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THE TECHNIQUES OF FREEDOM:
The FBI's 'Responsibilities Program' and the Rise of Liberal
Anti-Communism in the United States, 1951-1955

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of Master of Arts (History)

by

Steven Laffoley
Department of History
Saint Mary's University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
1991

If there be any among us who would wish to dissolve
this Union or change its Republican form of government, let
them stand undisturbed as monuments to the safety with which
error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free
to combat it.

-- Thomas Jefferson

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Steven Laffoley

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the Master of Arts (History)
at Saint Mary's**

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ABSTRACT

**THE TECHNIQUES OF FREEDOM:
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In February of 1951, J. Edgar Hoover, head of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigations, in compliance with the wishes of the nation's governors, initiated a program of government sponsored repression under the euphemistic name: 'The Responsibilities Program' (RP). As designed by Hoover, the RP's intention was to remove from public service all public employees who were suspected of subversive activities -- whether real or imagined. Over the next four years the FBI actively channeled information to State Governors regarding 'subversive' persons employed by the state. This information was both volunteered to, and requested by, State Governors who, in turn, acted on the information. No due process was afforded the individuals, no effort was made to confirm the information often supplied by shadowy

'informants'; they were quite simply branded un-American and suffered the consequences of a lost career and a diminished life.

The 'Responsibilities Program' continued unabated for the next four years until the firing of school teachers in Colorado lead local newspapers to argue that the government was denying teachers the due process of law, a right guaranteed them under the fifth amendment to the Constitution. A campaign of critical editorials and investigative journalism followed that exposed the existence of the FBI's organized, nationwide blacklist. In early 1955 the continued publication of highly critical articles and editorials lead J. Edgar Hoover to cancel the 'Responsibilities Program' thus ending the repression. In a liberal context, it appeared that civil liberties had been successfully defended from an encroaching anti-democratic evil.

However, removed from a liberal historical context, certain questions remain about the extent of the liberal victory. The 'Responsibilities Program' occurred in the midst of what has come to be known as the McCarthy Era. In such a context the RP appears to be just another facet of what Dalton Trumbo has called "the time of the toad" in America. And yet, a closer reading of the 'Responsibilities Program' file -- a file only recently, and forcibly, released to the public -- has suggested that perhaps the McCarthy Era might be better understood if it had been named

the 'Hoover Era'. The file strongly suggests that Hoover was the motivating force behind the repression of the fifties. If true, then the demise of Senator Joseph McCarthy represents something less than the end of 'anti-Communist' repression in America.

Also suggestive: the Governors who participated in the 'Responsibilities Program', liberal and conservative alike, demonstrated no ideological opposition to the program's principles. This presents some difficulties if one assumes a liberal reading of the events. For instance, if the liberal forces in the United States were so concerned with the civil liberties of all Americans, then why did liberal governors like Earl Warren of California participate so actively in the program? Some answers can be divined if the liberals are placed on the same ideological plane as the conservatives, making their disputes tactical not ideological. Ultimately, this suggests something of the liberal historians who played a role in chronicling the era.

Though the House Committee on Un-American Activities had been questioning Americans' loyalty since 1938, the 'Responsibilities Program' was the nation's first institutionalized blacklist: moving from the political forum of the HUAC to the administrative forum of a governmental agency. This was an important change in the development of anti-Communism, reflecting the further consolidation of the liberals' control over political and cultural forms in the United States.

Examined under a non-liberal light, the 'Responsibilities Program' clearly precipitated something of an ideological shift in the United States away from democratic principles leaving the liberals -- having fortified themselves behind the walls of the 'vital center' -- the beneficiaries of the new order. Indeed, the resulting ideological entity that emerged in the wake of the RP's fall was antithetical to the well-being of the Constitution's first amendment and to the continued existence of true democracy in America -- that is, a democracy that offers its citizens the right of true 'Choice'.

INTRODUCTION

A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

--Matthew 7:18

This study examines a four year period, from 1951-1955, when the FBI, in conjunction with the 48 governors of the United States, rooted out suspected subversives -- and in the process subverted civil liberties -- in an operation called the 'Responsibilities Program'(RP).

Nearly forty years have passed since the 'Responsibilities Program' was used by the FBI to censor radicals, liberals, and progressives; only now is it possible to look at the original source documents from the FBI's files. Over nine thousand pages on eight rolls of microfiche, the complete FBI file is an impressive source, even if measured by size alone. As a tool for understanding the rise of domestic anti-Communist repression -- Liberal and Conservative alike -- it is both a useful and a restrictive source.¹

¹ Note that any and all references to FBI Office Memoranda and Policy papers (Called SAC Letters) and newspaper articles, unless otherwise indicated, are from McCarthy Era Blacklisting of School Teachers, College Professors, and Other Public Employees: The FBI Responsibilities Program File and the Dissemination of Information Policy File, edited by Kenneth O'Reilly. The file is on microfiche published by University Publications of America (Bethesda, MD., 1990).

It is helpful for understanding the mechanics of repression in the era named for McCarthy: there are numerous documents which illustrate it, and numerous policy documents that define the targets: munitions plant workers, state employees of all departments, educators. There are documents that define the kinds of subversives in question: not only confirmed or suspected Communists but the nebulous 'fellow travelers' as well. And it is helpful in naming the State Governors who acted as inquisitors and executioners. There are many documents that specify particular Governors who requested information and when it was given. There are well known figures -- Warren of California, Dewey of New York, Stevenson of Illinois -- who were willing and eager players in Hoover's program. There are lesser known figures -- Brunsdale of North Dakota, Anderson of Minnesota, Patterson of West Virginia, and dozens of other governors -- who were also involved. In such areas the file is rich with information.

As far as other details are concerned -- the names of the victims, their places of residence, their occupations, the names of the informants who were so frequently quoted and so frequently used as primary evidence -- one is less impressed; there are many hundreds of documents which have been either partly blacked out, fully blacked out, or deleted altogether for reasons of security. It is a cruel

irony that in this forcibly released file the victims of Hoover's blacklist must remain faceless and nameless and now even blacklisted from history. The FBI continues to fear information it cannot control.

If one were to use this source independently as a history of FBI blacklisting, the weaknesses in detail and frankness would be restrictive. However, as a base on which to build other constructions the source is rich with possibilities. This study hopes to do just that: to trace the rise of domestic anti-Communism using the file's contents as a firm base and a "vital center". The 'Responsibilities Program' file is an excellent vehicle for understanding the greater development of domestic anti-Communism and the way it has shaped the present order.

In 1951, when Hoover and the FBI institutionalized a program of calculated repression against political undesirables, Hoover had already spent the previous six years spearheading an ideological shift in the American political and cultural psyche. By the time the Program was halted in 1955 by its liberal opponents, the primary assertion of the FBI -- that anti-Communism played a valid part in the American understanding of democracy -- had taken a firm hold of American politics, Liberal and Conservative alike. Hoover's 'Responsibilities Program' was put to rest over a disagreement of tactics, not ideology.

As regards this study, the 'Responsibilities Program', both literally and metaphorically, was representative of the

changing ideological phenomenon of domestic anti-Communism in Post World War II America. As such, any real understanding of the 'Responsibilities Program' must consider the greater environment that both shaped it and that it shaped. Because of the information deleted from the FBI file, this study is sadly deficient insofar as it gives voice to the victims of Hoover's repression; in the end they can only be identified by the final number of those affected. But the study does recognize the human costs that result when a select few decide for the overwhelming many that 'certain inalienable rights' are no longer inalienable, but rather conditional upon the "the loyalty oath, the compulsory revelation of faith, and the [approval of the] secret police."² It recognizes, further, that there occurred in the 1950's a shift from political to administrative solutions in the development of domestic anti-Communism. Indeed, this is the primary assertion of this study.

This study is separated into five chapters with an introduction and a conclusion. Because it endeavors to develop a certain theme -- the rise of liberal anti-Communism and the form that it took -- it is both more and less than a history of the 'Responsibilities Program'. To give a more detailed history of the RP would be to paint a

² Dalton Trumbo, The Time of the Toad, (New York, 1972), p.4.

disproportionate role of the program in the context of this study. Indeed, two chapters -- the first and the third -- discuss little or nothing of the RP but rather establish its political context. At the same time, the greater social and political context within which the RP occurred is not fully developed either, in order to allow the program its proper weight. The intent here is to create a sense of connection and context without an exaggeration of either part. The source allows a detailed study of the evidence of repression and control and how this took an administrative form. My intent is to add to the current scholarship and perhaps to suggest some questions that have yet to be asked.

The first chapter endeavors to place the FBI and J. Edgar Hoover into their historical context. The second chapter outlines the beginnings of Hoover's 'Responsibilities Program' and the manner in which Hoover controlled the focus of the repression. The third chapter examines the widening focus of liberal anti-Communism through the actions of intellectuals, politicians, and civil rights organizations. The fourth chapter examines the role Earl Warren played in the 'Responsibilities Program' and the extent to which it might imply compatibility between the conservative and liberal streams of anti-Communism. Chapter five examines the downfall of the 'Responsibilities Program' and the limitations of the liberal victory. And the conclusion examines the political and cultural fallout of liberal anti-Communism on the present.

This study does not accept that McCarthyism was a mass movement or had mass appeal, but rather that it was the result of a conscious effort by elites to manipulate political structures and restrict political choice. This is an important distinction, as this study is very much about how repression is instigated rather than how those under its weight reacted; it achieves little to accuse those who 'named names' of collusion. Dalton Trumbo, one of the famed Hollywood ten who were among the first to suffer in the McCarthy Era, was eloquent in understanding the nature of the times and who the enemy really was:

... the Blacklist was a time of evil, and ...no one on either side who survived it came through untouched by evil. Caught in a situation that had passed beyond the control of mere individuals, each person reacted as his nature, his needs, his convictions, and his particular circumstances compelled him to. There was bad faith and good, honesty and dishonesty, courage and cowardice, selflessness and opportunism, wisdom and stupidity, good and bad on both sides; and almost every individual involved, no matter where he stood, combined some or all of these antithetical qualities in his own person, in his own act...in the final tally we were all victims because without exception each of us felt compelled to say things he did not want to say, to do things he did not want to do, to deliver and receive wounds he truly did not want to exchange.³

Trumbo knew that those responsible for "the time of evil" were the HUAC, the Attorney General's Office, liberal

³ The words come from a speech delivered by Dalton Trumbo in 1970 at an awards ceremony. In Navasky, Naming Names, pp. 387-388.

intellectuals, the Supreme Court, and the FBI. He understood the dual nature of repression: those who find themselves living in its environment, and those who consciously and actively shape it. Though this study generally examines the later, it recognizes the intimacy it has with the former.

It was Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. who, in the name of liberal anti-Communism, felt it necessary to have "techniques of freedom";⁴ perhaps it is appropriate that he would later be the focus of Trumbo's derision for striving to make freedom a mere technicality.

⁴ The phrase is taken from the title of chapter nine in Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., The Vital Center, (London, 1970 edition).

CHAPTER I

J. EDGAR HOOVER AND THE RISE OF AMERICAN ANTI-COMMUNISM

Certainly the most tantalizing untold story of this whole period is the part played by the F.B.I. in the witch hunt.

-- I.F. Stone, March 1954

One of the main arguments of this study is that J. Edgar Hoover was largely responsible for what has come to be known as the McCarthy era. This does not suggest that Hoover was solely responsible for the crimes of the era or that the events of the era unfolded in such a way that Hoover controlled every string. Rather, Hoover was responsible for the mechanics of the institutionalized program of repression that existed throughout much of the fifties. And though these mechanisms of repression lasted for only a short time, his actions ultimately helped to redirect American politics for the next forty years. And yet, he did not operate in a vacuum. His influence over the mechanics of repression is tied to greater developments that occurred around him. It is his relationship to these developments that is of interest here.

Following World War II, it was J. Edgar Hoover who consciously and calculatngly pursued and developed the mechanisms for domestic anti-Communism. In this context, Joseph McCarthy, Roy Cohn, Richard Nixon and many other

noted anti-Communists of the fifties were all the beneficiaries of Hoover's actions and efforts rather than co-conspirators. Clearly, Hoover worked in an environment made more permissive by each of these people, and to a large degree they each worked independently as agents in the process of repression, but there is little question that it was Hoover who ultimately controlled the information that made each of these people players in the repression game.¹ How Hoover managed to monopolize the power of information gathering and dissemination is reflected in his relationship to the emerging Cold War.

¹ The degree to which Hoover supplied information to the Congressional committees alone is often unappreciated. In an internal memorandum to the Director from the Executives Conference on October 14, 1951, the leadership of the FBI reviewed the committees it had disseminated information to and questioned whether it should continue. The Committees named at the conference were:

Joint Committee on Atomic Energy
Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Armed Services Committee
Preparedness Subcommittee to the
Senate Armed Services Committee
House Committee on Un-American Activities
Senate Judiciary Committee
House Judiciary Committee
Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare
Subcommittee on Labor Management Relations of the
Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare
Senate Foreign Relations Committee

It was decided by the Executives Conference to recommend to the Director that no change in dissemination policy to the Congressional Committees take place. Hoover approved.

I

For repression to survive and thrive in a democracy it needs a crisis on which to feed. The development of the Cold War helped to facilitate and perpetuate a wartime economy, a wartime military, and a wartime fear of the 'enemy', without actually having a literal war.² "The dominant trend in American political, economic, and military thinking," I.F. Stone wrote in 1952, "was fear of peace."³ Skewed by the rose colored -- or in this case 'red' colored -- glasses of liberal historiography, the traditional view of the Cold War held that the Americans, fearful of Stalin's aggressiveness, endeavored to contain an overt threat by the Communists, who were said to be expanding into eastern Europe. Revisionist history has demonstrated that the real

2 Untouched by any of war's devastations, The United States was provided tremendous prosperity by the economic benefits of wartime production. The corporate liberals who had come to power to orchestrate the war economy in the early forties were drawn to the possibility of maintaining the wartime pace of economic growth. In recognizing this potential they suggested a peacetime foreign policy designed to protect the American domestic economy. One of the political difficulties in attaining this goal, however, was in convincing the American population en masse to support it. For the corporate liberals the threat was clear: if the Republicans came back to power they faced an isolationist foreign policy and a protectionist domestic economy. On the other hand, the liberals faced a split in the Democratic party over the fate of the New Deal policies instituted by Roosevelt in the previous decade. For these reasons an aggressive policy of anti-Communism abroad allowed for the maintenance of a wartime economy with guaranteed markets abroad. See Jezer, The Dark Ages, pp. 45-52.

3 I.F. Stone, The Hidden History of the Korean War, (New York, 1952).

American policy objective at the end of World War II "was not to defend western or even central Europe but to force the Soviet Union out of eastern Europe" altogether. The Soviet threat to the "free world" as the "justification of the containment policy, simply did not exist in the minds of American planners."⁴

This revisionist historiography argues that there was a strong American agency in the creation of the Cold War, not because of external forces but rather because of internal ones. There are two ways of reading these internal forces. If the supposed threat by the Soviet Union was not real -- in the military sense as it was argued by officials of the United States -- then clearly the American government had it within its power to "have adopted a more conciliatory attitude toward the Soviet Union."⁵ And insofar as evidence is available, there is much to suggest that the Cold War was used consciously as a tool to attain certain domestic economic and political ends.

Even before the advent of the Cold War there was a tangible appreciation by U.S. officials that the well-being of the domestic economy was contingent on being tied to international markets. Indeed, when such concerns were expressed by U.S. officials during the war, there were clear

4 Christopher Lasch, "The Sources of the Cold War," in The World of Nations, (New York, 1962), pp. 226-227.

5 Ibid., pp. 229-230.

hints of the economic expansionism that was to come. As early as 1942 Will Clayton of the U.S. State Department recognized the domestic value in a stable European market for American goods.

