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HUAC

**BACKGROUND GUIDE:
THE SECOND
RED SCARE**

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIRS

Greetings my fellow Americans,

Let me ask you: what does America stand for? If the words Justice, Freedom and all things Good didn't immediately come to mind you don't deserve to be on this committee. You see, America doesn't seem very "American" anymore. Communists and anarchists run wild in the streets. The Cold War between us and the Soviets is only escalating. All the while, our democracy is being chipped away at a rate we are not comfortable with. That is why America needs the help of each and every one of you. We, the House of Un-American Activities Committee, are here to once and for all rid America of the plague that is communism.

Many of you are here as members of this committee. We have only chosen the finest, most American gentlemen to serve on the HUAC, and hope and pray our combined efforts will lead to the arrest and death of many, many communists. As for the rest of you, you have been invited, not to aid us in our ultimate goal, but rather as suspects. You know who you are. Your past actions have been un-American and you will be held accountable. Communists have infiltrated every aspect of our lives— radio, television, news— they have found outlets to reach even the best of us. We must find a way to stop our American citizens from being exposed to and influenced by these sources. The HUAC has no sympathy towards filthy communists, and if we find out any connection between ANY member of this committee and the Soviets, the member will be... taken care of.

The world is changing. Our very lives are in much more danger than we may think. The Soviets may have nuclear weapons pointed towards us, but this pales in comparison with the destruction having communists Americans would cause. We will put an end to this. We will save democracy. Or God help us all.

God Bless America,
Your Chairs

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

The front of World War 2 and the Cold War fought on American turf was characterized by a widespread desire to rid the continent of communism. Communism signified not only a political and economic threat, but if it were to become widespread in American society, this prevalence would signify a dominance of Russia and its values over the United States. For more in depth historical background, skip to “Information on the Topic.”

The House Un-American Activities Committee was a committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, created and designed to rid the United States of communist threats: not only in the government, but everywhere in society (culture, radio, television, media, etc.). It investigated alleged disloyalty and subversive activities on the part of private citizens, public employees, and organizations suspected of taking part in communism or having communist ties.

In this committee, delegates will take on the roles of major officials and people of interest during the time of the Second Red Scare, when all citizens and political figures were on edge because of the threat of communism seeping into America. The House Un-American Activities Committee must lead the change to investigate disloyalty and put down subversive organizations and individuals. More specifically, our committee will be focusing on the role of the government in the lives of private citizens and the media. Every single citizen is vulnerable to the influence of the reds, and it is HUAC’s task to not only prevent communism from spreading, but also confronting those who have been accused.

Committee members will be debating on specific issues that came with the Red Scare and its influence on American society: race, power struggles, personal liberty, Truman’s executive orders, the role of the president, fair prosecution, trials, and communism in the media. Delegates should focus on knowing the climate of the Second Red Scare (detailed in “Information on the Topic”) and various incidents that occurred in response to this climate. Delegates should also focus on being able to think on their feet, as HUAC is a crisis committee. When chairs present delegates with a new crisis, delegates must be able to come up with a solution for such crises. Procedure and progress will be made through:

- Public Directives: solutions, or resolutions, that take specific action in order to combat a certain issue
 - Communiques: Similar to a note, but more official. A communique is an official letter to a source, person, or entity not represented in the committee.
 - Press Releases: Public statements made by committee members to the people/public of the time period.
 - Crisis Announcements: Crisis announcements will be made by chairs in order to create issues that must be tackled by committee members.
 - Personal Directives: Unilateral action taken personally by committee members.
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GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Communism

A political and economic ideology in which the people have common ownership over the means of production. Social classes and money don't exist in a communist society.

Socialism

A political and economic theory of social advocacy. It is very similar to communism with the subtle difference that the means of production, distribution, and exchange should be regulated by the community, not by the people.

Anarchism

A political ideology that believes in no government whatsoever, To an anarchist, the state is both unnecessary and harmful to the people.

Radical Leftism

A position on the political spectrum that is heavily liberal/left leaning. Many communists and anarchists were considered to be under the umbrella of radical leftism.

McCarthyism

A term that started with Joseph McCarthy's actions during the 2nd Red Scare, it describes accusations and convictions based on little to no evidence.

Espionage

Governmental use of spies to obtain political and military information from another government.

KGB

The Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti, a security agency of the Soviet Union. Many agents of the KGB were also spies.

CIA

The Central Intelligence Agency, a civilian foreign intelligence service of the US.

Smith Act

A 1940 law that most importantly made it a crime to “knowingly or willfully advocate, abet , advise or teach the duty, necessity, desirability or propriety of overthrowing the Government of the US or any State by force or violence, or for anyone to organize any association which teaches, advises or encourages such an overthrow, or for anyone to become a member of or to affiliate with any such association.”

