonesty, and like other wars, the Cold War encouraged the drawing of a sharp line between patriotic Americans and those accused of being disloyal. But what constituted disloyalty? Was it only to be defined as outright spying or sabotage? Might someone who belonged to the Communist Party be considered disloyal, whether or not he had committed any overt act against the United States? And what about a screenwriter who interjected pro-Soviet themes into a Hollywood movie, or a songwriter who criticized some aspect of American society in one of his songs? Containment – not only of communism but of unorthodox opinions of all kinds – took place at home as well as abroad. At precisely the moment when the United States celebrated freedom as the foundations of American life, American liberties came under attack at home.

Directions: Read and annotate the Documents in your assigned group, and answer the questions that follow. The groups are as follows:

- Group One: Soviet Espionage in America
- Group Two: The House Un-American Activities Committee
- Group Three: McCarthyism

CIRCLE OR HIGHLIGHT YOUR GROUP ABOVE!

Group One: Soviet Espionage in America

Part I: The Venona Project

Directions: Read the following excerpts from documents related to the Venona Project about certain individuals who were suspected of spying for the Soviet Union. As you read, complete the questions on the worksheet that follows. (Note: asterisks [*****] indicate a section of text that remains classified by the U.S. Government. In many cases it can be assumed to be the term “Venona.”)

Background: In 1995, the U.S. National Security Agency broke a half-century of silence by releasing translations of Soviet cables decrypted back in the 1940s by the Venona Project. Venona was a top-secret U.S. effort to gather and decrypt messages sent in the 1940s by agents of what is now called the KGB and the GRU, the Soviet military intelligence agency. The cables revealed the identities of numerous Americans who were convicted as spies for the Soviet Union.

1. Emil Julius Klaus Fuchs:
Klaus Fuchs (1911-1988) was born in Germany, but emigrated to England in 1933. A talented physicist, he went to work for the British government on the atomic bomb project, which was absorbed into the U.S.-directed Manhattan Project. From 1943 to 1946 he worked in the United States at Los Alamos, the New Mexico scientific complex where the atomic bomb was developed. Soon after returning to Great Britain he was arrested on charges of espionage. He quickly confessed, and served fourteen years in prison.

Memorandum from Daniel M. Ladd (assistant director of the FBI) to Alan H. Belmont (head of the FBI’s Internal Security Section), May 15, 1950

“....In September, 1949, acting on the basis of information secured from ***** we furnished to ***** information indicating that Fuchs had been active in the United States as a Soviet espionage agent. In January, 1950, during an interview with ***** Fuchs confessed to atomic espionage on behalf of the Soviets. Fuchs was thereafter arrested and convicted for violation of the *****. On March 1, 1950, he was given the maximum sentence of fourteen years. Fuchs was exhaustively interviewed by Bureau representatives in London during May, 1950, and furnished information of value concerning his espionage activities in the United States.....”
2. Alger Hiss:
Alger Hiss (1904-1996) served in the U.S. State Department during World War II, and was involved in the creation of the United Nations. In 1948 a confessed former Soviet spy told investigators that Hiss had been one of his contacts in the 1930s. Hiss denied the charges, but was ultimately convicted of perjury in 1950; he served 44 months in prison.

Memorandum from Daniel M. Ladd (assistant director of the FBI) to Alan H. Belmont (head of the FBI's Internal Security Section), May 15, 1950
“According to ***** on March 30, 1945, Anatoli B. Gromov, First Secretary and MGB representative at the Soviet Embassy in Washington D.C., informed his Moscow headquarters that “Ales” has, for some years, been the leader of a little group working for Soviet Military Intelligence. It was stated that this group was composed mainly of Ales’ relatives and that the group, which apparently was centered in the State Department, was working mainly on developing military information only and the information from the State Department interested them very little. It was stated that Ales, after the Yalta conference, had been in touch with a high Soviet official whom Ales implied was Comrade Vishinsky who thanked Ales on behalf of Soviet Military Intelligence. It would appear likely that this individual is Alger Hiss in view of the fact that he was in the State Department and the information from [Whittaker] Chambers [a confessed former Soviet spy] indicated that his wife, Priscilla, was active in Soviet espionage and he also had a brother, Donald, in the State Department. It also is to be noted that Hiss did attend the Yalta conference as a special advisor to President Roosevelt, and he would, of course, have conferred with high officials of other nations attending the conference. An attempt is being made by analysis of the available information to verify this identification....”