Without further prompt and substantial aid from the United States, economic, social, and political disruption will overwhelm Europe. Aside from the awful implications which this would have for the future peace and security of the world, the immediate effects on our domestic economy could be disastrous; markets for our surplus products gone, unemployment, depression, a heavily imbalanced budget on the background of a monstrous war debt. These things must not happen.⁶

This concern later became the impetus and backbone for the European Recovery Plan or Marshall Plan, named for the secretary of state. Ultimately as a means to support such an overtly expansionist policy for domestic ends, the external effort to guarantee markets in Europe was implemented under the guise of anti-Communism.

Another possible reason for U.S. agency in the development of the Cold War was that the Americans had no choice but "to pursue a consistent policy of economic and political expansion...because of [the] inner requirements of American Capitalism".⁷ Which is to say that capitalism's need to acquire capital as a means to acquire more capital

⁶ Richard Freeland, The Truman Doctrine and the Origins of McCarthyism, (New York, 1972), pp. 164-165.

⁷ Lasch, "The Sources of the Cold War," p. 226-227.

fundamentally required economic expansionism by the United States. The irony of this conclusion is that "Communism [then] really does threaten American interests."⁸ Though this view establishes a certain credibility for Cold War anti-Communism -- it then is in the national interest to pursue a policy of containment -- one historian has suggested that it assumes "far too much good sense" of the American policy makers at the time.⁹ In either case, it is clear that the development of the "Cold War" was an American effort to establish a new international order prompted not by a defense of the 'free world' or 'democracy' in a traditional sense, but rather as a means to support national economic and political interests. This effort to establish an international order also demanded certain changes in the domestic order.

The death of Roosevelt, and the political vacuum that resulted, contributed to the emerging changes in the domestic ideological environment. Harry Truman was an entirely different person and politician than Roosevelt, and he had trouble contending with the large political shadow of the late President. I. F. Stone has suggested that Truman was only able to command respect after he initiated his "get tough" program with the Soviets. As Stone described it,

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

"toughness became a mask for weakness, stubbornness for strength."¹⁰ At a time when the United States had no peers militarily or economically, it seemed an odd practice for Truman to 'get tough' with a Soviet Union that had lost over twenty million people during the war and was clearly in no position to present a military threat. Certainly, as sole possessor of the Atomic Bomb, the U.S. had little to fear militarily from the Russians.¹¹

But the converse was true for the Soviets. The institutionalization of the military industrial complex in the United States, the aggressive use of economic recovery plans in Europe and elsewhere as a means to prop up the domestic American economy, and the rhetoric of anti-Communism being spewed out by official Washington, were all instrumental in the Soviet Union perceiving the West as a real threat. Not long after the end of the war Stalin, so thoroughly backed into a corner by the rhetoric of the west, told his people that war with the "capitalists" was inevitable.¹² That kind of talk from the leader of the

10 I.F. Stone, The Truman Era, (New York, 1953), p. 17.

11 See Martin J. Sherwin, A World Destroyed: The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance, (New York, 1973).

12 The Soviets had applied for reconstruction assistance from the United States along with other European countries. The Americans were unwilling to give the Soviets a loan unless they could control the terms as they had with western Europe. Washington never replied. Later, Washington -- and in particular Arthur Schlesinger Jr. -- argued that the application for the loan was misplaced, and were annoyed that the Soviets couldn't believe such a thing! See Lasch,

Soviet Union clearly played into the hands of the American policy makers eagerly looking to make the Russians a tangible enemy. In effect, the Americans had said long enough and loud enough that the Russians were a threat that their fabricated expectation began to come to fruition; the planted seeds were now being sown.

II

But does an external policy of anti-Communism necessarily demand an internal purge of Communists and 'fellow-travelers'? One historian has argued that the Cold War as an external mistrust of the Soviet Union need not have manifested itself in a persecution of dissenters at home.¹³ Though this may not be entirely the case, the existence of such an internal climate -- one not totally unconnected with the external policy of anti-Communism, but having its own self-serving purposes and agenda -- suggests something about the active independent shaping of the domestic anti-Communist policy. Like the approach to the Soviets, the ideology of domestic anti-Communism was actively created and shaped by the American leadership, not out of a defensive fear, but rather out of an aggressive expansionism. At home it was a means to remove all

"Sources of the Cold War" in The World of Nations, (New York, 1962), p. 228.

13 O'Reilly, Hoover and the Un-Americans, p. 169

dissenting voices from American politics and maintain the status quo for American business.

Part of the effort to create support for the foreign policy of economic expansionism necessitated the defusing of organized labor's radical past.¹⁴ The end of the war brought prewar labor radicals, and prewar labor concerns, back to the forefront of the American economic development. The postwar CIO and AFL had over 14 million members with the financing to support strikes and organization efforts. In 1946 there were major strikes by the UAW at GM, a strike by 400,000 soft-coal miners, and the threat of a total railroad stoppage. 107,475,000 man days of work were lost due to the strikes and it forced the President to take action to undercut the power of the unions. Truman used patriotism and strong arm tactics as a means to defuse the striker's

14 The labor movement in America made a radical shift to the right between 1936, when the Congress of Industrial Organizations was founded, and 1946 when the CIO began its purge of Communists. The Union's move to the right was the result of an internal schism encouraged by the Truman Administration. In 1946 the CIO's executive board established its demand for uniformity. Associations with groups on the left -- like the National Negro Congress and the Civil Rights Congress -- were terminated. And much of the union's political clout was put behind the Truman Administration and the Marshall Plan. The same was the case with the less radical AFL. From 1950 onward the "government could embark on virtually any foreign adventure without a murmur of dissent from organized labor." See Cate, The Great Fear, pp. 349-375. See also David M. Oshinsky, "Labor's Cold War: The CIO and the Communists," in Robert Griffith and Athan Theoharis, The Specter: Original Essays on the Cold War and the Origins of McCarthyism, (New York, 1974), pp. 116-151.

radicalism. He threatened to "draft in to the Armed Forces of the United States all workers who [were] on strike against their government."¹⁵ Through legislation like the Taft-Hartley act, which restricted certain 'radical' activities of unions and also required that the officers swear that they were not Communists, the government began a calculated effort to move the unions to the right.¹⁶

"When the attack on the Communists began in the spring of 1948," observed I.F. Stone a few years before his death, "it was a way to scare liberals away from the Wallace campaign."¹⁷ Though anti-Communism at home provided a context for the maintenance of the perceived threat from the Soviet Union abroad, so too did it play off the need to counteract the Republican accusation that the Truman administration was soft on Communism. It provided the pretext for issuing Executive Order 9835 establishing a federal loyalty program giving the Attorney General and the

15 Goldman, The Crucial Decade, p. 24.

16 For example, French Canadians in Woonsocket Rhode Island, strong unionists in the thirties, turned against their union leadership in the postwar patriotism of the forties. By associating pluralism with the "American Way" -- and in this way redefining democracy and freedom -- the Federal Government was able to manipulate the workers dissent. "Since pluralism meant social harmony between Yankee elites and immigrant workers, and between labor and capital, it made the struggle for industrial democracy seem unpatriotic." See Alan Dawley, "What is to be Said," The Nation, May 7, 1990, p. 641.

17 The words are I.F. Stone's from Andrew Patner, I.F. Stone: A Portrait, (New York, 1988), p. 86.

FBI the right to compile a list of domestic subversives. The criterion for investigation, however, was far broader than membership in the Communist Party. Support for the Loyalists in the Spanish Civil War, or Civil Rights, or the United Nations, or even -- as I.F. Stone noted -- support for third party candidate Henry Wallace, was grounds for inclusion on this list.¹⁸

It is an intrinsic quality of the FBI that it "take[s] for granted the existence of a favorable climate for revolution in this, the most powerful capitalist country."¹⁹ And certainly with J. Edgar Hoover this had always been the case. This power to investigate suspected subversives was, for Hoover, a virtual blank check for collecting information.

¹⁸ David Caute, The Great Fear, (New York, 1978), pp. 280-282. Henry Wallace was a New Dealer for the Roosevelt administration. After being fired from the Truman administration he became an outspoken critic of the Truman anti-soviet policy among other things. Together with other ex-new dealers he founded the Progressives Citizens of America in December of 1946. Wallace began to mount a third party campaign for the presidency, in part to combat the policies set by the corporate liberals. Concerned that Wallace would draw off enough support from the democrats to allow the Republicans to win the election, the Truman corporate liberals began to pursue a policy of redbaiting that would achieve two goals: "destroy Wallace on the left, while co-opting the anti-communism on the right and refuting Republican charges that they were soft on Communism." See Marty Jezer, The Dark Ages, (Boston, 1982), pp. 78-80.

¹⁹ Donner, The Age of Surveillance, p. 11.

III

Where Joe McCarthy was brash, brazen, and daring, Hoover was always conscious of consequences and careful to follow certain specific guidelines to protect his operation. And where some have argued that McCarthy merely used anti-Communism as a means to power, Hoover was unquestionably anti-Communist/anti-Radical to the core.

Indeed, to say that J. Edgar Hoover was an anti-Communist is something of a understatement. His 1958 magnum opus, "The Masters of Deceit", is rife with an almost religious hatred of Communism. And unlike the general pattern of American anti-Communism throughout the first half of the 20th century -- which fluctuated from hysteria in the 1920's Red Scare to the more congenial period of cooperation in the late thirties and early forty's Popular Front period -- Hoover did not vacillate with the times. In 1919, Hoover was assigned as a Special Assistant to the Attorney General of the United States to investigate the newly formed Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party. He wrote, in his brief to the Attorney General in 1919, that:

These doctrines [the writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin as well as the activities of the Third International] threaten the happiness of the community, the safety of every individual, and the continuance of every home and fireside. They [the Communists] would destroy the peace of the country and thrust it into a condition of anarchy and lawlessness and immorality that passes

imagination.²⁰

Nearly forty years later, in 1958, his opinion had not changed:

Today, as I write these words, my conclusion of 1919 remains the same. Communism is the major menace of our time. Today it threatens the very existence of our Western civilization... It would strip man of his belief in God, his heritage of freedom, his trust in love, justice and mercy. Under Communism, all would become, as so many already have, twentieth century slaves.²¹

It is by virtue of Hoover's influence that anti-Communism in the 50's took on the proportions that it did when even the FBI recognized that the American Communist Party (CP) was at an all time low in its postwar membership.²² Paradoxically, Hoover would latter use this low number to suggest that the American CP had conducted its own purges and that they were now down to a "Hard Core".

The rhetoric of the postwar imbued the American psyche with a "popular obsession for achieving a total victory over

20 J. Edgar Hoover, Masters of Deceit, (New York, 1958), p. vi.

21 Ibid., pp. vi-vii

22 Even by Hoover's own numbers the Communist Party membership in the United States had declined to only 22,600 by 1955. In 1944 the FBI estimation of membership was no more than 64,600. In either case the numbers did not indicate any mass involvement with the party, at least not on the basis of membership.

communism."23 Into this environment, largely created by Hoover and others, Americans projected their fear of subversion. So sure that the United States was superior, and so sure of its ultimate victory over the evil of Communism, that gains by the Communists were perceived by the public as Administration losses. Even the Atomic Bomb "must" have been stolen by the Soviets rather than developed independently. Americans looked to their own institutions and public works for subversives who must be undercutting the chances for American victory. J. Edgar Hoover and Attorney General Tom C. Clark were at the forefront, both creating the 'fear' and then developing the mechanisms for rooting out these subversive elements.

In his testimony before the Temporary Commission on Employee Loyalty appointed by Truman to examine the safeguards of national security, Attorney General Tom Clark argued:

The problem of subversive or disloyal persons in the government is a most serious one. While the number of such persons has not as yet reached serious proportions, there is no doubt that the presence of any in the Government service or the possibility of their entering Government service are serious matters, and should cause the gravest concern to those charged with the responsibility of solving the problem. I do not believe the gravity of the problem should be weighed in the light of numbers, but rather from the view of the serious threat which even one disloyal person constitutes to the security of the Government of

23 Theoharis, Seeds of Repression, p. 98.

the United States.²⁴

It is no coincidence that the rise in the power of the FBI and the rise in the 50's of the "witch hunts" happened at the same time. Prior to World War II the FBI was a relatively obscure investigative organization primarily concerned with the violation of federal statutes. However, under the leadership of Hoover, beginning in 1924, there were increased activities in gathering information on radical groups. As time progressed, and the organization became more independent, Hoover began to set the FBI's agenda according to his own personal concerns.

It was in the mid-thirties that President Roosevelt offered Hoover the opportunity to legitimize what he had been doing furtively up to that point. In May of 1934, Roosevelt ordered the FBI to investigate the American Nazi Movement. Later, in 1936, the scope of the investigations was widened to include Fascists and Communists. At a meeting with Roosevelt in 1936 Hoover spent much of his time impressing upon the President the threat of the Communists, particularly insofar as they controlled the labor movement.²⁵ Though he lacked the official authority to do so, Hoover jumped on the opportunity to collect as much

²⁴ Ibid., p. 104.

²⁵ O'Reilly, Hoover and the UnAmericans, pp. 13-36; Donner, The Age of Surveillance, pp. 53-54.

information about Communists as he could, virtually ignoring "the burgeoning ultra-right movements", and in effect began establishing the information storehouse that would later support the 'Responsibilities Program'.²⁶

In addition to the collected information about suspected radicals who might be involved in sabotage, espionage, etc. Roosevelt asked Hoover to investigate critics of his policies.²⁷ In each instance Hoover took the opportunity to write a blank check for the surveillance of 'subversives'.

The investigative power that Hoover had commanded during the war was threatened by the peace of 1945. Not satisfied to curb the investigative powers that had been established, he, along with the Attorney General Tom C. Clark, endeavored to continue the wartime investigative

²⁶ Hoover ignored the Fascist movements in the United States in part because he believed they grew out of Communist movements. In 1938, before an American Legion group, he stated that "Fascism has always grown in the slimy wastes of Communism. Our democratic institutions cannot exist half American and half alien in spirit. We are proud of our American form of government. If we want to improve it, we will do it in our way and in our own good time." A month later at a gathering of the Detroit Economic Club, he said, "Subversion alien theories and isms are not only a drastic contrast to American ways of thinking, feeling and acting, but they stand for a complete overthrow of established ideals of American life and philosophy of government to which America is dedicated." This is a clear example of how Hoover was able to separate the social cause from the groups in question by tainting the ism with UnAmericanism. He would later try this with the civil rights movement with limited results.

²⁷ Donner, The Age of Surveillance, pp. 23-26.

procedures. It was the Cold War policy that afforded the F.B.I. the opportunity to justify not only the protection of national security through information gathering, but also to focus attention on the Cold War education of the American people. There was a conscious effort on the part of the F.B.I. to "convince the American people that domestic Communists and other dissenters posed a serious threat to the national security and" that they needed to "influence the national political debate on the Communist issue."²⁸

Hoover's efforts to manipulate the American people reflected the fact that the F.B.I. "had little use for the pluralist myth."²⁹ Hoover saw the American people as objects of manipulation via all available means of communication. In 1946, the F.B.I. set out a written policy that they would:

(1) aid those who hunted subversives in and out of government, (2) aid those who hunted as well as those who questioned the emerging McCarthyite politics, and (3) influence the debate within the liberal community between 'First-Amendment extremists' and Cold War liberals who believed Communist party members were not entitled to traditional constitutional protections.³⁰

By widely publicizing two security cases following World War II the FBI and the Attorney General's Office were

²⁸ O'Reilly, Hoover and the Un-Americans, p. 5.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

able to increase the public awareness about a so-called 'Communist threat'. The first came in 1945 when the F.B.I. raided the offices of a left-wing journal on east Asian affairs called Amerasia. It found there documents that had been obtained furtively from the State Department, the OSS, and the Navy. The ensuing disclosures to the Congress saw the formation of a special subcommittee to investigate. What resulted was a challenge to the loyalty of state department employees. The F.B.I., using questionable sources as fodder, flooded the white house and congress with reports about "Soviet espionage cells in the Government." The irony of the Amerasia case was that it necessarily did not involve Communists; in fact it was a political case. It was not unusual at all to have government documents furtively being passed to groups as a means to express disapproval of the government's policies. In this case the Amerasia journal was merely protesting the government's China policy.³¹ The second case 'publicized' by the FBI came when revelations were made about subversion in the atomic spy ring in Canada in 1946. These cases in addition to the labor strikes that were so numerous in 1945-46 only reinforced the FBI concern about radical activities in the country.