Treason

The crime of betraying one's country.

Subversion

The crime of contradicting the values of a system in place, such as promoting communism in a democratic country.

AGENDA INFORMATION

Historical Background

The Second Red Scare, the time in which this committee will take place, was a time of elevated tensions in regards to communism. During the Cold War, the United States focused on containing the expansion of communism, but issues regarding foreign policy made containment more difficult on the homefront. Decolonization of Middle Eastern regions, interregional conflicts (such as Guatemala and Cuba), shifting alignments, and global and economic transformations were only some of the complexities that plagued the Cold War.

The first red scare occurred as a result of backlash against the strike wave of blue collar workers and the surge of American chauvinism following World War 1. This time was filled with a series of movements against suspected communists, anarchists, labor leaders, and radical ideals. These cautions were carried out not only by the government, but also by citizens that feared the spread of communism would be a disease to the United States. In January of 1920, Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer began a series of raids in suspected radicals' homes. This became known as the "Palmer Raids," which led to the deportation of over 500 non- US citizens.

The Cold War was a time in which the American government hoped to focus on the containment of Communism. This conflict of ideologies between the capitalist United States and communist Soviet Union was what led to large scale, global conflict between many nations, including Korea and Vietnam. Because containment was a major facet of the United States' foreign policy during the Cold War, it strived to prevent other nations from adopting and being influenced by communism. Wars were not the only method that the US used to prevent the spread of communism. Governments utilized propaganda, espionage, and technological advancements to assert their superiority over Russian tactics.

Immediately after World War 2, the United States experienced its largest strike wave in history, larger than the ones that preceded the First Red Scare. Stronger than ever, unions were successful at busting wages and bettering working conditions. President Truman thus passed the Taft Hartley Act, which strived to make it more difficult to strike. The underlying premise behind this legislation was to require union leaders to pledge that they were not members of the Communist Party.

Mass hysteria came about with the rise of Senator Joseph McCarthy, one of the most prominent members of the anti communist party. He rose to national prominence in 1950 when he announced a

list of 205 known communists working in the State Department. Lists like these encouraged a “witch hunt” frenzied atmosphere during the time, in which citizens were being accused of communism left and right.

“Senate and House anticommunists put a great deal of effort in investigating the movie and television industry, fearing that communists would subtly get their message out through the media. In 1947, a group of prominent directors and writers, subsequently known as the “Hollywood 10,” was summoned to testify in Washington. They refused, citing their First Amendment rights to freedom of speech and assembly. These ten and others who refused to cooperate were “blacklisted” in the 1950s, unable to find work in Hollywood.” Even those not convicted or pointed out as communist were suspected of working in cahoots with underground Soviet forces to get their message across subtly.

The Ethel and Julius Rosenberg trial was one that shook the American public to the core. The building of the Soviet nuclear bomb convinced many Americans that there were communist spies in the United States that had provided the Soviets with essential information about the bomb. The couple that was accused of such spying was Ethel and Julius Rosenberg. Although the Rosenbergs were members of the Communist Party, they insisted their innocence but were later sentenced to the death penalty in 1953.

HUAC was established to rid communism from all facets of American life, including areas of government, organizations, corporations, and daily life. HUAC has the power and influence to investigate members of the government along with the general public. And with this power, however, has come a wave of backlash from figures who claim that the power of HUAC is too overarching and strict when it comes to rooting out communists. Because of its influence over the American system and people, HUAC has created an atmosphere of fear and distrust in the United States. Unfounded accusations must be dealt with in order to restore the image of HUAC and to more effectively and efficiently uncover Soviet spies within the American government.

If successful, HUAC can become the epitome of idealized, democratic America-- HUAC members must thus use its power wisely and with the purpose of effecting utilitarian change within American society. Likewise, HUAC must ensure that its members, such as congressmen and military officials, do not have a trace of communist ties or sympathies. HUAC will be able to preserve the integrity of the United States by “gathering intelligence, conducting hearings, and broadcasting its findings.”

STANCES OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Truman

President with a very tough stance on Communism. His Truman Doctrine wanted to focus on containing Communism and stopping its spread. That meant inside of the US as well.

McCarthy

Senator that began all of this. If you are a living, breathing human being, Joseph McCarthy will accuse you of being communist and try to get you executed for it.

Henry Wallace

Vice President of FDR. He supported New Deal liberalism and more importantly, conciliation with the Soviets. Because of this, many accused him and his party as being controlled by the communists.

Dalton Trumbo

A blacklisted Hollywood screenwriter, Trumbo refused to testify against his friends when confronted by the HUAC. He is a full blown communist.