3. Harry Gold
Memorandum from Daniel M. Ladd (Assistant Director of the FBI) to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, February 28, 1951
Our investigation to identify Fuchs’ American contact began simultaneously with our identification of Fuchs as an espionage agent in September 1949. We had a little information from ***** concerning this man which indicated not only that he had been in contact with Fuchs, but was also in contact with Abraham Brothman. We also secured information concerning him from Fuchs and Mrs. and Mr. Robert Hieneman, who are Fuchs’ sister and brother-in-law respectively. All of the persons rejected photographs of Harry Gold, which were shown to them initially. However, after an involved investigation we centered on Harry Gold as our best suspect, and on May 22, 1950 he admitted extensive espionage activity in the United States. Also on May 22, 1950, Fuchs tentatively identified motion pictures of Gold, which were shown to him as his espionage Fuchs, on the following day, definitely identified the photographs of Gold. Gold was arrested on May 23, 1950, and indicted on June 9, 1950, but a Federal Grand Jury in the Eastern District of New York. He pled guilty to this indictment and on December 9, 1950, Judge James P. McGranery in Philadelphia sentenced him to thirty years imprisonment, less the time served since his plea of guilty on July 20, 1950....

4. David Greenglass
Memorandum from Daniel M. Ladd (Assistant Director of the FBI) to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, February 28, 1951
Harry Gold, on June 1, 1950, furnished information regarding a contact made in June, 1945, in Albuquerque, New Mexico with a soldier and his wife, later identified through investigation as David and Ruth Greenglass. Gold paid Greenglass $500 on this occasion and in turn received information relative to classified technical experiments being conducted at the atomic energy program at Los Alamos, New Mexico. Information from ***** also reflected that Greenglass had been recruited into Soviet espionage activity in the Fall of 1944. On June 15, 1950, David Greenglass was interviewed in New York City and admitted his espionage activity as outlined by Gold. Greenglass was arrested on June 16, 1950, in New York City based on a complaint filed in Albuquerque, New Mexico, charging him with violating the Espionage Conspiracy Statute. Greenglass was indicted in Santa Fe, New Mexico, on July 6, 1950. He has also been indicted in the Southern District of New York, and the last superseding indictment was dated January 31, 1951. He had pled guilty to this indictment and he is to be sentenced following the completion of the Rosenberg-Sobell trial, which is scheduled to begin on March 6, 1951.
Through arrangements made by Mr. O. John Rogge, Greenglass’ attorney, both David Greenglass and his wife have given considerable amount of information implicating their brother-in-law Julius Rosenberg, and other individuals in Soviet espionage. Greenglass will be one of the main witnesses in the trial of Rosenberg and Sobell.
Part II: The Rosenberg Trial
Directions: Read the summary of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, and the closing statements of the 1951 Rosenberg Trials from Emmanuel Bloch, lawyer for the defense, and Irving Saypol, prosecuting attorney.

Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, a married couple convicted of conspiracy to commit espionage in 1951, are put to death in the electric chair. The execution marked the dramatic finale of the most controversial espionage case of the Cold War.

Julius was arrested in July 1950, and Ethel in August of that same year, on the charge of conspiracy to commit espionage. Specifically, they were accused of heading a spy ring that passed top-secret information concerning the atomic bomb to the Soviet Union. The Rosenbergs vigorously protested their innocence, but after a brief trial in March 1951 they were convicted. On April 5, 1951, a judge sentenced them to death. The pair was taken to Sing Sing Prison in Ossining, New York, to await execution. During the next two years, the couple became the subject of both national and international debate. Many people believed that the Rosenbergs were the victims of a surge of hysterical anticommunist feeling in the United States, and protested that the death sentence handed down was cruel and unusual punishment. Most Americans, however, believed that the Rosenbergs had been dealt with justly. President Dwight D. Eisenhower spoke for many Americans when he issued a statement declining to invoke executive clemency for the pair. He stated, "I can only say that, by immeasurably increasing the chances of atomic war, the Rosenbergs may have condemned to death tens of millions of innocent people all over the world. The execution of two human beings is a grave matter. But even graver is the thought of the millions of dead whose deaths may be directly attributable to what these spies have done."

Julius Rosenberg was the first to be executed, at about 8 p.m. on June 19, 1953. Just a few minutes after his body was removed from the chamber containing the electric chair, Ethel Rosenberg was led in and strapped to the chair. She was pronounced dead at 8:16 p.m. Both refused to admit any wrongdoing and proclaimed their innocence right up to the time of their deaths. Two sons, Michael and Robert, survived them.

Closing Statement of Emmanuel Bloch: Lawyer for the Defense
“...If you want to convict these defendants because you think that they are Communists and you don’t like communism and you don’t like any member of the Communist Party, then, ladies and gentlemen, I can sit down now and there is absolutely no use in my talking. There was no use in going through this whole rigmarole of a three weeks’ trial. That is not the crime.