³¹ Athan Theoharis, The Seeds of Repression, (Chicago, 1971), p. 125.

In July of 1946 the Justice Department in collusion with the FBI convinced Truman to allow for the wide use of wiretapping. Attorney General Tom C. Clark doctored a wartime policy paper of Roosevelt for wiretapping such that Truman believed he was simply reiterating Roosevelt's policy. Although the FBI could now wiretap at will, the evidence obtained could not be used in court.

In 1948 Communists in government became a focus again for the congress in session. When a federal Grand jury in New York refused to hand down indictments to suspected Communists identified by F.B.I. informants, Hoover once again took matters into his own hands. The F.B.I. began to feed file information to specific members of the investigation committee. The determination of Freshman congressman Richard Nixon to go after Alger Hiss, whose credentials were "impeccable", is understandable in light of the information that the F.B.I. was feeding him. Nixon was being billed as the "great anti-Communist congressmen" with the active support of the bureau.³²

Hoover was, of course, careful about what information was leaked. Indeed, even information that was released to specific congressmen was done in such a way as to "permit their safe and non-discoverable destruction." In Hoover's "Official and Confidential" file on Alger Hiss there were

³² O'Reilly, Hoover and the Un-Americans, pp. 106-112.

three documents that suggested to the Secretary of State that he leak "unsubstantiated and derogatory" information to certain conservative congressmen to force Hiss' resignation. On each document was Hoover's inscription, "This Memorandum is for Administrative Purposes to be Destroyed After Action is Taken and Not Sent to Files." The reason for these files surviving at all was due to clerical error. Many of the files pertaining to McCarthy period cases reflect the policy of destroying documents which might have more readily exposed the activist nature of the F.B.I.³³

By early 1947 the 'Spectre of Communism' was haunting American politics; the efforts by Hoover and others in the Justice Department were paying off. In an April 7, 1947 memorandum sent to the fifty-two FBI field offices, Hoover noted that requests were being "received at a greatly accelerated rate" for information "concerning organizations and individuals". He noted almost proudly that this "appears to be due...to the recent publicity concerning Communism."³⁴

In June of the following year, it was clear that the need to set a policy regarding the dissemination of information was being considered by the FBI executive committee. Hoover had written Assistant to the Director

³³ O'Reilly, Hoover and the Un-Americans, pp. 126-128.

³⁴ SAC Letter # 40 From The Director to the field offices, April 7, 1947.

D.M. Ladd asking if a proposed policy of information dissemination had "been thought through carefully and all its implications considered." Ladd noted that the relationship with "the local and state police agencies...is becoming more pronounced as those agencies are increasingly becoming legitimately interested in...Communist activities." Ladd suggested that "public source information" be disseminated upon request. Public source information was any information gathered through newspapers, public records, etc. Ladd was concerned about maintaining the best possible relationship with the law enforcement agencies across the country. "In the event of an emergency" he wrote, "it is conceivable that we may be forced to call upon these agencies for assistance if it becomes necessary to effect the apprehension of all known Party members within a few hours." At the bottom of the page Hoover put his characteristic approval: "O.K. H."³⁵ On June 17, Hoover sent a memo to the field offices confirming the new policy.³⁶

Hoover was concerned with the possibility of the FBI being embarrassed and time and time again emphasized that

35 Memorandum to the Director from D.M. Ladd, June 11, 1948. Subject: Dissemination of Information in Bureau Files -- Cooperation With Law Enforcement Agencies.

36 Memorandum to All Special Agents in Charge from the Director regarding Dissemination of Information in Bureau Files -- Relations with Private Organizations and Individuals, June 17, 1948.

any information passed must be done with the expressed understanding that the FBI would not be named as source. The "FBI must exercise extreme caution," he wrote, "to avoid embarrassment."³⁷ In a June 22 memo, Hoover emphasized that it was "permissible" to provide public source material to law enforcement agencies who requested the information. However, he carefully listed the conditions under which such information should be disseminated. Repeatedly Hoover impressed upon his field offices that the information should be furnished with the understanding that it was not "verified by the FBI", that the "requesting agencies have a definite understanding" that the information provided is to be "verified by them at its original source" should they choose to act on it, and again later in the memo, that there would be "no mention of the FBI" and that the "relationship" between the FBI and the requesting agency "will be kept strictly confidential."³⁸

IV

Before 1950 it had not been necessary for Hoover to consider any more than an ad hoc program of information

³⁷ SAC Letter # 40 to field offices regarding Dissemination of Information, April 7, 1947.

³⁸ Memorandum to All Special Agents in Charge from the Director . regarding Dissemination of Information in Bureau Files -- Cooperation With Law Enforcement Agencies, June 22, 1948.

dissemination; his authority in the intelligence field had been uncontested. However, the national sense of fear that he had worked so hard to develop also brought with it an increase in requests for information. In some respects Hoover had overachieved; he was not prepared for the wave of requests and watched disconcertedly as individual states and other intelligence organizations set up independent 'red-squads'.

The stage was set for the institutionalization of anti-Communism. The HUAC and other Congressional Committees continued to serve their purpose as an outlet for Hoover's information but he needed a centralized and formalized system where he could control the nationwide acquisition and dissemination of information. The 'Responsibilities Program' would fill that need.

CHAPTER II

HOOVER AND THE CONSCIOUS DEVELOPMENT OF INSTITUTIONALIZED REPRESSION

Something utterly new has taken root in America during the past generation, a Communist mentality representing a systematic, purposive, and conscious attempt to destroy Western civilization and roll history back to the age of barbaric cruelty and despotism, all in the name of 'progress'. Evil is depicted as good, terror as justice, hate as love, and obedience to a foreign master as patriotism.

-- J. Edgar Hoover¹

More than any other man, J. Edgar Hoover was responsible for the development of domestic American anti-Communism and the American political police. The programs and tactics that he created and employed have been used by the United States Government ever since to quell domestic unrest, to challenge dissent, and to maintain the status quo. As can be seen from a discussion of the beginnings of the 'Responsibilities Program', Hoover's responsibility in the making of a political repression machine was central. We can also see that the creation of a repression machine contributed to the culture of repression. That is, the RP contributed to the widening focus of repression that would eventually encompass cultural forms and media.

¹ J. Edgar Hoover, Masters of Deceit, (New York, 1958), p.319.

I

At 4:30 in the afternoon on the 12th of February 1951, seven United States governors representing the Counsel of State Governments met with FBI head J. Edgar Hoover in Chicago to discuss the "inadequate coordination in the field of internal security between State and Federal governments."² In the space of an hour and fifteen minutes these select few people set the stage for a national policy of government condoned repression. For the next four years, the FBI -- and almost every State governor to a man -- worked willingly, often eagerly, to weed the public sector of 'suspected subversives'.

In many respects, the FBI's 'Responsibilities Program' was the first institutionalization of domestic anti-Communism in postwar America. The 'Responsibilities Program' was created for the expressed purpose of identifying and marginalizing American Communists, radicals, and fellow travelers. It was in addition, however, a tactical institutionalization of counterrevolution against all groups opposed to the status quo.

Since the Responsibilities Program was not the first government program to sponsor anti-Communist repression, it needs to be distinguished in a number of ways from the

² Memorandum to Mr. Tolson from L.B. Nichols, February 12, 1951.

Congressional committees that predated it by a dozen years. Firstly, even during the HUAC's peak of effectiveness it was almost entirely reliant on the information given to it by the FBI and the Justice Department. In this regard the members of the HUAC were still agents of the FBI. Secondly, the HUAC and its like-minded committees in the Congress and throughout State government were often used by anti-Communist politicians, like Richard Nixon and Joseph McCarthy, as a means to consolidate their political power. None of these politicians pursued a programmatic effort to eliminate Communists, but rather publicized each attack for its intrinsic political value. Thirdly, though the FBI was only an information gathering organization with no authority to prosecute, it still controlled the flow of information and thus, to a great extent, controlled who would be attacked or purged. To this extent, each of the government sponsored attacks on subversives before the Responsibilities Program was sponsored ultimately by the FBI in an ad hoc fashion. The House Committee on Un-American Activities certainly deserves the derision it has received; however, as FBI files are slowly released through the Freedom of Information Act, the degree to which the HUAC was an agent of Hoover becomes more and more apparent. The Responsibilities Program was unique in that Hoover and the FBI centralized and formalized the means by which the persecution of 'subversives' took place.

It was also unique insofar as it involved so many of the United States' elected leadership. It is now clear that nearly every Governor in the United States was part of the extensive network. Familiar political leaders like Adlai Stevenson, Thomas Dewey, and most disturbingly -- as will be discussed in a subsequent chapter -- Earl Warren, were as deeply involved in the purging process as Joseph McCarthy, Roy Cohn, or Richard Nixon.

The tactics that J. Edgar Hoover and Attorney General Tom C. Clark had utilized in bringing the 'Communist menace' to the forefront of public concern had more than paid off. In a relatively few years the internal Communist threat had become a mania throughout the United States. By 1950 the increasing fear of subversion had become political fodder for many U.S. Governors.

At the Governors Conference in January of 1951 -- just before the meeting with Hoover -- many U.S. Governors expressed great concern about the possibility of Communists in government service or working in munitions factories. In particular they expressed concern about their lack of knowledge regarding "Communists, known to the FBI, engaged in manufacturing war materials in their states."³

In Pennsylvania the state police had already started an independent red-squad that, to Hoover's great dismay, would

³ Memorandum to the Attorney General from J. Edgar Hoover, February 3, 1951.

not cooperate with the FBI insofar as giving them acquired information. "The State Police," wrote the head of the Philadelphia FBI office in a January 29, 1951 memo to Hoover, "have declined to furnish information from their subversive files to the Bureau."4 Pennsylvania was not alone in the States Rights movement for independent security programs. At the same Governors meeting in January, Governor Val Peterson of Nebraska argued "that matters concerning security being reported to the FBI, was not binding on the States and that it was up to the States to develop their own investigations of Communists and particularly of Communists who were employed in [vital manufacturing] Plants."5 Peterson was quickly seconded by Governors Beardsley of Iowa, Carver of Delaware, and the Governor of Wyoming.

This trend concerned Hoover a great deal. "I am of the firm opinion," he wrote in a February 3, 1951 memo to the Attorney General, "that it would be highly undesirable, and that irreparable harm could result from providing the Governors of the States specific information relating to Communists in industry of the State government, or other subversive information" which would risk being "out of [our]

4 Memorandum to the Director from Philadelphia SAC, January 29, 1951.

5 Memorandum to D.M. Ladd from A.H. Belmont, February 5, 1951.

control." He believed that the release of such information would "set a dangerous precedent" that would require similar actions be done for "Congressional Committees, State legislative investigative committees, and other organizations and persons."⁶ At face value, Hoover appears to have based his concern on a fear that such dissemination of information would risk the abuse of "civil rights". Upon closer reading, however, it is clear that Hoover was primarily concerned about losing control of the process of dissemination. Two years later in an Office Memorandum, Assistant to the Director Nichols wrote that in 1951 the FBI was "confronted with the proposition of either having [the FBI's] files opened up with no controls being imposed, or working out an arrangement with the Governors Conference."⁷

Since 1945 Hoover had, in conjunction with the Justice Department, been involved with the effort to increase the "internal security" through the dissemination of information.⁸ But up until that time it had been an ad hoc program that Hoover had controlled uncontested by other intelligence groups. The need to organize a specific program that centralized and formalized the dissemination

6 Memorandum to the Attorney General from J. Edgar Hoover, February 3, 1951.

7 Office Memorandum to Tolson from Nichols December 7, 1953.

8 Athan Theoharis, Seeds of Repression, (Chicago, 1971), pp. 123-146.

had not been necessary and, in fact, not entirely possible. In the years following the World War II Hoover had established general guidelines for his field offices for dealing with information requests. In 1947, Hoover sent memos to the 52 field offices stating the Bureau's policy regarding the dissemination of information. At that time he was concerned for the reputation of the FBI.⁹ This concern about possible Bureau embarrassment only became more acute as Hoover's campaign of internal security took hold of the popular imagination. By 1951 concern on the part of the State Governors had grown to the point where they believed that they needed more information on the people they were hiring.

In response to the Governor's actions, Hoover recognized that he had to act quickly in order to centralize the collection and dissemination of information. He chose to use a scheduled meeting with the Governor's representatives as an opportunity to consolidate his power over information control. For a full month Hoover had his field agents collect data on State Governors who were in the process of setting up their own state level investigative committees.¹⁰

9 SAC letter # 40, from Hoover to all field offices, April 7, 1947.

10 Hoover had numerous Governors investigated in order that he would have the best bargaining position at their meeting on the 12 of February 1951.

Though the FBI had no power to act on information gathered, it increasingly became the "clearing house for information effecting the internal security of the United States," as Hoover noted in the midst of the Responsibilities program in 1953.¹¹ He understood the power it implied. As Hoover talked to the Governors on that winter evening in Chicago he must have been keenly aware of the opportunity.

At the meeting Governor Frank Lausche of Ohio was the leading representative of the Governor's committee and was in charge of presenting the Director with the collective concerns of the Governors. Other executive members present were Elbert N. Carvel of Delaware, Gordon Browning of Tennessee, Fredrick G. Payne of Maine, and Sherman Adams of New Hampshire. Sitting in on the meeting were Governors Walter J. Kohler of Wisconsin, Adlai Stevenson of Illinois, and Frank Bane, who was the Executive Secretary.

Governor Lausche began the meeting by stating the concern on the part of the Governors about the poor state of coordination with the Federal government on the matter of internal security. He suggested that a plan should be established, that the Governors from time to time needed to "secure information" on individuals they were considering hiring. Hoover said he was "very glad" to have the chance

¹¹ Revisions to Section 5 Dissemination of Information from the FBI to all the field offices, January 3, 1953.

to speak to the Governors. Given the floor, he "discussed in some detail" the general position of the Communist party in the United States. They were down to a "hard core" he said, but because of "the war [Korea]" they were a greater threat than ever. If the "present situation" was going to be won, it would be on the "home front, and that the home front must remain inviolate."¹²

Though the meeting was called in response to the concern that employees in the munitions industries or those employees who worked in defense industry might pose a threat of sabotage, it did not take long for Governor Carvel of Delaware to express concern about "Communism in our colleges and Universities." Interestingly, Hoover was reluctant to respond. Later in the meeting he rejected the blacklisting of Professors and school teachers fearing a public backlash. For the moment, Hoover was primarily concerned with those public employees who worked in the public sector that 'might' engage in sabotage and espionage. As far as subversive educators were concerned, he told the governors that the Bureau would be willing to help in "some instances" by giving out "public source material" in the event of a request. Hoover would not offer information from the confidential files, which was information gathered through

¹² Memorandum to Mr. Tolson from L.B. Nichols, February 12, 1951.

"technical surveillance, microphones, and confidential informants."¹³

Still, Hoover was anxious to get the Governors "on line" for a centralized program and continued to hammer away at the Communist threat to the nation. He used charts to demonstrate the strength of the Communists state by state and then district by district. He expressed his distaste for what he called "Hysteria and World War II vigilantes" in the fight against communism.¹⁴ This was indicative, in part, of Hoover's inclination to be cautious and calculated, but it was more indicative of the image he was trying to convey about the folly of a program not centrally organized. He impressed upon the Governors that he had already developed the "security index program" which was a means to keep tabs on the "4,463 most potentially dangerous" subversives. The program was designed such that these subversives could be arrested "within one hour after the order [was] given."¹⁵ It was from the Security Index Program that Hoover proposed to develop what was to become the Responsibilities Program.