Ethel Rosenberg

Spy accused of transmitting intelligence, including nuclear weapon design, to the Soviets after WW2. After being arrested, her main goal is self preservation and giving her kids a chance for a future.

Julius Rosenberg

Spy accused of transmitting intelligence, including nuclear weapon design, to the Soviets after WW2. After being arrested, his main goal is self preservation and giving her kids a chance for a future.

Alger Hiss

A government official accused of being a spy. He was convicted of perjury and sentenced accordingly. An adamant communist who would give up his career for his beliefs.

Klaus Fuchs

A genius physician and Soviet spy. After being caught, the US managed to get information out of him that could help convict many other communist spies.

Francis E. Walter

His hatred for communists second only to his hatred of people of color. More racist than he is anti-communist, this House of Representatives and HUAC member served as a chairman. He was a no nonsense anti-communist as well as an advocate to proving that black people were dumber than white people.

Kit Clardy

Often referred to as Michigan's McCarthy, he conducted many HUAC hearings in Michigan. Being a bit extreme in his hatred towards communists, he often used abuse and violence against suspected communists.

Clyde Doyle

A Congressman and member of the HUAC. Doyle's uneventful political career is made up for by his drive to rid America of all Communists.

Maurice Rapf

A founder of the Screen Writers Guild, Rapf is an open Communist. Rapf tries to imbue his films with themes of class struggle and due to this, got summoned by the HUAC. With his name blacklisted and career over, Rapf now fights for the rights of other accused Communists in Hollywood.

Lester Cole

A Hollywood screenwriter that was socialist for all his life, he openly joined the Communist Party and has been particularly difficult when interrogated by the HUAC. He was also blacklisted by Hollywood.

Howard Koch

Koch's movie Mission to Moscow portrayed the Soviets positively. Huge no-no. After accused of being a communist, he was blacklisted from Hollywood. Koch has strong, outspoken leftist beliefs and resents Hollywood and the HUAC for ruining his career.

Elia Kazan

Director, producer, writer and actor in Hollywood. He is hugely influential and respected in the entertainment world. Elia has been more cooperative than the others, however, and can be a valuable asset to the HUAC.

W.E.B. Du Bois

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois has had a lot of contact with the Communists back in the 1910s. Nowadays, he has distanced himself but still associates with many Communist sympathizers and continues to criticize capitalism. Du Bois is best described as a Socialist, but can the HUAC tolerate Socialism?

Charlie Chaplin

Although Chaplin denied claims of being communist, the evidence is against him. Several of his friends were communists. They are now in jail. In addition to this, his activism and friendliness towards the Soviets raises many eyebrows at the HUAC. Chaplin insists that he has been and always will be a peacemonger.

Lucille Ball

This actress got herself into a lot of trouble with the HUAC when she registered her party affiliation as Communist. Her excuse was that her grandfather insisted and she hasn't voted Communist in the past. No one knows for certain if Lucille is a communist or not. No one except Lucille, of course.

John Lennon

It doesn't take long to notice that John Lennon's values and virtues aren't very American. If you just

listen to “Imagine” or “God,” he contradicts traditionally American political and religious beliefs. Whether or not Lennon, an English man living in New York, is a threat to the American people is up for the HUAC to decide.

(note - John Lennon doesn't fit the time continuity of the HUAC, but his views add an interesting perspective and layer to the committee so the chairs have decided to include him)

Keep in mind that many of these characters can say to be one thing, but are truly another. It may seem as though this committee is dominated by members of HUAC and not many suspected communists, but this committee is unique in that committee members can utilize their own creative license to make the committee more interesting and nuanced.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How should the morality in the pursuit and persecution of communists be determined? What methods will be used to investigate possible communists? How will we ensure a fair and just judicial system while maintaining the US's stance of containment?
- How will HUAC uncover communists within the Hollywood industry? How will it ensure that the public remains uninfluenced by communism?
- How will HUAC go about combatting espionage and soviet spies?
- Will Socialism be tolerated by the HUAC?
- How will presidential administrations ease racial and societal tensions in the country? How will the powers of HUAC and the FBI be limited in order to ensure the safety and well being of citizens? Will personal liberties be valued over security?
- How will Truman's Executive Order 9835 be implemented and how will it be ensured that civil liberties are protected? What will be the guidelines for prosecuting various organizations?
- How will the trials of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg be carried out? How will the government respond to any acts of resistance regarding the trial?

Keep in mind that committee sessions will go in the direction that delegates choose. If delegates wish to debate certain issues, they should express so through speeches and directives. There will be a lot of room for creativity in this committee, but don't let it get out of hand— the chairs expect professionalism and a real life simulation of HUAC.

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