“But believe me, ladies and gentlemen, I am not here, other defense counsel are not here as attorneys for the Communist Party and we are not here as attorneys for the Soviet Union. I can only speak for myself and my father. We are representing Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, two American citizens, who come to you as American citizens, charged with a specific crime, and ask you to judge them the way you would want to be judged if you were sitting over there before twelve other jurors...

“Now, let us take Dave Greenglass. This didn’t come out of my mouth. This came out of his mouth. Is he a self-confessed spy? Is there any doubt in any of your minds that Dave Greenglass is a self-confessed espionage agent? He characterized himself that way. What did this man do? He took an oath when he entered the Army of the United States... Is there any doubt in your mind that he violated that oath? He was assigned to one of the most important secret projects in this country, and by his own statements, by his own admissions, he told you that he stole information out of there and gave it to strangers, and that it was going to the Soviet Government. Now, that is undisputed. I would like Mr. Saypol [the prosecutor] or anybody who is going to sum upon the part of the Government to refute that. Is there any doubt in your mind about that?

“... But one thing I think you do know, that any man who will testify against his own blood and flesh, his own sister, is repulsive, is revolting, who violates every code that any civilization has ever lived by. He is the lowest of the lowest animals that I have ever seen, and if you are honest with yourself, you will admit that he is lowest than the lowest animal that you have ever seen.
"... Ruth Greenglass admitted here that she was in this conspiracy. Is there any doubt about that? ... Ruth Greenglass has never been arrested. She has never been indicted. She has never been sent to jail. Doesn't that strike you as strange? ... And, ladies and gentlemen, this explains why Dave Greenglass was willing to bury his sister and his brother-in-law to save his wife.

"... Now I will tell you what the plot of the Greenglasses was here. Two-fold. Greenglass figured that if he couldn't put the finger on somebody, he would lessen his own punishment; and he had to put the finger on somebody who was here in the United States, and he had to put the finger on somebody who was a clay pigeon; and that man sitting there (indicating defendant Julius Rosenberg) is a clay pigeon, because he was fired from the Government service, because it was alleged that he was a member of the Community party; and he was the guy who was very open and expressed his views about the United States and the Soviet Union, which may have been all right when the Soviet Union and the United States were Allies, but today it is anathema; and you heard him testify, and he said it openly here, he didn't try to conceal it, "Yes, I thought that the Soviets did a lot for the underdog and they did a lot of reconstruction work"... and he went on to recount one or two other things that he felt should be to their credit...

_Closing Statement of Irving Saypol: Prosecuting Attorney_

"...Imagine a wheel. In the center of the wheel, Rosenberg, reaching out like the tentacles of an octopus. Rosenberg to David Greenglass. Ethel Rosenberg, Ruth Greenglass; Rosenberg to Harry Gold; Rosenberg, Yakovlev.

Information obtained, supplied -- always the objective in the center coming from all the legs, all the tentacles going to the one center, solely for the one object: The benefit of Soviet Russia. The sources, Government sources, Los Alamos, atomic information. Sobell, Elitcher, information from the Navy, relating particularly to gunfire control; always secret, always classified, always of advantage to a foreign government.

"... There is no condemnation for the activities of the Greenglasses in 1944 and 1945. David Greenglass is a confessed member of the Rosenberg espionage ring.... By his own plea of guilty, by his own voluntary act, without weaving a web of lies in an attempt to deceive you, he has made himself liable to the death penalty, too... Greenglass' relations toward his older sister, Ethel, and her husband, Julius, were such that he was willing prey to their Communist propaganda. He committed this crime because they persuaded him to do it... The atom bomb secrets stolen by Greenglass at the instigation of the Rosenbergs were delivered by Harry Gold right into the hands of an official representative of the Soviet Union. The veracity of David and Ruth Greenglass and of Harry Gold is established by documentary evidence and cannot be contradicted.

"...This description of the atom bomb, destined for delivery to the Soviet Union, was typed up by the defendant Ethel Rosenberg that afternoon at her apartment at 10 Monroe Street. Just so had she on countless other occasions sat at that typewriter and struck the keys, blow by blow, against her own country in the interests of the Soviets.