As the meeting ended the Governors asked the Director what they should say to the press. They were encouraged to say that they had "conferred with the Director for the

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

purposes of determining how better to carry out the Presidential directives on internal security."16 In one short sentence Hoover had legitimized the meeting by tying it in with the President's program while at the same time centralizing its focus.

Immediately following the meeting with the Governors Hoover sent a memorandum to the 52 FBI field offices:

I pointed out to the Governors that should any of them ever have a special problem, he should communicate either with the SAC [the field office] covering his district or with me, that we would check and see what information we had on the individual, that it was entirely possible we might be in possession of information which the Governor or his representative could secure, just as well as we did, of a public source character and which might then be used by the Governor to make his own investigation.17

This established a centralized control for the channeling of information through the FBI. But once Hoover recognized the degree to which he controlled information, the Responsibilities Program soon expanded its focus.

It had been the Governors who pushed for the investigation of 'subversive' educators. And repeatedly Hoover had resisted an all out investigation, concerned about the possible backlash of public opinion. However, his consent to take each individual request by the Governors and

16 Ibid.

17 Memorandum to all field offices from the Director SAC letter # 17, February 13, 1951.

see if public source information existed gave some leverage for the Governors to investigate, but also acted as a testing ground for further action.¹⁸

Meanwhile, the FBI executives wasted little time in establishing a review of the Security Index File for suspected subversives working in 'vital' industries.

If we consider the fact that the Bureau is responsible for the internal security of the country as a whole [wrote Belmont to Ladd in a Feb 13, 1951 memo] and that the facilities in question are public utilities serving large portions of the people, it is plain that we have a responsibility to the people to place on guard those responsible for the protection of the facilities when we have information of a subversive nature affecting them.¹⁹

On that same day a memorandum was sent to the field offices requesting a review of the Security Index File "to secure the names of those subjects presently employed in the public utilities outside of the Vital Facilities list for the purposes of confidentially furnishing their identities to the appropriate local authorities."²⁰

The memorandum emphasized the importance of disseminating information on a "confidential basis" to the State Governor. And then, interestingly, the memo stated that "confidential informants and sources should not be

18 Memorandum to Tolson from L.B. Nichols.

19 Memorandum to D.H. Ladd from Belmont, February 13, 1951.

20 Ibid.

disclosed and whenever possible public source information should be stressed." This left open the possibility of using non-public sources if the specific case deemed it necessary. The memo ended with the instruction that "information is to be furnished orally and a written record is to be maintained in your office reflecting the information given with the date and person to whom furnished."

Following the review, it did not take long for the field offices to respond with names to be given to the governors. One of the first to reach the FBI headquarters was typical of many to come:

He [the subversive in question] has been identified by reliable sources as having been a member of the Communist Party. There is no indication at the present time that he is a member of the Communist Party, but he is very open in his praise of Russia and his criticism of the United States. He was recently reported by a fellow workman as being pro-Communist and as having made critical statements of the United States in connection with the Korean situation and defending the Russian Government.²¹

In the entire four year program, it was not unusual for the field offices to uncover no real evidence of subversion. To the extent that Hoover needed the threat of numbers to maintain the momentum of fear, this presented a problem. This was overcome by changing the way in which the

²¹ Memorandum to the Director from Portland SAC, March 14, 1951.

subversive threat was understood. Hoover was fond of pointing out that the number of Bolsheviks involved in the October Revolution of 1917 were a relative few and the American Communists in 1947 were larger in number. Eventually, Hoover would stop publishing the Communist membership numbers altogether, while at the same time suggesting that the declining numbers were in fact a sign of strength, that membership had gone underground and become even more secretive! Indeed, part of Hoover's success in publicizing the "Communist threat" -- and a means to increase the 'numbers' involved in the threat -- was to establish that such Communist associations, past or present, meant that the individual was 'tainted'. Thus it was of little importance that a person may have been a member of the Communist Party for a short time years before; all people and organizations that the 'tainted' person came into contact with were now 'tainted' as well.

It was also the separation of subversives from a social cause that contributed to Hoover's success. By so separating them it was implied that the person was either "duped" or an "agent" of a foreign power. Once the social basis for membership was dispensed with, the "agitator" -- and not the movement -- was the threat to the stability of the status quo.²²

²² Donner, The Age of Surveillance, p. 14. This practice continued well into the seventies. The Illinois Crime Investigation Commission issued a report on the Students for

Finally, by eventually considering educators for investigation Hoover could both add to the fear, as educators were in contact with the 'vulnerable' young, and pad the numbers of subversives. The Philadelphia office was particularly concerned about the possibility of subversive educators. They felt that the Pennsylvania Act of 1939, which forbade subversives from being employed by the city, was a base from which to develop a nation wide program. But Hoover's reluctance continued. He wrote back that "it is not desired that public schools or private institutions of learning be considered public utilities of public organization."²³

During April the leadership of the FBI had begun to change its mind. In a policy letter to Hoover, D.M. Ladd suggested that the school issue was too important not to address:

In connection with Communist elements in the educational field, it is our opinion that we should furnish information to state Governors

a Democratic Society. Its contents were "replete with dossiers, photographs, personal letters, diaries, and documents relating to the SDS figures with whom it purported to be primarily concerned..." The released file's intention was for the purpose of bringing "punitive exposure [to] intelligence targets and as part of a nationwide intelligence mobilization against young radicals." So the process of identifying and marginalizing dissenters by tagging them as 'agitators' was intended to remove the students basis for dissent from their actions. See the above cited, p. 5n.

23 Memorandum to Philadelphia SAC from Hoover, April 16, 1951.

concerning Communists who are connected with state operated colleges and Universities. However, we feel that we should not volunteer information regarding Communists in private institutions or public schools. If you agree, this policy will be followed in the future.²⁴

On the bottom of the Memo Hoover scrawled a characteristic "OK H."

On April 27, 1951 the Executives Conference of the FBI, including Ladd, Clegg, Harbo, Rosen, Mohr, Sizoo, and Belmont, met to consider the possibility of disseminating information about Communists in the public school systems. Jointly they prepared a memo that argued educators should now be included in the 'Responsibilities Program,' conditional on Hoover's approval.

It was pointed out [at the meeting] that the educational field is considered a prime target by the Communist Party because it reaches the youth of our nation. A daily contact of teachers with pupils forms a close association and enables the teachers to effectively control the thinking of the pupils and thus insidiously instill into the minds of children the Communist Party line. It was pointed out that because of this the FBI may be considered to have a responsibility to advise responsible local officials of the identities of Communist in the schools.

Later in the memo the executive conference expressed concern that that the "educational field is probably one of the most controversial and independent fields in existence." And as such they should be careful, as "any attempt to

²⁴ Memorandum to the Director from D.M. Ladd, April 11, 1951.

remove public school teachers based on information by the FBI could be twisted by the Communist Party and its sympathizers into an endeavor by the FBI to control the thinking in the educational field." The group felt, however, that since the public had "now become educated to the dangers of Communism... the public would now back up the dissemination of such information by the FBI." Certainly, they argued, there would be occasional "flare-backs" but careful choice of who would receive the disseminated information would minimize the risk. Again, at the bottom of the Memo was Hoover's "OK. H." It is telling that the FBI should think the students so susceptible to manipulation.²⁵

As a means to disseminate information about teachers and professors, the FBI had its field offices investigate the local laws regarding subversives in the employ of the state. In Philadelphia agents reported on the provisions of Act of 1939 which forbade "subversive activity" on the part of teachers.²⁶ The Governor of the State, like many others across the country, was more than willing to establish restrictive state laws that the FBI could use to against subversive educators. But, public resistance was still a problem. Pennsylvania Governor Fine was shocked by the

25 Memorandum to the Director from the FBI Executive Conference regarding the Responsibilities of the FBI in the Internal Security Field, April 30, 1951.

26 Memorandum to the Director from Philadelphia SAC, May 25, 1951.

resistance of state officials to the passing of anti-Communist legislation. "I earnestly urge," he said to the Pennsylvania General Assembly, "that the Justice Department of the State, which recommends passage of the mentioned loyalty Bill now in the house, be given adequate weapons to cope with the menace of international Communist conspiracy." His concern was about the state's "red and pink" teachers having "influence over our children."²⁷ But the laws did exist. In Maryland there was the "Ober Law" which "required state and municipal employees, including school teachers, to sign a loyalty oath."²⁸ So, too, did Texas and California have laws that required loyalty oaths.²⁹ Governor Lodge of Connecticut was disturbed by the resistance to similar legislation, asking for a loyalty oath "largely from College and University Professors."³⁰

²⁷ "Fine Urges Loyalty Path To Oust Red Teachers," Philadelphia Inquirer, p. 19, July 13, 1951.

²⁸ Memorandum to the Director from Baltimore SAC, June 16, 1951.

²⁹ In California, Governor Earl Warren instituted the 1950 Levering Act. This act made all public employees 'civil defense workers' and gave them 30 days to sign an affidavit that swore that for the last five years they had never "advocated the violent overthrow [of the United States] nor belonged to any organization that did." After 1953, all state employees had to answer all and any questions put to them by state agencies and legislative committees or risked dismissal. See Cate, The Great Fear, p. 341.

³⁰ Memorandum to the Director from New Haven SAC, June 25, 1951.

Late in 1951, the executive committee had set into policy the intention to spread their hunt further than Communists. The investigation into the New York City Police Department reveals the change in focus. In a memo sent to D.M. Ladd from A.H. Belmont it was suggested that the New York Office be furnished with five separate lists of "individuals who are alleged to be either members of the Communist Party or sympathetic to the Communist Party movement." The heading of the lists were as follows:

- 1) Members believed to be Communists
- 2) Members suspected of being Communist Sympathizers
- 3) Members affiliated with organizations sympathetic to or dominated by the Communist Party
- 4) Members who have signed Communist Party petitions
- 5) Probationary Patrolmen who were members of the Communist Party, or were at one time or another involved in organizations which had Communist tendency³¹

The scope of the program expanded quickly. The Washington Office was receiving numerous requests to disseminate information, and with few exceptions Hoover granted all requests. His confidence in the success of the program only increased when he received letters from political leaders who were grateful for the FBI assistance.

In addition to thanking you for giving us this information (wrote an unidentified person to Hoover late in 1951) I am urging that whenever there is unfavourable information about any of our employees we shall appreciate hearing about it

³¹ Memorandum to D.M. Ladd from A.H. Belmont.

even though we may not be able to use the information in the form of a direct charge against the individual concerned. We are, of course, very eager to have assurance that our employees are 100% loyal.

On the bottom of the letter, Hoover wrote: "This shows [the] value of our procedure in making such information available to responsible local officials. H."32

Having included educators in the program, and having widened the focus of 'subversive' behavior, and finally having won the cooperation of the U.S. Governors, Hoover had effectively established a formal anti-Communist network throughout the United States.

In the genesis of the RP were also the seeds of other repressive programs and tactics and even attitudes that have permeated the American social and political structure until the present. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the creation of a repression machine also contributed to the culture of repression. That is, the RP contributed to the widening focus of repression that would eventually encompass cultural forms and media. This was evident in the role played by the intellectuals.

32 Letter to Hoover from a source blacked out by the FBI, October 5, 1951.

CHAPTER III

LIBERAL ANTI-COMMUNISM AND THE INTELLECTUALS

They were going so fast they overshot their mark, but towards the dawn they found themselves in some pretty fair pastureland slightly to the Right of center... Bugles blared, enlisted men stood at attention, censors swung great pots of diabolofuge, and the chief ideologue christened the place Vital Center.

-- Dalton Trumbol

J. Edgar Hoover was supported by a liberalism which defended "an approach to internal security that encouraged the delegation of authority to a strong central domestic intelligence agency."² Liberals wanted to remove internal security matters from the legislative committees and give it to the "best professional counterespionage agency [they could] get to protect [the] national security."³ Liberals condoned the idea that a "man might be jailed not for something he did but for something it was thought he might do."⁴ To better understand the intellectual environment within which Hoover was allowed to operate, it is important to examine briefly the role and position of liberal

1 Dalton Trumbo, "Honor Bright and All That Jazz," in The Time of the Toad, (New York, 1972), p. 143.

2 William W. Keller, The Liberals and J. Edgar Hoover, (Princeton, 1989), p. 29.

3 Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Vital Center, (New York, 1949), p. 129.

4 I.F. Stone, Polemics and Prophecies, (Boston, 1971), pp. 9-10.

intellectuals, civil rights groups, and liberal politicians and their relationship to Hoover in the rise of anti-Communism. It is also important to emphasize their role in order to better appreciate the anti-Communist consensus that existed between the liberals and conservatives in the American political spectrum. The RP found its ideological justification in the thinking of post-war intellectuals and their quest for political power.⁵

I

As has already been noted, the liberal notion of state security was born in the Roosevelt years with the ascendancy of the FBI as a de facto political watchdog agency. The

5 To underscore my understanding of Liberals and Liberalism in the McCarthy Era, a clarification should be made at this juncture. This study recognizes that the liberal position, ideologically, in the fifties -- a position that demonstrated the liberals' fascination with manipulation and power -- was no aberration of the times. There are a number of works which identify the manipulative tendency in liberalism as early as the Progressive Era. What was so profound and unique in the McCarthy period was the consolidation of the liberals' control over social structures, political and cultural. It was this consolidation that precipitated the "end of ideology" ideology. One particular work that is able to identify and understand the liberal ideology in the Progressive Era is James Weinstein, The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State, 1900-1918, (Boston, 1968). As Weinstein puts it, the "confusion over what liberalism means and who liberals are is deep-seated in American society...In large part this is because of the change in the nature of liberalism from the individualism of laissez faire in the nineteenth century to the social control of corporate liberalism in the twentieth." For an additional discussion of liberalism in the Progressive Era see, Charles Forcey, The Crossroads of Liberalism, (London, 1961).

success of Hoover and Attorney General Clark in asserting the omnipotence of the International Communist Movement reflected itself in legislation proposed by liberals and conservatives throughout the late forties and early fifties.

Restrictive legislation was a logical extension of the liberal understanding of internal security. Liberals shared the conservatives' basic assumption about the Communist threat, but they supported an institutionalized anti-Communism. Since the FBI had already compiled a list of subversives, it seemed a natural choice to look to Hoover. This was also politically expedient, for it would take anti-Communism out of the politically minded congress and make it an administrative function. By giving it to the FBI, they had largely achieved their goal.

The Emergency Detention Act (EDA) served this end by suggesting an administrative apparatus for pursuing Communists. The EDA necessitated the identification of potential subversives and a continuous flow of information about their whereabouts and intentions. This was intended to act as a preventative measure in the event of an actual conflict with the Russians. The EDA, however, was notably vague in a number of areas. In particular it did not specifically identify what constituted a subversive threat. It left that decision to the administrator in charge --

namely Hoover.⁶

The EDA was introduced by liberal Senators on September 6, 1950. In it was a general statement about Communism and its threat to the United States. Communism was found to be a "revolutionary political movement whose purpose it is, by treachery, deceit, infiltration... espionage, sabotage, [and] terrorism... to establish a Communist totalitarian dictatorship in all the countries of the world through the medium of a single world-wide Communist political organization." The EDA's intent was to provide for the detention, in the event of an emergency, of those people considered by the Attorney General to be involved in an organization that conspired to overthrow the government by violent means. Insofar as it identified the threat as Communism, this position differed little from the position of the conservatives. And, in fact, the EDA eventually was passed by the U.S. Congress as part of the Internal Security Act of 1950 which was the legislative child of conservative Senator McCarran.

Where the liberals and the conservatives parted company was in the conservative insistence that Communists and Communist front organizations be registered and controlled and possibly outlawed. Ironically, this position was not

⁶ See Keller, The Liberals and J. Edgar Hoover, pp. 55-64.

only opposed by the liberals but by Hoover as well.⁷ Hoover's position may not have been as contradictory as it might seem, however. By supporting the refusal to register Communists, he could reserve the power of "making a list" for himself. A blank check for investigations was far more attractive to Hoover than a specified policy which the conservative plan would have called for. Because of the vagaries and inconsistencies of the liberals' policy on internal security, Hoover was able to give the FBI a virtual free hand in the pursuit of subversives, whereas the conservative plan would have curtailed Hoover's ability to pursue certain goals.⁸

Hoover's new powers dramatically curtailed Communist activities. Making anti-Communism an administrative function, however, also reinforced the notion of Communism as a monolith, and thus, any leftist association became immediately suspect. Reading leftist authors, or becoming a member of a civil rights or peace organization, were perceived as a threat to the national security. When the "excesses" of Hoover's actions in the RP became apparent to the liberals in late 1954, they generally missed the fact that it was a natural outgrowth of their policy rather than an oddity by an overzealous head of the FBI.

7 Ibid., p. 31n.

8 Ibid., p. 31.

II

That anti-Communism was accepted by liberal circles is clear in an examination of the American Civil Liberties Union. The ACLU was literally torn in two by the shifting understanding of anti-Communism; it stands as a graphic example of the developing 'non-Communist' left or 'Vital Center'.

The splintering of the ACLU began quietly enough in 1939 with a behind doors meeting between Martin Dies, chairman of the new House Committee on Un-American Activities, and Morris Ernst and Arthur Garfield Hays, lawyers for the ACLU. Dies had earlier that year attacked the ACLU as a Communist infiltrated group. Although there was no proof that a deal between Dies and the ACLU had been struck, on 7 May 1940 Elizabeth Gurley Flynn was removed from the ACLU board for being a member of the Communist Party even though she had been recently re-elected with public knowledge of her membership. Dies, in turn, issued a statement retracting his suggestion that the ACLU was a subversive organization. By 1951 the ACLU, defender of civil liberties, included in its constitution opposition to Communism.⁹ Though never actively working against

9 The ACLU spent much of the forties and fifties flip-flopping on sensitive issues. Though the ACLU opposed the Smith Act of 1940 they refused to involve themselves in the original legal battle or the later appeals. When the McCarthy Era entered full swing in the early fifties, the

Communists, the ACLU was ambivalent in its protection, and it was this that led to a split in the organization.

When, in the fall of 1953, the ACLU failed to come to the defense of philosopher-philanthropist Corliss Lamont when he was subpoenaed to testify before the HUAC, Lamont resigned and formed a new civil liberties group called the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee. Other "Libertarian stalwarts" like Thomas Emerson, H.H. Wilson, Carey McWilliams, and I.F. Stone also left the ACLU and joined the ECLC. In the words of I.F. Stone, the basic belief of the group was that "if you weren't going to defend the rights of Communists and Trotskyists, then you were making a fundamental breach of the First Amendment that would have great harm."¹⁰ Though non-Communist, the ECLC would

ACLU backed away from more sensitive Communist issues. In the late fifties the ACLU approved a policy that recognized the rights of Unions to remove Communists from their rolls. They also, by virtue of their silence, approved of the Government's immigration policy to deny citizenship or permanent residence status to Communists. A further example would be their dramatic reversal of policy when the Korean War began. The ACLU, up until that time, had been a pacifist organization which defended the rights of conscientious objectors. However, at the outbreak of war they reversed themselves and "rescinded its opposition to military conscription." See Mary S. McAuliffe, "The American Civil Liberties Union During the McCarthy Years," in Griffith and Theoharis, The Spectre, pp. 154-170. See also Victor S. Navasky, Naming Names, (New York, 1980), pp. 48-49.

¹⁰ The words are I.F. Stone's in Patner, I.F. Stone: A Portrait, p. 115.

continually be suspected as subversive for its "anti-anti-Communism".¹¹

Because the ACLU spent much of the fifties internally divided over its purpose and position in the McCarthy Era, it "faltered in its defense of civil liberties and contributed, in part, to the national hysteria over Communism."¹² Indeed, the irony of the ACLU's Freedom of Information Act suit was that it later revealed that members were routinely exchanging information with the FBI. Morris Ernst, "who called himself 'Hoover's lawyer,' alerted the FBI to anti-FBI sentiment among the ACLU members and to the plans of some of them to attack the bureau."¹³ Ernst's concern about McCarthyism, like the concern of the liberal congressmen who supported the EDA, led him to support an institutionalized -- thus theoretically depoliticized -- anti-Communism.

In December of 1953 Ernst spoke with Assistant to the Director Nichols. Nichols reported to Hoover that Ernst "felt now was a propitious time to advocate [a] Commission

¹¹ Navasky, Naming Names, p. 56; Lasch, "The Cultural Cold War," p. 86. This term was coined by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

¹² McAuliffe, "The American Civil Liberties Union During the McCarthy Era," p. 170.

¹³ Navasky, Naming Names, p. 51. See also Donner, The Age of Surveillance, pp. 144-147. "Ernst's courtship [of Hoover] took the form of 'My dear Edgar...for your eyes alone' letters.."

concept for the purpose of looking into the Communist situation which would serve the purpose of counteracting McCarthyism." Ernst then "stated [that] he had made great inroads in certain liberal circles for wiretapping legislation in that he would place the responsibility in the Attorney General," though after some thought he felt that the "Supreme Court should appoint a prosecutor who would issue the authority."¹⁴ That the ACLU abandoned the principles for which it was founded and joined the FBI in this endeavor suggests much about the change in the political climate of America, but also -- and perhaps more fundamentally -- a change in the cultural and intellectual climate as well.

III

Though its effects may never be fully appreciated, the collapse of intellectual dissent helped to ingrain the exclusionary ideology of the 'Vital Center'. Historians in this period carry a heavy weight of responsibility for their role as activist/cheerleader for the present order rather than for intellectual values. As E.P. Thompson has pointed out, "it is true that the shape of cultural history is decided by minorities... and it was the default of the disenchanted which gave to Natopolitan [anti-Communist/ pro-

¹⁴ Office Memorandum to Tolson from Nichols December 7, 1953.

Capitalist) ideology its form."¹⁵ In the process of this values realignment, intellectuals -- in the thirties a strong center for dissent -- chose a number of forums to disseminate the new truth. Both the FBI and the CIA were instrumental in developing and cultivating this new intellectual position.¹⁶

The Congress for Cultural Freedom was established in 1950 as a means to confront Soviet eastern Europe with 'pragmatic truth' designed to expose communism's ideological flaws. It was here that the "end-of-ideology" ideology was first expressed as a working means for understanding the new order. This new 'pragmatic' approach to society dismissed 'idealistic' ideology as bankrupt.

Austrian Franz Borkenau, a speaker at the conference, argued that the failures of liberalism had encouraged the

¹⁵ E.P. Thompson, "Outside the Whale," in E.P. Thompson, The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays, (New York, 1978), p. 231. "Their flight from Humanism did not take place in some vacant lot but in the whale of Western Capitalism." In other words Thompson is placing the rise of the anti-Communist intellectuals into their proper context -- which is in the rise in post-war capitalist expansionism. The intellectuals argue not from a position of "self-interest" but rather from "despair." They are able to retard "the forces of change" by calling upon their own disenchantment as proof of determined failure. In the process, however, they throw the baby out with the bath water. They become "apologists" for the present order and castigate as foolhardy those who ponder progressive possibilities. See Crossman, The God That Failed, for a good example of this.

¹⁶ For a brief discussion of the CIA involvement in such operations see Donner, The Age of Surveillance, pp. 268-275.

development of totalitarianism. In the twenties and thirties, intellectuals turned to Communism as a means to understand the collapse of liberalism.¹⁷ However, as Communism expanded, the resistance to it as an ideology grew. In this context, the intellectuals who were ex-Communists saw themselves as the critics best equipped to examine and explain the failures of communism.¹⁸

The irony of their attacks on communism "requires no special powers of discernment to see that their attack... expressed itself in formulations that were themselves derived from the cruder sort of Marxist cant."¹⁹ "The defense of freedom merged imperceptibly with the dogmatic attack on 'historical materialism,' which, in another context, has done so much to impede historical and sociological scholarship in the period of the cold war."²⁰

In America this new political pragmatism developed into

17 For a good discussion of the nature of radicalism and ideology in the Thirties, as well as the changing understanding of liberalism, see Richard Pells, Radical Visions and American Dreams, (New York, 1973). In particular see pages 125-140 for a discussion of Marxism in the thirties and how it helped to explain the failure of "liberalism" for many intellectuals.

18 Christopher Lasch, "The Cultural Cold War," in The Agony of the American Left, (New York, 1966), pp. 63-69. See also Richard Crossman, ed., The God That Failed.

19 Lasch., p. 67.

20 Ibid., p. 67.

an anti-Communism that was suspicious of the 'masses'.²¹ Indeed, it was this distrust of the 'masses' that motivated the likes of Schlesinger and Boorstin to "identify the national interest with executive recommendations [and] to doubt the rationality of the American public."²² It was the faith in 'executive recommendations', among other things, that allowed them, philosophically, to accept the anti-Communism of Truman while at the same time chastising the anti-Communism of McCarthy. Liberal willingness to tolerate right wing domestic anti-Communism in the fifties was the result of the wartime mentality pursued by the Truman administration and later by the Eisenhower administration.²³ The true remaining progressives became in the light of this new ideology -- as Schlesinger has argued -- "doughface progressives", dupes, fools. They espoused "ignorant dogmatism." They found dreams "better than fact." "But like most dreams," said Schlesinger, "they are notable for the distortion of facts by desire."²⁴

Soon after the founding of the CCF the American Congress for Cultural Freedom was founded in 1951. Like the

²¹ Ibid., pp. 68-69.

²² Athan Theoharis, "Liberals, Anti-Communism, and McCarthyism," in Griffith and Theoharis, The Spectre, p. 270.

²³ William W. Keller, The Liberals and J. Edgar Hoover, (Princeton, 1989), pp.28-71.

²⁴ Schlesinger, The Vital Center, p. 42.

ACLU's association with the FBI, the CCF and the ACCF were associated with the CIA.²⁵ The ACCF took as its credo the need to combat Communism, a position which overrode the distinction between 'legitimate' left and right in America. As a result, the membership of the ACCF was a combination of right-wingers like John Chamberlain and Whittaker Chambers and liberals like Arthur Schlesinger, Sidney Hook, Irving Kristol, and Daniel Bell. This odd marriage worked in part because the ACCF "took shape in a period of the cold war when official anti-Communism had not clearly distinguished itself, rhetorically, from the anti-Communist of the Right."²⁶ That the ACCF fell apart after 1954 only suggests the degree to which liberal anti-Communism had become institutionalized and could exist as a coherent ideology of its own. "In effect," writes historian Christopher Lasch, "the intellectuals of the ACCF defined cultural freedom as whatever best served the interests of the United States Government."²⁷

When the ECLC urged non-participation with McCarthy's committee, the ACCF, in response, announced that they were "opposed [to any] 'exploitation of academic freedom and civil liberties 'by persons who are at this late date still

²⁵ Lasch, "The Cultural Cold War," p. 69-114; Navasky, Naming Names, p. 55.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 81.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 86.

sympathetic to the cause of the Soviet Union.'"28 The ACCF then prescribed the definitions for proper dissent which, by implication, the ECLC did not follow.29

The Americans for Democratic Action was also representative of the the split among those on the left. The ADA had been founded in 1941 as an anti-Communist liberal organization. Founded by Arthur Schlesinger, Wechsler, Raugh, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Hubert Humphrey, its philosophical base "celebrated rather than criticized the social order and had given up the old ideal of the perfectibility of man in favor of a new 'realism' about his inherent corruptibility (and the need for institutions beyond those prescribed by the founding fathers to keep these tendencies in check)."30

It is a cruel irony of the period that those forces which ultimately pulled down Joseph McCarthy did so by

28 Lasch, "The Cultural Cold War," p. 87.

29 "The test of any group's sincerity is whether it is opposed to threats of freedom anywhere in the world and whether it is concerned about the gross suppression of civil liberties and academic freedom behind the Iron Curtain. The ECLC has not met that test." See Lasch, "The Cultural Cold War," p. 88. The irony of this was that the ECLC, at its inception, had announced that its focus was domestic, and not foreign, affairs. However, it did release a statement condemning the Soviet Union for its political conduct and its anti-Semitism. See Navasky, Naming Names, p. 56.

30 Navasky, Naming Names, p. 52; See also Jesse Lemisch, On Active Service in War and Peace, (Toronto, 1975), pp. 53-56. Niebuhr rejected "what he called 'the heady notion that man is the master of his fate and the captain of his soul.'"

backing J. Edgar Hoover. Arthur Schlesinger Jr., concerned about the ad hoc nature of the HUAC's red hunting, argued that the American people should rely on the FBI and J. Edgar Hoover:

The espionage dangers, of course, are obvious and acute. No loyal citizen can underestimate these dangers, although there is probably little that he can do individually to grapple with them. All Americans must bear in mind J. Edgar Hoover's warning that counter-espionage is no field for amateurs.³¹

Where Hoover simply redefined the notion of plurality or civil liberties, the Liberals went to great lengths intellectually to justify their approval of denying civil liberties to Communists, be they American or not, and also great lengths to dismiss as relevant the will of the 'masses'.³² The "ideologue" that Dalton Trumbo was speaking

31 Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., The Vital Center, (New York, 1949), p. 129. Schlesinger was impressed by Hoover's article in the January 1949 issue of the "FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin." In it Hoover argued that the amateur red-hunter, "untrained in the use of proper investigative techniques, may constitute a serious menace to civil rights... Patriotism and zeal cannot compensate for a lack of detailed, technical knowledge... The work of the vigilante too often deserves the label 'witch hunt'; the work of the fifth columnist needs no label. Let us beware of both." This expressed concern by Hoover for 'civil liberties' should be seen in relation to his understanding of it. It is clear by the nature of the RP that he was interested more in the consistency of defining the threat, and control of the operation. By expressing 'concern' he was able to establish the necessity of a centralized, professionalized hunt for subversives.

32 One of the more strained attempts intellectually to justify the quelling of dissent came from Daniel Boorstin. In The Decline of Radicalism, (New York, 1969), p. 97, he tried to distinguish between dissent and disagreement. "A

of in his 1965 retrospective piece about the McCarthy Era was Arthur Schlesinger Jr. And indeed, Mr. Schlesinger was at the forefront of defining liberal Anti-Communism. But he was not alone. Other prominent historians such as Daniel Boorstin could also be added to the list of "ideologues" who offered up their apostasy either before the HUAC in person, or by proxy through their written work.³³ This is not to suggest that there were no voices of dissent from the left being heard. Indeed, there were a number of active leftists still working in the 'darkness'. What had changed, however, was the existence of a dissenting 'class' of intellectuals. Those who remained active on the left were seen in the best light as mavericks, or rebels, or loners; in the worst light

liberal society thrives on disagreement but is killed by dissension." He implies that any discussion outside the basic assertion that liberal capitalism is the best possible world is a cancerous threat.

33 Boorstin is particularly notable for his appearance in front of the HUAC where he was eager to name names and state categorically that he believed "communists" should not be allowed to teach. In the sixties and seventies he continued to be fervently anti-radical. See Eric Bentley, Thirty Years of Treason, (New York, 1971), pp. 601-612. Bentley's book includes the transcript of Boorstin's testimony before the HUAC. See also Jon Wiener, "The Odyssey of Daniel Boorstin," The Nation, (September 26, 1987), pp. 289, 305-307 for a review of Boorstin's career and highlights of his anti-radicalism. Also see Robert E. Treuhaft, "A Reunion to Remember," The Nation, (July 7/14, 1984), pp. 15-17. Boorstin "named" his roommate Richard Murphy Goodwin as a 'communist' in his testimony before the HUAC. Goodwin later fled the country in 1951 and ultimately taught Economics in England. Particular parts of Boorstin's anti-radicalism will be taken up further on in this chapter.

they were the Communists, or subversives, or saboteurs.³⁴

The liberal, 'vital center' intellectuals, were, in effect, the co-founders of the domestic "police state" of the fifties.³⁵ By giving Hoover power that remained virtually unchecked for a generation, the consequences of the 'new order' were dramatic. It was clear that "by the fifties, the FBI's role as an authoritarian guardian of acceptable political and cultural values had become a reality of American life."³⁶

It is this troubling alliance that raises questions about the true nature of anti-Communism as a consensual ideological position in the American political landscape. Historians like Arthur Schlesinger and Daniel Boorstin were instrumental in portraying the McCarthy Era as a 'dark age' from which we have since found the 'liberal' or 'pragmatic' light. When, as we shall see in a subsequent chapter, the 'Responsibilities Program' was halted by liberal opponents concerned about due process and civil liberties -- most notably ACCF member John Steinbeck -- they did it from a position they called the 'non-Communist left' or 'Vital

34 A good example is C. Wright Mills. For an examination of his thinking during the fifties see Peter Clecak, Radical Paradoxes, (New York, 1974), pp. 31-72. The subtitle of the chapter on Mills is "C. Wright Mills: The Lone Rebel".