"...Ladies and gentlemen, you have heard statements of defense counsel here concerning the injection of communism in this case. I repeat again, these defendants are not on trial for being Communists. I don't want you to convict them merely because of their Communist activity. Communism, as the testimony has demonstrated, has a very definite place in this case because it is the Communist ideology which teaches worship and devotion to the Soviet Union over our own government. It has provided the motive and inspiration for these people to do the terrible things which have been proven against them. It is this adherence and devotion which makes clear their intent and motivation in carrying out this conspiracy to commit espionage."
Part II: The Rosenberg Trial Questions

1. Why were the Rosenbergs put on trial?

2. Who is Greenglass? And what is his relationship to the Rosenbergs?

3. What reasons does Bloch give for Greenglass testifying against the Rosenbergs?

4. What reasons does Saypol give for Greenglass testifying against the Rosenbergs?

5. What does espionage mean? Why was Soviet espionage such an important issue in the late 1940s and early 1950s?

6. Why do you think the Rosenbergs were found guilty?
THE ANTICOMMUNISM CRUSADE ACTIVITY

*How did the anticomunist crusade deprive certain Americans of their civil liberties and create an atmosphere of fear?*

**Background:** The Cold War encouraged a culture of secrecy and dishonesty, and like other wars, the Cold War encouraged the drawing of a sharp line between patriotic Americans and those accused of being disloyal. But what constituted disloyalty? Was it only to be defined as outright spying or sabotage? Might someone who belonged to the Communist Party be considered disloyal, whether or not he had committed any overt act against the United States? And what about a screenwriter who interjected pro-Soviet themes into a Hollywood movie, or a songwriter who criticized some aspect of American society in one of his songs? Containment – not only of communism but of unorthodox opinions of all kinds – took place at home as well as abroad. At precisely the moment when the United States celebrated freedom as the foundations of American life, American liberties came under attack at home.

**Directions:** Read and annotate the Documents in your assigned group, and answer the questions that follow. The groups are as follows:

- Group One: Soviet Espionage in America
- Group Two: The House Un-American Activities Committee
- Group Three: McCarthyism

CIRCLE OR HIGHLIGHT YOUR GROUP ABOVE!

Group Two: The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)

**Part I: “Un-American”**

*Directions:* Read the following excerpt from House Resolution 282, the legislation that established the House Un-American Activities Committee in May 1938. When you have finished, make a list of activities that you think might qualify as “un-American.”

“Resolved, that the Speaker of the House of Representatives be, and he is hereby, authorized to appoint a special committee to be composed of seven members for the purpose of conducting an investigation of (1) the extent, character, and object of un-American propaganda activities in the United States, (2) the diffusion within the United States of subversives and un-American propaganda that is instigated from foreign countries or of a domestic origin and attacks the principle of the form of government as guaranteed by the Constitution, and (3) all other questions in relation thereto that would aid Congress in any necessary remedial legislation.”*

**What short of activities do you consider “Un-American”?**

Recall the description of HUAC from Foner, CH. 23. *Name and describe two hearings that the committee held about communist influence in America.*
Part II: The Hiss-Chambers Hearings before the House Un-American Activities Committee

Directions: Read the excerpts from the Hiss-Chamber hearings of August 1948 in which Alger Hiss was put on trial for espionage. Then answer the questions that follow.

Testimony of Whittaker Chambers, August 3, 1948:
Mr. CHAMBERS. I was a member of the Communist Party and a paid functionary of the party....

Mr. STRIPLING. When did you disassociate yourself with the Communist Party? [...]

Mr. CHAMBERS. Almost exactly 9 years ago... I went to Washington and reported to the authorities what I knew about the infiltration of the United States Government by Communists.... I had joined the Communist Party in 1924. No one recruited me. I had become convinced that the society in which we live, western civilization, had reached a crisis, of which the First World War was the military expression, and that it was doomed to collapse or revert to barbarism... In 1937 I rejected Marx's doctrines and Lenin's tactics. Experience and the record had convinced me that communism is a form of totalitarianism, that its triumph means slavery to men wherever they fall under its sway. I resolved to break with the Communist Party at whatever risk to my life or other tragedy to myself or my family... I had sound reason for supposing that the Communists might try to kill me... For a number of years I had myself served in the underground, chiefly in Washington, D.C. The heart of my report to the United States Government consisted of a description of the apparatus to which I was attached. It was an underground organization of the United States Communist Party.... I knew it at its top level, a group of seven or so men.... Alger Hiss, who, as a member of the State Department, later organized the conferences at Dumbarton Oaks, San Francisco, and the United States side of the Yalta Conference. The purpose of this group at that time was not primarily espionage. Its original purpose was the Communist infiltration of the American Government. But espionage was certainly one of its eventual objectives. Let no one be surprised at this statement. Disloyalty is a matter of principle with every member of the Communist Party. The Communist Party exists for the specific purpose of overthrowing the Government; at the opportune time, by any and all means; and each of its members, by the fact that he is a member, is dedicated to this purpose....

Testimony of Alger Hiss, August 5, 1948:
Mr. STRIPLING. You say you have never seen Mr. Chambers?