35 By 'police state' I am implying the active effort on the part of the FBI to create a one party state by severely limiting dissent.

36 Donner, The Age of Surveillance, p. 146.

Center'. In other words, they grounded their anti-Communist ideology in a 'pragmatism' that defined the acceptable political spectrum -- it mattered little if one were liberal or conservative. If they end up quibbling over tactics it is not to be confused with an argument over ideology. Thus, if Hoover is to blame for the mechanics of repression in the fifties, it was the intellectuals and liberals who bear the blame for succumbing to, and participating in the creation of, the rules and the context of the new order.³⁷ If liberal intellectuals were willing accomplices, could the same be expected of Supreme Court Justices?

³⁷ For an indispensable discussion of the role of intellectuals in this period see, Christopher Lasch, The New Radicalism in America, 1889-1963, (New York, 1965), pp. 286-349. Another important work in the examination of intellectuals in this period is Richard H. Pells, The Liberal Mind in a Conservative Age, (New York, 1985). For an interesting contemporary discussion of ideas and ideologies see, C. Wright Mills, The Marxists, (New York, 1962).

CHAPTER IV

EARL WARREN AND LIBERAL ANTI-COMMUNISM

We know that the constant dripping of water can wear away stone, and that even the gentle rain can quickly erode the side of a mountain that does not have protective foliage. And so our freedoms -- the finest products of civilization -- can be eroded, a little here and a little there, until they become honored more in the breach than in the observance.

-- Earl Warren¹

One prominent individual who appears in the 'Responsibilities Program' file is Earl Warren, Governor of California and later Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Aware of Warren's reputation as a liberal on the Court, and aware that Warren is largely credited with dismantling McCarthy's repression machine, one might expect that he would have found little in common with J. Edgar Hoover and his program of repression. And yet, as the story of the 'Responsibilities Program' unfolds, Warren is revealed to have been not only a primary player, but also one of the most active as well. Repeatedly, Warren went beyond the simple reception of information within the confines of the 'Responsibilities Program' and initiated requests for information on numerous suspected subversives. In the context of liberal historiography, this is a troubling

¹ Earl Warren, A Republic, If You Can Keep It, (New York, 1972), p. 99.

contradiction. If Earl Warren is indeed the liberal he is portrayed to have been as Chief Justice, then what explains his zeal to deny due process to Communists and fellow travelers while he was Governor? How is it that he could play an activist role in both camps if the two sides -- liberal and conservative -- were antithetical? Could Warren have found the liberal light after his appointment to the Supreme Court? Though some change in ideological position is possible, it does not explain similar anti-Communist actions on the part of other liberal governors or Warren's failure to repudiate his actions as Governor once he became Chief Justice.² One biographer of Warren doubts that Warren changed his views that dramatically and argues that he was only a titular conservative due to the nature of the times. Edward White suggests that Warren's "positions" while Governor "may suggest that [his] eventual posture on the Court represented a dramatic shift in his attitudes. But to judge Warren by his rhetorical stance on issues was treacherous." Warren in White's view was a "Progressive first and a Republican second." However, White asks too little of the ideological contradiction. To simply excuse repressive words and actions as rhetoric "during [a time of] dramatic changes" is both naive and, I think, misses the very thrust of Warren's liberal anti-Communism.

² See G. Edward White, Earl Warren, (New York, 1982), pp. 153-155.

Perhaps, however, the basic assumption of the liberal interpretation is flawed. It assumes that there were two sides, or that there were opposite camps. When this assumption is questioned, and the ideological spectrum is seen in the wider anti-Communist context, Warren's participation in the RP adds weight to the notion that liberals were, in fact, a great source of strength for Hoover and his programs. It is true that there were differences between conservative and liberal versions of anti-Communism. In particular, the conservatives were little concerned with the right of due process for the suspected 'subversive' and were more comfortable with 'police state' enforcement tactics; this is evident in the actions of McCarthy's committee or the HUAC which were dominated by conservatives. So too did they differ "on the issue of registration of Communists and Communist-front organizations."³ However, if the liberals were more concerned with at least some aspects of due process, it did not stop them from consistently voting for anti-Communist legislation or maintaining anti-Communist positions.⁴ That

³ Keller, The Liberals and J. Edgar Hoover, p. 31.

⁴ It is important to emphasize that the differences which the liberals and conservatives might have had were tactical rather than ideological. Not a single President, Democrat or Republican, since the second world war has been elected without identifying anti-Communism as part of his political platform. This accounts for the odd spectacle of Senators John Kennedy and Richard Nixon sitting together on the House Committee on Education and Labor which was notoriously anti-New Deal and militantly anti-Communist. Both distinguished

Warren could play such an active role in both camps suggests a fundamental compatibility with Hoover's anti-Communism, even if there were differences of opinion with regard to tactics. By placing Warren in a liberal anti-Communist context, by better understanding the role of the liberals in the rise of the FBI as a de facto political police, and by recalling the emerging consensual liberalism of notable intellectuals in the fifties and sixties, we can see that Warren's participation in the 'Responsibilities Program' seems less a contradiction in philosophy and more a natural progression of liberal anti-Communism. This chapter re-examines Warren's role in the McCarthy era -- not as a liberal civil libertarian caught in difficult times, but rather as liberal anti-Communist whose ideological disposition found him closer to J. Edgar Hoover than has been previously recognized.

I

As part of the decision to organize the 'Responsibilities Program', Hoover ordered a review of the Security Index -- a list of suspected subversives already assembled -- in order to identify potential subjects for possible dissemination of information. Part of that review

themselves as notable anti-Communists. See Cate, The great Fear, p. 358-359.

entailed a review of the potential recipients of disseminated information. Governor Earl Warren of California was one of the many Governors investigated.

By August of 1951 most of the Governors had been screened as to their loyalty and reliability. In an August 16th memo to Hoover from the San Francisco SAC (the local FBI field office), Earl Warren was approved as a recipient for disseminated information and it was requested that he be given information on a suspected subversive.⁵ A month later Hoover approved of the request and authorized the San Francisco office to "orally furnish... information concerning [a subversive] subject to... Earl Warren of California."⁶ For the remainder of his term as governor (nearly two and half years) -- before he resigned to accept the post of Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court -- Earl Warren actively participated in the 'Responsibilities Program'.

5 Office Memorandum to the Director, FBI from SAC San Francisco, August 16, 1951. "It will be noted that the Honorable Earl Warren is the Governor of California. He was a candidate for the Vice-Presidency of the United States on the Republican ticket in 1948. The Files of this office reflect no information concerning Governor Warren which would indicate that this office could not confidentially bring to his attention information concerning the subject [the subversive in question]. Authority is therefore requested to supply Governor Warren with the following data concerning the subject." The "following data" that the San Francisco Agent spoke of was blacked out in the file.

6 Office Memorandum to SAC San Francisco from the Director, FBI, September 20, 1951.

Because of California's large population and its industrial strength -- which entailed considerable union activity -- it became a frequent focus of the RP.⁷ By October 1st of 1951 the FBI, under the RP, had disseminated information on over 20 'subversives' to Warren.⁸ By December at least another half dozen were added.⁹

7 Warren had a long history of antipathy towards communists in the Unions. As early as the thirties when he was a district attorney he "was concerned... about the unsavory association... of 'foreign' ideologies, especially communism, with organized labor." See White, Earl Warren: A Public Life, p. 36.

8 Series of 20 requests and approvals between the Director, FBI and SAC Los Angeles, Offices Memorandums September 19, 20, and 28, 1951. Office Memorandum to SAC Los Angeles from Director, FBI, October 1, 1951. Also Office Memorandum to Ladd from Belmont September 28, 1951 and Office Memorandum to Ladd from Belmont October 1, 1951. "It was stated that Governor Warren's loyalty is unquestioned and his cooperation with the Los Angeles office is excellent."

9 It is difficult to ascertain specific numbers regarding dissemination to one Governor alone. On a number of occasions authorization is requested "concerning a group of security index subjects," but no number is specified. And in that portion of the request where the names are listed the FBI has blacked out all references. However, by counting the number of specific requests and subsequent approvals one can at least guess at a possible number. Office Memorandum to the Director, FBI from SAC Los Angeles October 11, 1951 requests authorization for dissemination "concerning a group of security index subjects."; Office Memorandum to Ladd from Belmont October 22, 1951 approving dissemination of information on suspected subversive; Office Memorandum to SAC Los Angeles from the Director, FBI approving dissemination of information on suspected subversive to Warren. "Governor Warren's loyalty is unquestioned and he is cooperating with the FBI."; Office Memorandum to Ladd from Belmont November 20, 1951 approval of dissemination to Warren. "Governor Warren's loyalty is unquestioned and his cooperation with the Los Angeles office is excellent."; Office Memorandum to Director from SAC Los Angeles, December 5, 1951 request to disseminate information to Warren; Office Memorandum to SAC Los Angeles from

Warren proved to be one of the most reliable Governors in the program. Time and time again he was supplied with information that would have clearly indicated the FBI as source. And yet, Warren skillfully used the information such that the FBI remained unnamed. Discussing dissemination policy in 1951, Assistant to the Director D.M. Ladd used Warren as an example regarding requests from Governors. "In some cases," he wrote, "such as requests from Governor Earl Warren of California, we have authorized the furnishing of other than public source information such as that received from reliable sources."¹⁰ It was an indication of how much the FBI trusted Warren.

Throughout 1952 Warren continued actively to participate in the 'Responsibilities Program' not only by accepting unsolicited information but also by asking for information as well.¹¹ In July of 1953, a few months before

Director, FBI December 20, 1951 approval of dissemination; Office Memorandum to Director from SAC San Francisco December 29, 1951 request for dissemination of information to Warren; Office Memorandum to SAC San Francisco from Director, FBI January 16, 1952 approval of dissemination. These are just a few of the dozen or so Office Memoranda exchanged between Los Angeles and Washington.

¹⁰ Office Memorandum to Ladd from Belmont December 21, 1955.

¹¹ Insofar as the 'Responsibilities Program' is concerned, there are far too many Office Memoranda to cite here. However, there were at least fifty exchanges between the SAC's in California and Washington throughout 1952 having to do with the dissemination of information to Earl Warren. What the file does not include, but does make reference to repeatedly, is the requests for information by Warren. The number of people that Warren requested information about is not recorded in the RP file. It appears, however, to have

Warren was appointed to the Supreme Court, Warren's participation in the RP was reviewed by the FBI in light of some problems with leaks. When questioned by a San Francisco FBI agent, Warren assured the FBI that he had taken extreme caution with the information that had been given to him. He pointed out that only he and his secretary were aware of the relationship between the Governor's office and the FBI. Explaining his method of passing the information, Warren said that since membership in the Communist party possibly violated state loyalty laws, he would send any pertinent information to the department concerned with a letter stating that he had received the information from a reliable source. These letters in no way identified the FBI. The San Francisco agent reported that Warren felt "that the program [had] been of considerable benefit to him and to the State Government in that it has prevented people who are or have been a member of the [Communist] Party from obtaining state employment." And, as the agent pointed out at the end of the letter, Warren was "most anxious that nothing occur which would interfere with this relationship."¹² Indeed, it was only when President

been a considerable number; but this is only speculation. The point here is that Warren saw nothing wrong with utilizing the FBI to investigate any number of suspected subversives in the state employ.

12 Office Memorandum to the Director, FBI from SAC San Francisco July 9, 1953.

Eisenhower appointed Warren to the position of Chief Justice in the fall of that year that the relationship ended.¹³

But if the relationship with the RP ended, the ideological compatibility may not have. Even after Warren left the Governor's office for the relative political safety of the Supreme Court, he showed no signs of changing his position with regard to the RP. Warren contacted the FBI after his appointment and "advised.. that when he left the Governor's office he asked the resident agent at Sacramento what he should do with the material that had accumulated", referring to the disseminated information that he had received.¹⁴ Reviewing Warren's participation in the RP, and as a recipient of other disseminated information, the FBI reported that "there is no ready way to determine the number of individuals concerning whom Governor Warren was furnished information from our files" apart from the RP.¹⁵ Within the RP, figures from January 1, 1953 to March of 1954 indicated that 99 subjects were brought to the attention of Earl

¹³ Interestingly, Earl Warren was the first nominee for Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to have an FBI investigation before confirmation. See Bernard Schwartz, Super Chief: Earl Warren and His Supreme Court -- A Judicial Biography, (New York, 1983), p. 22.

¹⁴ Office Memorandum to the Director from Sacramento SAC March 31, 1954.

¹⁵ Office Memorandum to the Director from Boardman, March 31, 1954.

Warren of whom 43 were teachers.¹⁶ Warren moved to the Supreme Court on the very heels of his involvement in the RP. He had first hand knowledge of the means by which the government was persecuting 'subversives'. Within the space of a few years he established himself as an activist Judge in support of due process but only insofar as he was opposed to the McCarthyite congressional inquisitions. As one biographer has noted, "even in instances where he supported a broad governmental policy that had the effect of restricting individual rights against the state, he might oppose means chosen to effectuate the policy if he thought them to be unduly coercive."¹⁷

As Chief Justice Warren is credited with dismantling McCarthyism. "While the Senate last week was burying McCarthy," wrote I.F. Stone in May of 1957, "the supreme Court buried McCarthyism."¹⁸ Insofar as the congressional witch hunt was concerned, the Warren Court did, in fact, "bury" the freewheeling McCarthyism. In decisions like the

16 Office Memorandum to the Director from Boardman, April 2, 1954.

17 White, Earl Warren: A Public Life, p. 242. White was referring to the loyalty oath controversy from 1949 to 1952. While a member of of the University of California's Board of Regents, Warren opposed the a loyalty oath for the University faculty. However, as Governor, he instituted a loyalty oath in September of 1950 which applied to all state employees knowing full well that this would apply to the faculty of the University of California.

18 Stone, The Haunted Fifties, P. 196.

Schware and Konigsberg cases, the Service Act, the California Smith Act, and the Sweezy and Watkins decisions, Warren helped to redefine the nature of American anti-Communism. He did not, however, eradicate it. The demise of McCarthyism proper only signaled the ultimate establishment of the anti-Communism of a liberal bent.

In the Sweezy decision Warren overturned the conviction of a New Hampshire professor who failed to respond to the questions of the New Hampshire Attorney General. Said Warren about the Sweezy decision, "the core of the problem is the same: to find a way to protect the constitutional liberties of individuals against the unjustified encroachments through legislative activities without impeding the legislative process."¹⁹ In the Watkins decision a former official of the Farm Equipment Workers International Union had admitted that he had once cooperated with the Communist party but he refused to identify other people. He claimed that identifying others was not "relevant to the Work of the committee". He was cited for contempt for refusing to answer questions. Warren overturned the conviction. The "critical element" in his decision had been "the weight to be ascribed to the interest of the Congress in demanding disclosures from an unwilling witness...the mere summoning of a witness and compelling him

¹⁹ Earl Warren, The Memoirs of Chief Justice Earl Warren, (New York, 1977), p. 313.

to testify against his will...is a measure of governmental interference." Thus the HUAC could not "define its own authority." Investigations like that of Watkins by the Congressional committees, Warren wrote, could "lead to ruthless exposure of private lives in order to gather data that is neither desired by the Congress nor useful to it."²⁰

In effect, the two decisions were an attack on the congressional committees. It is important to understand the legal decisions of Warren in their proper context. Warren fully accepted the notion that Communism was a threat to the security of the United States. His disagreement with McCarthy and the conservative anti-Communists was an objection to their "overzealousness".²¹ Not once in his lengthy autobiography does Warren make mention of his anti-Communist activities as Governor insofar as requesting information from the FBI is concerned. His judicial intention may have been to "buttress the broad presumptive

²⁰ White, Earl Warren, p. 243; See also Schwartz, Super Chief, pp.234-239.