Mr. HISS. The name means absolutely nothing to me, Mr. Stripling.

Mr. STRIPLING. I have here, Mr. Chairman, a picture which was made last Monday by the Associated Press... I show you this picture, Mr. Hiss, and ask you if you have ever known an individual who resembles this picture.

Mr. HISS. I would much rather see the individual. I have looked at all the pictures I was able to get hold of in, I think it was, yesterday's paper which had the pictures. If this is a picture of Mr. Chambers, he is not particularly unusual looking. He looks like a lot of people. I might even mistake him for the chairman of this committee. [Laughter.]

Mr. MUNDT. You realize that this man whose picture you have just looked at, under sworn testimony before this committee, where all the laws of perjury apply, testified that he called at your home, conferred at great length, saw your wife pick up the telephone and call somebody whom he said must have been a Communist, plead with you to divert yourself from Communist activities, and left you with tears in your eyes, saying, "I simply can't make the sacrifice."

Mr. HISS. I do know that he said that. I also know that I am testifying under those same laws to the direct contrary....
Testimony of Alger Hiss, August 16, 1948:
Mr. NIXON. Mr. Hiss, let me explain this. Mr. Chambers, as indicated, did testify that he spent a week in your house. He also testified to other facts concerning his acquaintanceship with you—alleged facts, I should say—and I want to point out that the committee by getting answers to completely objective questions from you will be in a position to go certainly to third parties and to find out whether or not Mr. Chambers has committed perjury. Now, on one point it is pretty clear that you have indicated that Mr. Chambers must have committed perjury because he said he spent a week in your house.

Mr. HISS. I have written a name on this pad in front of me of a person whom I knew in 1933 and 1934 who not only spent some time in my house but sublet my apartment. That man certainly spent more than a week, not while I was in the same apartment. I do not recognize the photographs as possibly being this man.

Mr. NIXON. Your testimony is that this man you knew in 1933 and 1934 was in one of the houses you lived in?

Mr. HISS. I sublet my apartment to the man whose name I have written down... The name of the man I brought in—and he may have no relation to this whole nightmare—is a man named George Crosley.

Mr. NIXON. You feel he might be Whittaker Chambers?

Mr. HISS. I find it difficult to believe. I can't identify him from the pictures and can't see any motive.

The Hiss-Chambers Hearings, August 17, 1948
Mr. NIXON. Mr. Hiss, the man standing here is Mr. Whittaker Chambers. I ask you now if you have ever known that man before.

Mr. HISS. May I ask him to speak? Will you ask him to say something?

Mr. NIXON. Yes. Mr. Chambers, will you tell us your name and your business?

Mr. CHAMBERS. My name is Whittaker Chambers.

[At this point, Mr. Hiss walked in the direction of Mr. Chambers.]

MR. HISS. Would you ask him to talk a little more?

Mr. NIXON. Read something, Mr. Chambers. I will let you read from....

Mr. HISS. Are you George Crosley?

Mr. CHAMBERS. Not to my knowledge. You are Alger Hiss, I believe.

Mr. HISS. I certainly am.

Mr. CHAMBERS. That was my recollection....

Mr. HISS. Did you ever sublet an apartment on Twenty-ninth Street from me?

Mr. CHAMBERS. No; I did not.

Mr. HISS. You did not?

Mr. CHAMBERS. No.
Mr. HISS. Did you ever spend any time with your wife and child in an apartment on Twenty-ninth Street in Washington when I was not there because I and my family were living on P Street?

Mr. CHAMBERS. I most certainly did....

Mr. HISS. Would you tell me how you reconcile your negative answers with this affirmative answer?

Mr. CHAMBERS. Very easily, Alger. I was a Communist and you were a Communist.

Mr. NIXON. I will help you with the answer, Mr. Hiss. The question, Mr. Chambers, is, as I understand it, that Mr. Hiss cannot understand how you would deny that you were George Crosley and yet admit that you spent time in his apartment. Now would you explain the circumstances?

Mr. CHAMBERS. As I have testified before, I came to Washington as a Communist functionary, a functionary of the American Communist Party. I was connected with the underground group of which Mr. Hiss was a member. Mr. Hiss and I became friends. To the best of my knowledge, Mr. Hiss himself suggested that I go there, and I accepted gratefully....

THE FINAL SHOW-DOWN: Hiss-Chamber Hearings, August 25, 1948

Testimony of Whittaker Chambers

Mr. STRIPLING. Mr. Chambers, do you know the individual who is now standing at the witness stand?

Mr. CHAMBERS. Mr. Alger Hiss.

Mr. STRIPLING. When did you first meet Mr. Hiss?

Mr. CHAMBERS. 1934.