²¹ Warren, The Memoirs of Earl Warren, p. 312-313. Warren goes on to say that "throughout the McCarthy era, we were under attack for being 'soft on Communism' because we prevented rabid congressional committees from 'exposing for the sake of exposure,' from establishing 'guilt by association,' and from compelling witnesses to implicate themselves without regard to Fifth Amendment protection against self-incrimination. Even some of the lower courts joined in the witch-hunting." There is an interesting discussion about the loyalty oath controversy while Warren was on the board of regents. Warren conspicuously portrays himself as a devout civil libertarian. This does not jibe at all with his actions as Governor in the RP.

freedom to pursue one's own affairs without governmental interference with a constitutional right to confront agents of government who attempted to place limits on that freedom."²² His actions as Governor, however, had reflected a blatant disregard for due process. He had been more than willing to have educators removed from their positions without an inquiry or hearing of any kind.

Warren's legal decisions did not demonstrate a break from his positions as governor. If he did not attack or support the FBI and its programs as Chief Justice, he, at the very least, demonstrated a noticeable ambivalence. The *Greene vs. McElroy* case illustrates the point further. An engineer employed by a private firm had been denied a security clearance by the Army-Navy-Air Force Personnel Security Board. In his effort to challenge the decision the engineer was repeatedly denied access to the 'confidential' information obtained by the FBI. The information asserted that the engineer had associated with Communists. Warren decided that the "procedures had not been explicitly authorized". That is, he demanded that the organization empowered to investigate have prior authorization by the Attorney General or the President.²³ Since the FBI was the agent of the Attorney General of the United States, one

²² White, Earl Warren: A Public Life, p. 245.

²³ Ibid.

might deduce that Warren tacitly supported the FBI's endeavors.

The court decisions that are cited as deterrents to McCarthyism only affirmed that the "legislative power of investigation [was] limited by the first Amendment, and that summonses to appear in the public pillory of the HUAC or a similar State body may 'abridge' freedoms of speech, press and assembly by intimidation."²⁴ In other words the Warren court condemned the use of congressional hearings as a law enforcement agency. This in mind, the power of the FBI was only increased insofar as its ability to centralize the business of information gathering and dissemination was concerned. It is interesting that Warren never confronted the rights of the FBI to obtain and disseminate information. Warren's interest remained always that the proper agencies, the proper channels, be used. Willfully or no, this was tacit support for the activities of the FBI and J. Edgar Hoover.

²⁴ Stone, The Haunted Fifties, p. 202.

CHAPTER V

THE DEMISE OF THE 'RESPONSIBILITIES PROGRAM' IN THE CHANGING NATURE OF ANTI-COMMUNISM

So far as the broader field of political liberty is concerned, we can still afford to play from strength, not from weakness. In the absence of convincing proof of clear and present danger, we must maintain our libertarian principles. In a world under the shadow of the police state, we only strengthen our claim to moral leadership by creating here an environment for free and responsible discussion.

--Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.¹

1954 was a turning point for the 'Responsibilities Program', as it was for the larger development of anti-Communism. In that year the RP effectively ended. But its cessation did not signal the defeat of anti-Communism. The victory won was limited, its accomplishments small, and its defense of democratic rights timid. On that score Hoover was the victor.

The challenge to the RP came when the press became privy to Hoover's tactics. In response, it rightly challenged Hoover and his program on constitutional grounds. The challenge rested, however, not on the violation of first amendment rights -- the rights of speech, of assembly, and redress of grievances -- but on violations of fifth

¹ Schlesinger, The Vital Center, p. 218.

amendment rights: the right to confront the accuser, and the right to due process of law. It was a significant irony that the press so quickly abandoned its most natural course of argument. By so doing, it failed to test the RP at its weakest point, and to defend democratic rights at their strongest. The struggle between liberal and conservative anti-Communism has never been so clearly illustrated as in the battle between the press and the 'Responsibilities Program'.

I

Until late 1953, with few exceptions, the 'Responsibilities Program' proved to be a success for Hoover.² The only major change in the program was a

² Indeed, the FBI only reported five incidents where there had been a 'violation of confidence' before late 1953: On September 24, 1951, when the President of Pennsylvania State College reported that a number of Presidents of Pennsylvania Universities had received information from the FBI concerning Communist teachers; on October 5, 1951, when District of Columbia Superintendent of Schools Robert Corning reported having received information from the FBI leading to the resignation of a subversive teacher; in November 1951 Director, when Division of Investigations, Department of Public Safety Howard Wilson reported to the FBI that Governor Johnston Murry of Oklahoma had contacted him about FBI information regarding an employee; on February 29, 1952, when a second incident involving Governor Murry resulted in the discontinuing of information dissemination in Oklahoma; and on June 3, 1953, when Richard Combs, Counsel, California State Senate Committee on un-American Activities, reported to the FBI that he had heard rumors to the effect that the FBI was dissemination information. Earl Warren suggested that it was only possible to deduce that the information came from the FBI but that there was no conclusive proof. Note again that any and all references to FBI Office Memoranda and Policy papers (Called SAC Letters)

directive that required information be given directly to the Governor of each state, unless otherwise indicated.³ This had come about as the result of problems in New Orleans and California where the FBI had been indicated as the source of disseminated information.⁴ For a short time, following the incidents, the FBI considered ending the program. In fact, it did cancel the program -- temporarily at least -- in California.⁵ However, the FBI Executive Conference "came to

and also all references to newspaper articles and editorials are from McCarthy Era Blacklisting of School Teachers, College Professors, and Other Public Employees: The FBI Responsibilities Program File and the Dissemination of Information Policy File, edited by Kenneth O'Reilly. The file is on microfiche published by University Publications of America (Bethesda, MD., 1990).

3 SAC letter Number 53-72, October 27, 1953.

4 In July of 1953 the FBI had disseminated information to the President of Louisiana State University. In November of that year the Bureau received requests for information from the Assistant to the Attorney General of the state. The request was made in such a fashion that the FBI knew the President of the University had 'violated the confidence' of the FBI. California was a particular problem. It represented nearly one third of all Responsibilities Program cases. After Earl Warren left there had been a number of 'betrayals of confidence' where the FBI had been indicated as the source of disseminated information. Part of the problem had been the means of passing the information. "There had been a practice of plain memoranda without identification as to source showing up in the desk of the President of the University of California." Office Memorandum for Tolson, Boardman, and Nichols March 30, 1954.

5 Program Cancelled in California in Office Memorandum to L.V. Boardman from A.H. Belmont, March 31, 1954. Office Memorandum to San Diego SAC from the Director, April 12, 1954. "You are being separately advised... that the Responsibilities Program in California is being discontinued".

the conclusion that the advantages to the Bureau outweighed the disadvantages and that the program should be continued... [though the] dissemination of information would be restricted to the Governors of the various states... despite the betrayals of confidence."6 As a precaution, they would "discontinue... name checks for Governors" outside of the 'Responsibilities Program'.7 Upon receiving the Executive Conference's recommendation that the program should be continued, Hoover replied that he

6 Office Memorandum to Mr. Tolson from The Executive Conference, November 24, 1953. In a May 17, 1954, conference the Executives again recommended the continuance of the Responsibilities Program "because it furnishes a weapon of harassment of the Communist party and that it aided in stopping the infiltration of public and semi-public organizations by Communists." Office Memorandum to the Director from L. V. Boardman, May 17, 1954.

They further indicated that they believed the program was in the "bureau's interest even though we may have additional instances where our confidence is betrayed." Office Memorandum to Mr. Tolson from the Executive Conference, April 7, 1954. In an Office Memorandum to the Director from Mr. L.V. Boardman, April 2, 1954, Boardman indicated that the Responsibilites Program had some effect though he was reluctant to say it was fully effective. "As of March 31, 1954," he wrote, "the Bureau has authorized dissemination of information on 875 Security Index Cases under the RP; 204 of these were from California." Though no statistics have been kept as to "action taken by state and local officials...[a] check of 25 California Security Index Cases reflects 12 no longer employed in State or local jobs." However, because there are no official statistics of this kind kept by the SAC's "there is no accurate guage by which it can be determined whether this program is actually effective in combating Communism".

7 Office Memorandum to the Director from the Executives Conference, April 16, 1954. Hoover wrote on the bottom of this memo that "I share [this] view... in view of recent incidents in Ohio where Governor betrayed our confidence."

"somewhat reluctantly [would] go along with the recommendation" though he feared that they would have "more and more headaches with it."⁸ It was an accurate allusion to the future.

With the change in policy restricting information to Governors alone, the Attorney General was notified for approval. In a memorandum to the Attorney General, Hoover indicated that "pending receipt of instructions... to the contrary... [the] practice of disseminating information to the Governors... would continue."⁹ Approval came from the Attorney General on December 23, 1953.¹⁰ So on the eve of the new year, the 'Responsibilities Program', despite a few difficulties, continued to act as a means of removing from public service 'suspected subversives'.

II

Until late 1953, Hoover had effectively manipulated the media and used them as an ally to further emphasize the importance of the FBI in the hunt for Communists. Typical

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Security Information Memorandum to the Attorney General from the Director, FBI December 2, 1953.

¹⁰ Indicated in Office Memorandum to Mr. Tolson from the Executive Conference April 7, 1954. "We advised the Attorney General of the Responsibilities Program by memorandum dated December 2, 1953. By memorandum of December 23, he stated he saw no objections to continuing the program."

was the article distributed to newspaper editors throughout the nation in May of 1952. In a piece entitled, "You, the FBI and Security," Hoover encouraged the assistance of the public in the hunt for Communists and other subversives. "The men and women behind America's industrial might," wrote Hoover, "are the front-line patrols in the vital matter of security." American citizens were encouraged to spy on their neighbors, friends, and fellow workers. Everything from "suspicious parachute landings" to "suspicious individuals loitering near restricted areas" to "possession and distribution of foreign-inspired propaganda" was to be reported to the FBI.

As late as April 1954, Hoover still felt comfortably in control of the media, and had good reason to believe this to be true. In a memo to his top aids, Hoover recounted a meeting he had with Ralph McGill, Editor of the Atlanta Journal, who had come to "pay his respects" to the Director.

During [McGill's] visit I outlined some of the problems faced by the FBI in the handling of security matters and stressed the fact that the FBI did not evaluate information which it procured and forwarded to other Government agencies. And I also took the occasion to point out to him the confidential character of the FBI files and the fact that access to them was not had by members of congress or committees of congress, not withstanding some of the public statements which had been made by certain members of Congress.¹¹

¹¹ Memorandum for Mr. Tolson and Mr. Nichols from J.E. Hoover, April 16, 1954. McGill was in Washington attending the annual meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

It was clear that Hoover was confident enough about the 'Responsibilities Program' to lie outright to McGill. From Hoover's perspective the press had consistently supported his stand on Communism and subversion. And indeed, up until that time no criticism had surfaced from the news media about the FBI and any possible misuse of FBI information, even though there had been instances of leaks.¹² But this was not to last. In May of 1954, a crisis arose in Colorado which ultimately brought the 'Responsibilities Program' to a close.

¹² Typically, the one exception came from I.F. Stone. In September of 1953, Stone noted the growing friendship between McCarthy and Hoover. "When Hoover praises McCarthy, that would seem to be page one news," wrote Stone. "Remarkably little attention was paid by the press last week to the interview the chief of the G-men gave to San Diego Evening Tribune of August 22." In that interview Hoover was quoted as stating that he supported the Congressional inquisitions. "They [the congressional committies] have subpoena rights without which some vital investigations could not be accomplished." "I view him [McCarthy] as a friend." Stone was able to see the paradox of the liberal support of the FBI when the FBI supported McCarthy. "A Hoover-McCarthy Axis," Stone wrote, "must also spike the feeble popgun of those faint-hearted liberals whose anti-McCarthy line has been, 'let the FBI do it.' This is how the FBI does it. The same mishmash of tenuous guilt-by-association, anonymous gossip and slander on which the congressional investigators feed so lushly is exactly the same mishmash the Coplon case turned up in the FBI files." See Stone, The Haunted Fifties, pp. 23-30.

III

In May of 1954, Governor Dan Thornton of Colorado faced opposition by the Colorado Federation of Teachers (CFT), who demanded that three teachers who had been fired without hearings be reinstated. The union accused the Governor of using "FBI reports...about alleged subversive activities in [the teachers] backgrounds" to have them removed from their positions.¹³ The union executive secretary pointed out that "the CFT abhors the use of Communistic, totalitarian and police state methods...[and] takes the position that any teacher who is accused of subversive activity, past or present, is entitled to due process of law." However, the CFT, the union executive continued, "does not support the right of any teacher who is now a member of the Communist conspiracy to teach in any American public school."¹⁴ The union's opposition was based not on the irrelevancy of Communist association by teachers but rather on the lack of due process afforded them.

Under union pressure, Governor Thornton admitted that he had received information about the teachers in question from what he called "highly authoritative" sources. Thornton as much as admitted to the Union executive that there was a

¹³ "Reinstatement of 3 Teachers," Denver Post, May 10, 1954.

¹⁴ Ibid. "The American Federation of Teachers (AFL)...was the first AFL union to ban Communists from membership." This is a vital point. The anti-Communist AFL challenged the tactics of the FBI and not the underlying ideology.

national network of information dissemination. He stated that the "cases [in question] were the result of a resolution passed by the national governor's conference requesting such information."¹⁵ Thorton stopped short of identifying the FBI, however. The Union executive had "inferred" that the information originated from the FBI files. The press fallout was substantial. After conferring with the FBI, Thorton issued a press release on the following day, May 11.

In the release, Thorton established that he had indeed received "information from qualitative and authoritative sources." And when he received information about "communistic activities" by school teachers, he believed it to be his "responsibility to pass this [information] on to the State Board of Education." He could not reveal his sources as "it would greatly aid the communistic cause." He believed that by not passing the information on to the "proper officials" he would have been "derelict in [his] duties", that he had not carried "out [his] patriotic responsibility", that he had "acquiesced and became a fellow traveler."¹⁶

The Colorado newspapers were all but unified in their opposition to the tactics of Governor Thornton. But their

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ "So the People Might Know," Press release of Governor Thornton, May 11, 1954.

disagreement took the form of concern for due process, not a fundamental questioning of the validity of repression in a democracy. As one paper expressed it, "there were no charges and no hearings...nobody stands accused of anything."¹⁷ The State Board of Education demanded that Governor Thorton "relay any information he receives on teachers with alleged subversive backgrounds so that they may then conduct hearings on the charge."¹⁸ One editorial in the Denver Post found the revelation of FBI involvement offensive insofar as it affected states rights. "The use of FBI material," went the editorial, "for purposes of implementing federal security directives and to determine the eligibility of persons for direct or indirect federal employment is quite different from using that information for state or private purposes."¹⁹ The editorial went on to say that "what perhaps started out as an effort to obtain facts in an orderly way, and to cleanse our schools of 'subversives', has suddenly become an ugly exhibition of

¹⁷ "Nobody Owns and Public Job," Rocky Mountain News, May 11, 1954.