Mr. STRIPLING. When did you last see Mr. Hiss?

Mr. CHAMBERS. About 1938....

Mr. STRIPLING. Would you now give to the committee a chronological resume of your meeting with Mr. Hiss, and how long you knew Mr. Hiss and the circumstances under which you met him?

Mr. CHAMBERS. The meeting took place in Washington, and I believe in a restaurant. I then continued to know Mr. Hiss until I broke with the Communist Party in early 1938, and I saw him once again toward the end of 1938....

Mr. STRIPLING. Did you ever meet Mr. Hiss at his apartment on Twenty-eighth Street?

Mr. CHAMBERS. I did.

Mr. STRIPLING. How many times did you meet Mr. Hiss, would you say at the address on Twenty eighth Street?

Mr. CHAMBERS. I would think-well, let's say 20 times.

Mr. STRIPLING. Twenty times at Twenty-eighth Street. Were you ever known or did you represent yourself to Mr. Hiss, when you first met, as being an individual by the name of George Crosley?

Mr. CHAMBERS. I did not....

Mr. NIXON. Now, did you see Mr. Hiss any time after 1935?
Mr. CHAMBERS. Yes; I saw Mr. Hiss constantly through 1937, until I broke with the Communist Party....

Mr. NIXON. Did you ever stay overnight in his home?

Mr. CHAMBERS. I stayed overnight frequently in his home.

Mr. NIXON. When you say "frequently," do you mean twice or more than that?

Mr. CHAMBERS. I mean that I made his home a kind of headquarters.

Mr. NIXON. Mr. Hiss' home was a kind of a headquarters?

Mr. CHAMBERS. That is true....

Mr. NIXON. Mr. Chambers, can you search your memory now to see what motive you can have for accusing Mr. Hiss of being a Communist at the present time?

Mr. CHAMBERS. What motive I can have?

Mr. NIXON. Yes, I mean, do you—is there any grudge that you have against Mr. Hiss over anything that he has done to you?

Mr. CHAMBERS. The story has spread that in testifying against Mr. Hiss I am working out some old grudge, or motives of revenge or hatred. I do not hate Mr. Hiss. We were close friends, but we are caught in a tragedy of history. Mr. Hiss represents the concealed enemy against which we are all fighting, and I am fighting. I have testified against him with remorse and pity, but in a moment of history in which this Nation now stands, so help me God, I could not do otherwise.

Testimony of Alger Hiss

Mr. HISS. Before I had a chance to testify, even before the press had a chance to reach me for comment--after Chambers' testimony--before you had--so far as I am aware--one single fact to support the charge made by a self-confessed liar, spy, and traitor, your acting chairman pronounced judgment that I am guilty as charged, by stating that the country should beware of the peace work with which I have been connected. I urge that these committee members--your committee members--abandon such verdict-first-and-testimony-later tactics, along with dramatic confrontations in secret sessions, and get down to business.

First, my record should be explored. It is inconceivable that there could have been on my part, during 15 or more years in public office, serving all three branches of the Government, judicial, legislative, and executive, any departure from the highest rectitude without its being known. It is inconceivable that the men with whom I was intimately associated during those 15 years should not know my true character far better than this accuser. It is inconceivable that if I had not been of the highest character, this would not have manifested itself at some time or other; in at least one of the innumerable actions I took as a high official, actions publicly recorded in the greatest detail.

Then the committee can judge, and the public can judge, whether to believe a self-discredited accuser whose names and aliases are as numerous and as casual as his accusations.

The other side of this question is the reliability of the allegations before this committee, the undocumented statements of the man who now calls himself Whittaker Chambers. Is he a man of consistent reliability, truthfulness, and honor? Clearly not.
The Hiss-Chamber Hearings, August 25 – THE DECISION

Mr. MUNDT. We started out in these hearings simply to get at the truth concerning espionage activities in Government. One of our early witnesses, Mr. Whittaker Chambers, mentions your name and the name of your brother, Donald Hiss, in connection with other individuals, most of whom have refused under oath to deny the charges or to deny the fact that they are members of the Communist Party. You suggested when you first came before the committee that in an effort to get at the facts that we take certain steps, one of which was to go to the records, wherever the records are available. We have done that, and we have spread those records wherever available into this testimony. You suggested that you be confronted with your accuser. We have done that, both in executive session and in open session. You suggested that we check all the verifiable details, which we have done.

Your testimony that first day was that, to the best of your recollection, you did not know Whittaker Chambers, and that the picture which was presented to you by counsel, Mr. Stripling, did not bring back the memory of anybody whom you had seen by that picture.

The next step in this proceeding was, and I might say here that you made a very fine impression on me... So, I asked a subcommittee to go to New York for the purpose of interviewing Mr. Chambers to see whether by some chance, he had confused Alger Hiss with someone else, whether or not he could substantiate his statement that he knew Alger Hiss, and, if so, how well, and what details he could supply, which are verifiable.

Then you were again interviewed in Washington, and at that time you verified these same details, which were given us by Mr. Chambers, intimate details about your family, about your hobby, about your pets, about the decorations in the room, and after verifying a number of these details, you said, "I might have known a man who had access to that information," and you said that man, if you knew him at all, was one George Crosley.

The next day the committee went to New York City and brought you and Mr. Chambers together, at which time you identified him positively; you identified him as the George Crosley, but you said then that you sublet him your apartment... You said then that you had him living with you several days in your own home. You said then that you had also seen him at sometime--later than the time when he occupied your apartment, and you said then that you had made a series of small loans.

We have tried since then to verify further the testimony of both yourself and Mr. Chambers. We have been unable to find anybody who knows or who has seen George Crosley. You have been unable to produce anybody for us who knows or has seen George Crosley.

Therefore, in summary...I find that while you said earlier that you did not know Mr. Whittaker Chambers or any man answering that description or looking like him, it is now established testimony that you did know him and that you do know him. There is some doubt about the name, but there is no question about your having known the individual...You knew this man; you knew him very well.

In other words, there seems no question about your associations with a man who told this committee that he associated with you.
Group 2: House Committee on Un-American Activities
Hiss-Chamber Hearings – Questions

1. Who was Whittaker Chambers? Who was Alger Hiss?

2. Why did Chambers become a communist? Why did he break with the party?

3. What activities did Chambers accuse Alger Hiss of committing?

4. Under which circumstances did Chambers claim that he knew Alger Hiss and knew he was a communist?

5. How did Hiss respond to his accusations?

6. What complaints did Hiss have of the House Committee on the Un-American Activities (HUAC)?

7. What was the purpose of having the two men meet face to face?

8. What led congressman Mundt to change his mind regarding Hiss?

9. Based on this reading, which strikes you as the more believable witness—Hiss or Chambers? Why?

10. After reading through the Hiss-Chamber hearings, what conclusions can you draw about the Cold War HUAC investigations?
Background: The Cold War encouraged a culture of secrecy and dishonesty, and like other wars, the Cold War encouraged the drawing of a sharp line between patriotic Americans and those accused of being disloyal. But what constituted disloyalty? Was it only to be defined as outright spying or sabotage? Might someone who belonged to the Communist Party be considered disloyal, whether or not he had committed any overt act against the United States? And what about a screenwriter who interjected pro-Soviet themes into a Hollywood movie, or a songwriter who criticized some aspect of American society in one of his songs? Containment – not only of communism but of unorthodox opinions of all kinds – took place at home as well as abroad. At precisely the moment when the United States celebrated freedom as the foundations of American life, American liberties came under attack at home.

Directions: Read and annotate the Documents in your assigned group, and answer the questions that follow. The groups are as follows:

- Group One: Soviet Espionage in America
- Group Two: The House Un-American Activities Committee
- Group Three: McCarthyism

CIRCLE OR HIGHLIGHT YOUR GROUP ABOVE!

Group 3: McCarthyism

Part I: McCarthy’s Accusations

Directions: Read the documents and answer the questions that follow

Excerpts from Speech of Joseph McCarthy, Wheeling, West Virginia, February 9, 1950

“...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....

Six years ago... 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 80,000,000,000 people under the absolute domination of Soviet Russia—an increase of over 400 percent. On our side, the figure has shrunk to around 500,000. In other words, in less than six years, the odds have changed from 9 to 1 in our favor to 8 to 1 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 from enemies from without, but rather because of enemies from within.”

The reason why we find ourselves in a position of impotency is not because our only powerful potential enemy has sent men to invade our shores...but rather because of the traitorous actions of those who have been treated so well by this Nation. It has not been the less fortunate, or members of minority groups who have been traitorous to this Nation, 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 most traitorous...
I have here in my hand a list of 205...a list of names that were made known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist Party and who nevertheless are still working and shaping policy in the State Department....

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—being a traitor to the people who gave him a position of great trust—high treason...

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 honesty and decency in government.

**Excerpt from President Truman’s News Conference at Key West, March 30, 1950:**

Q. Do you think that Senator McCarthy can show any disloyalty exists in the State Department?

THE PRESIDENT. I think the greatest asset that the Kremlin has is Senator McCarthy....

Q. Mr. President, could we quote that one phrase, “I think the greatest asset the Kremlin has is Senator McCarthy”?

THE PRESIDENT. Now let me give you a little preliminary, and then I will tell you what I think you ought to do. Let me tell you what the situation is. We started out in 1945, when I became President, and the two wars were still going on, and the Russians were our allies, just the same as the British and the French and Brazil and the South American countries. And we won the war together.... Then our objective was to—as quickly as possible—get peace in the world. We made certain agreements with the Russians and the British and the French and the Chinese. We kept those agreements to the letter. They have nearly all been—those agreements where the Russians were involved—been broken by the Russians. And it became perfectly evident that they had no intention of carrying out the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter and the agreements which had been made at Teheran, Yalta, and Potsdam. And it became evident that there was an endeavor on the part of the Kremlin to control the world.

A procedure was instituted which came to be known as the cold war. The airlift to Berlin was only one phase of it. People became alarmed here in the United States then, that there might be people whose sympathies were with the Communist ideal of government—which is not communism under any circumstances, it is totalitarianism of the worst brand. There isn’t any difference between the totalitarian Russian Government and the Hitler government and the Franco government in Spain. They are all alike. They are police state governments.

In 1947 I instituted a loyalty program for Government employees, and that loyalty procedure program was set up in such a way that the rights of individuals were respected.

In a survey of the 2,200,000 employees at that time, I think there were some 205—something like that—who left the service. I don’t know—a great many of them left of their own accord....

And then, for political background, the Republicans have been trying vainly to find an issue on which to make a bid for the control of the Congress for next year. They tried “statism.” They tried “welfare state.” They tried “socialism.” And there are a certain number of members of the Republican Party who are trying to dig up that old malodorous dead horse called “isolationism.” And in order to do that, they are perfectly willing to sabotage the bipartisan foreign policy of the United States. And this fiasco which has been going on in the Senate is the very best asset that the Kremlin could have in the operation of the cold war. And that is what I mean when I say that McCarthy’s antics are the best asset that the Kremlin can have.

Now, if anybody really felt that there were disloyal people in the employ of the Government, the proper and the honorable way to handle the situation would be to come to the President of the United States and say, “This man is a disloyal person. He is in such and such a department.” We will investigate him immediately, and if he were a disloyal person he would be immediately fired.
That is not what they want. They are trying to create an issue, and it is going to be just as big a fiasco as the campaign in New York and other places on these other false and fatuous issues. With a little bit of intelligence they could find an issue at home without a bit of trouble!

Q. What would it be, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT. Anything in the domestic line. I will meet them on any subject they want, but to try to sabotage the foreign policy of the United States, in the face of the situation with which we are faced, is just as bad as trying to cut the Army in time of war.

Statement of Seven Republican Senators, June 1, 1950

1. We are Republicans. But we are Americans first. It is as Americans that we express our concern with the growing confusion that threatens the security and stability of our country. Democrats and Republicans alike have contributed to that confusion.

2. The Democratic administration has initially created the confusion by its lack of effective leadership, by its contradictory grave warnings and optimistic assurances, by its complacency to the threat of communism here at home, by its over sensitiveness to rightful criticism, by its petty bitterness against its critics.

3. Certain elements of the Republican Party have materially added to this confusion in the hopes of riding the Republican Party to victory through the selfish political exploitation of fear, bigotry ignorance, and intolerance. There are enough mistakes of the Democrats for Republicans to criticize constructively without resorting to political smears.

4. To this extent, Democrats and Republicans alike have unwittingly, but undeniably, played directly into the Communist design of "confuse, divide and conquer."

5. It is high time that we stopped thinking politically as Republicans and Democrats about elections and started thinking patriotically as Americans about national security based on individual freedom. It is high time that we all stopped being tools and victims of totalitarian techniques—techniques that, if continued here unchecked, will surely end what we have come to cherish as the American way of life.

“I Have Here in my Hand…” (cartoon)
Group 3: McCarthyism

Part I: McCarthy’s Accusations QUESTIONS

1. What information did McCarthy cite to show that America was losing the war against Communism?

2. Explain what McCarthy meant when he said “When a great democracy is destroyed, it will not be from enemies from without, but rather because of enemies from within.”

3. How did McCarthy describe the sorts of people engaged in “traitorous actions” in the United States?

4. What did Truman mean when he claimed that McCarthy was an “asset” to the Kremlin?

5. According to Truman, how did McCarthy fit in with the overall strategy of the Republican Party?

6. Evaluate the five statements by the Republican senators. What was their purpose in issuing these statements?

7. In your opinion, how did partisanship fighting between the Republicans and Democrats interfere with the issue at hand?

8. How does the political cartoon by Herblock portray McCarthy? Why do you think he chose to portray McCarthy this way?