¹⁸ "Five Accused Teachers To Be Given Hearing," The Boulder Daily Camera, May 11, 1954; "Education Board Asks Data On Any Red-Linked Teachers," Rocky Mountain News, May 11, 1954; "5 Fired Teachers Assured Hearings," Denver Post, May 11, 1954; "Investigation of Subversives in Teaching Called Asinine," Pueblo Star-Journal, May 11, 1954.

¹⁹ "The Teacher Purge Has Ugly Aspects," The Denver Post, May 11, 1954.

guilt by association."20 Thorton tried to deflect the criticism by suggesting 'secret hearings' so as to protect himself and the program.21

As early as May 8 the FBI had noticed the problem growing in Colorado, noting in a memorandum that "the Colorado Federation of Teachers charged that certain teachers in Colorado have been denied civil rights without due process and several have lost their jobs."22 To make matters worse Thorton had apparently suggested that "all Governors [were] receiving information from the FBI and other agencies such as the CIA, Naval Intelligence and Internal Revenue on Communist connections of school teachers, and that such information had been coming in to all Governors since last October [1953]."23 Two days later Thorton promised to meet with the FBI before his press

20 Ibid. The editorial emphasizes the same themes that the liberal anti-Communists in the Congress did. "We do not believe Communists should be permitted to teach in the public shools. We do not believe a Communist can be a teacher, devoted to a search and respect for truth as he must be." The piece finishes on an ironic note: "The enormous volume of information in the hands of the FBI, were it to come under the policy contol of a demagogue, could be used to smother free speech and to impose totalitarianism in the United States with astonishing speed."

21 "Secret Hearings Urged For Teachers By Dan," Rocky Mountain News, May 12, 1954.

22 Office memorandum to A.H. Belmont from J.G. Landis, May 8, 1954.

23 Office Memorandum to A.H. Belmont from L.H. Martin, May 11, 1954.

conference on the matter.²⁴ For the next week the FBI scrambled to cover itself and extract a promise from the Governor to keep his source a secret and cool the crisis.²⁵ But the press grabbed and would not let go. The Washington City News Service reported that:

In Washington, the FBI had 'no comment' on the Governor's statement, but informed Washington sources said there is 'no plan, no order from Washington' to hand out such information as Thornton claimed was available to all Governors concerning alleged Communist activities.²⁶

Hoover was concerned about the press coverage and more so about the leaks. He noted at the bottom of his news service copy, "Do we know who the 'Washington sources' are?"²⁷

24 Office Memorandum to the Director from Denver SAC, May 10, 1954. The Governor called the Denver office "in anticipation of questions arising concerning these school teachers from the press." "The Governor made a definite commitment to him that the FBI would not be revealed as the source." Office Memorandum to L.V. Boardman from Belmont, May 11, 1954.

25 Just before the scheduled meeting with the Governor, the Denver SAC sent a Teletype to Hoover saying that they would tell the Governor that "the Bureau appreciates his maintaining the Bureau's confidence in this matter and I will impress upon him the importance of continuing this program." Teletype to the Director, May 11, 1954. Office Memorandum to L.V. Boardman from A.H. Belmont, May 11, 1954, an update on the Colorado crisis.

26 The Washington City New Service, May 12, 1954.

27 Ibid. Also Office Memorandum to Mr. Tolson from L.B. Nichols, May 13, 1954, concerning the Washington City News Ticker.

When Thornton seemingly bowed to pressure from the union and the press and agreed to hearings for the teachers, the FBI again became concerned noting that "editorial comment" in the Denver Post was "extremely critical of the FBI."²⁸ Once again a number of the FBI's executives recommended that the program be discontinued.²⁹ Assistant to the Director Tolson, however, stated that he saw "no basis for doing this" and Hoover added, "I share Tolson's view."³⁰

In late May, J. Edgar McDonald, chairman of the State Board of Education for Colorado, called the FBI office in Denver to arrange a meeting. The FBI reported to Hoover that they expected McDonald to "raise questions as to whether the FBI has furnished the Governor" derogatory information "regarding teachers now under suspension in Colorado."³¹ And when the chairman did ask the question on the 25th, the FBI replied that they had "no comment."³² Concerned that the chairman would get to the Governor first,

28 Office Memorandum to L.V. Boardman from A.H. Belmont, May 13, 1954.

29 Ibid., "In view of the obvious lack of supervision which has been afforded that handling of information disseminated to Governor Thornton under the Responsibilities Program, that we discontinue the furnishing of information to Governor Thornton and any other officials in the state of Colorado."

30 Ibid.

31 Office Memorandum to Boardman from A.H. Belmont, May 22, 1954.

32 Teletype to the Director, May 25, 1954.

Hoover arranged for the Denver office to "immediately brief Governor Thornton regarding the matters discussed during the interview."³³ This occurred following Thornton's return from Korea on the 5th of June.³⁴

The matter might have blown over had it remained an isolated event; however, in June of 1954, Governor Thornton tried to have a professor fired from the University of Colorado. Again there was opposition based on the denial of due process. The President of the University believed there was no evidence "to sustain subversive charges at a hearing" and refused to fire the teacher "unless Governor Thornton reverses himself and reveals the exact source of his information."³⁵ But Thornton continued to refuse, stating that the "Communists today are frantically trying to find out the source."³⁶ The FBI was again concerned at the breach of confidence.³⁷ On September 19, 1954 an editorial lashed

33 Teletype to Denver SAC from Hoover, May 27, 1954.

34 Teletype to Director, May 27, 1954. "Rebutal this date...Governor Thornton presently in Korea, and expected to return Denver June five next." Teletype to Director, June 7, 1954, "Upon return of Governor Thornton from Korea he was ...fully briefed as to results of interview with McDonald. Thornton reiterated his position that he did not intend under any circumstances to reveal the source of the information in connection with this matter."

35 "Board Raps Thornton Accusation," Denver Post, June 9, 1954.

36 Ibid.; Also "Dan Claims Tip on C.U. Teacher Was 'a Service'," Denver Post, June 9, 1954.

37 Urgent Teletype to the Director from Denver SAC, June 9, 1954.

out at the FBI stating that "the Federal Bureau of Investigation head J. Edgar Hoover, is treading on dangerous ground."³⁸ The article accused the FBI of passing information in an extralegal fashion without proper authority. It was following this second incident that Lawrence Martin, Associate Editor of the Denver Post, began a series of articles to expose the FBI and repression.

In September of 1954, Lawrence Martin published the first "Faceless Informer" article in the Denver Post. As far as the editors of the Post were concerned, they believed that the problem of subversion had contrapuntal elements: "first, how to protect the community, particularly the schools, from infiltration by subversives and second, at the same time safeguard due process and individual constitutional rights threatened by methods closely akin to the smear tactics of McCarthyism."³⁹

38 "Are Faceless Police Tolerable?" Denver Post, September 19, 1954.

39 Lawrence Martin, "Faceless Informers and Our Schools," Denver Post, September 19, 1954; Lawrence Martin, "Faceless Informers and the Schools," September 26, 1954. "This is another in a series of articles dealing with the use of anonymous, unevaluated information, not backed by the accusers, which reflects upon the present loyalty and reliability of teachers in the public schools of the United States." Later in the article, one State Superintendent of schools expressed concern about "the obvious danger of exposing teachers unjustly to smears, the unwarranted black looks of the community and professional ruin [versus] the danger of exposing a whole classroom or a whole school of American children to the sly tactics of Communists, Fascists or other subversives."

By working throughout the United States, Martin began to unearth the extent of the FBI operations. He reported that "at least 1,000 teachers" have been placed on a suspect list, and this number was "undoubtedly conservative."⁴⁰ In California, more than 200 schoolteachers were under investigation for subversion.⁴¹ More than 100 teachers were dismissed there from 1952 to 1954 "on suspicion of subversive association or beliefs."⁴² In Utah, Martin identified the FBI as the source of derogatory information which was the basis for firing three teachers suspected of subversion.⁴³ In New York, inquisitions by Saul Moskoff, New York City's Special Guardian of the Schools Against Subversion, were responsible for "202 teachers [having] resigned or retired... because of guilt or of sheer fear and panic during or following their grilling."⁴⁴ A later report suggests that the number was actually 189 from 1952 to 1954,

40 Lawrence Martin, "Faceless Informers: 1,000 Teachers In U.S. Placed on 'Suspect List'," Denver Post, September 20, 1954.

41 Lawrence Martin, "Faceless Informers: California Ranks High in Vigorous Subversive Hunt," Denver Post, September 24, 1954.

42 Lawrence Martin, "Faceless Informers: Rebel Schoolteacher Loses in California," Denver Post, September 30, 1954.

43 Lawrence Martin, "Faceless Informers: FBI Data Ousted Three Utah Teachers," Denver Post, September 27, 1954.

44 Lawrence Martin, "Faceless Informers: N.Y. Red-Hunt 'Traps' Teachers," Denver Post, September 29, 1954.

with 91 others having been removed before 1952.⁴⁵ But Martin's complaints consistently challenged the "techniques of investigation" such as having to "weigh a teacher's word against that of a faceless informer."⁴⁶ Teachers are "ruined" he complained, and "it is done on unproved suspicion of association with subversives, or under political pressure of various kinds without adequate hearings."⁴⁷ "In some states," he continued, "classroom discussion of the United Nations has been called subversive....in others, membership in a teacher's union" and both have been grounds for "suspension and dismissal."⁴⁸ In Texas, there was a phone line for concerned citizens; in Detroit "a report from a mysterious source" was published accusing 150 teachers of being subversives; in North Carolina, 10 to 25 teachers contracts were not renewed on the basis of being suspected subversives; in Chicago, National Education Association "investigators were denied permission to see school records or to visit schools"; and in Baltimore two "teachers were fired for not signing

45 Lawrence Martin, "Faceless Informers: Schools Out For Teacher Who Wouldn't Answer 'Baseless' Charges," Denver Post, September 28, 1954.

46 Ibid.

47 Lawrence Martin, "Faceless Informers: Suspicion Often Enough to Fire Teachers," Denver Post, October 1, 1954.

48 Ibid.

loyalty oaths."⁴⁹ Similar tales were told of Tennessee, Connecticut, and other states.

The articles continued into October with Martin becoming increasingly critical of the FBI.⁵⁰ In one, Martin likened the FBI tactics to McCarthyism:

The cases of school teachers fired on suspicion of subversive beliefs -- not on proof of subversive acts -- has sharpened the fear among members of congress that the totalitarian methods of McCarthyism may have been transplanted to the Federal Department of Justice and the FBI.⁵¹

In one of his last 'Faceless Informers' articles, Martin proposed that there was a solution to the problem. He suggested better and more equitable subversive laws that would both protect the teachers from anonymous information and protect the community from Communist infiltration.⁵²

Though the articles by Lawrence Martin were effective in re-establishing a legal responsibility in the matter of subversion, they did not challenge the basic question of subversion. Three editorials in the Denver Post were quite

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Lawrence Martin, "Faceless Informers: Curtain of Secrecy," Denver Post, October 1, 1954; Lawrence Martin, "Faceless Informers: Colorado Has A Problem," Denver Post, October 5, 1954; Lawrence Martin, "Faceless Informers: Spurred To Action," Denver Post, October 6, 1954.

⁵¹ Lawrence Martin, "Faceless Informers: We Cannot Answer," Denver Post, October 3, 1954.

⁵² Lawrence Martin, "Faceless Informers: There Is A Solution," October 7, 1954.

telling in what they did and did not emphasize. In the first, "'Vicarious Guilt' -- a Constitutional Problem", the Post argued that "the use of anonymous information on past political activities of the American School Teachers, made available to school administrators under the cloak of secrecy, presents the United States with a grave constitutional question." It established that derogatory "material...[had] been distributed by the FBI among the states and local school districts." For the Post the problem was that "the constitutional question of the executive department's right to perform such acts [had] never been raised. It should be explored both in the courts and by congress." "What has happened to the teachers" in each state "challenges our historic Anglo-American concepts of due process and just treatment."⁵³

The second editorial, published a couple of weeks later, emphasized the same thing. It argued that "the authority and objectives of the FBI were never...formally written into the statutes of this country." More interesting in the second editorial was the acceptance of anti-Communism without accepting the denial of due process. "Action by faceless informers that brands individuals as untrustworthy, NOT on evidence of present attitudes of overt acts but on information dealing exclusively with past

⁵³ "'Vicarious Guilt' -- a Constitutional Question," Denver Post, September 23, 1954.

conduct and associations, is a denial of 'Fundamental Justice' and is Un-American."54

Finally, in the third editorial, the Post proposed that a 'new test for loyalty' be established:

The problem is one of trying to draw a distinct line between those persons of leftist leanings, now or in the past, who are good, loyal Americans and those leftists who are actually un-American and part of the Communist conspiracy.55

This proposal fully accepted the notion of an existing Communist conspiracy. The three editorials taken together establish a concern for the denial of fifth amendment rights. However, by accepting that there were opinions or beliefs 'threatening' enough to the United States to represent 'clear and present danger', they accepted that certain limits could be acceptably placed on political opinion.

IV

By this time, J. Edgar McDonald, from the Colorado Board of Education, had gone public, arguing that the teachers in Colorado had certainly been fired on the basis of information passed to the governor by the FBI.56 Though

54 "Why Not 'Due Process' For Teachers," Denver Post, September 30, 1954.

55 "Needed: A New Test For Loyalty," Denver Post, October 3, 1954.

56 "Red Charges on Seven Teachers Linked to FBI," Denver Post, October 10, 1954.

under pressure to admit the facts, Governor Thornton continued to deny that the FBI was the source.⁵⁷ The FBI executives were once again considering the future of the RP. For them, however, there was little question "that the Responsibilities Program [had] served a most useful and valuable purpose in eliminating subversives from employment in local governments, particularly from teaching positions."⁵⁸ The bad publicity had taken its toll, however, and on October 23 the following message was sent to all FBI SAC's: "All offices instructed to immediately discontinue submitting requests to the Bureau for authorization to disseminate information under the Responsibilities Program" pending approval of program continuance by the Attorney General.⁵⁹ Hoover, ever the tactician, only informed the Attorney General about the breach in the one program. He made a point of continuing

57 "Dan Mum On Teacher Data Source," Denver Post, October 11, 1954.

58 Office Memorandum to the Director from L.V. Boardman, October 13, 1954.

59 Memorandum to All SAC's, October 23, 1954; See also Office Memorandum to Mr. Tolson from L.B. Nichols, October 29, 1954. "The series of articles is most critical of the Bureau, and it is apparent that Martin did do quite a research job. He has scarcely missed one case wherein the Bureau received unfavorable publicity because of a breach of confidence in the Responsibilities Program. SAC's are named in this series, and in the story on October 3, 1954 he goes into the details of a controversy with Senator Fulbright and mentions Mr. Nichols by name frequently."

other information dissemination programs with "certain committees of Congress, the making available data to the General Accounting Office, the Government Printing Office, the Library of Congress and so forth."⁶⁰ In trying to minimize the damage done to the FBI, Assistant to the Director Nichols aggressively pursued public relations. He took "the position that [the FBI had] been utterly amazed and surprised at the action of the Denver authorities in the receiving and acting upon [the information] without according due process to the teachers involved."⁶¹ Indeed, even the Attorney General, though decidedly cautious about the program's future, felt that the problem was one of "misunderstanding by the public of the limitations on the authority of the FBI."⁶²

On November 9, Hoover met with Attorney General Herbert Brownell, Jr. The Attorney General suggested continuing the program but that disseminating information to the Governors about "persons employed in educational institutions should just be discontinued without any announcement or indication to that effect." Hoover disagreed. He pointed out to the Attorney General that the program was established because of

⁶⁰ Office Memorandum to Mr. Tolson from L.B. Nichols, November 2, 1954.

⁶¹ Memorandum to Mr. Tolson from L.B. Nichols, November 4, 1954.

⁶² Office Memorandum to Mr. Hoover from (Attorney General) Herbert Brownell, Jr., October 25, 1954.

concerns by Governors -- particularly Adlai Stevenson -- about subversives in schools. He also stated that the FBI felt a subversive teacher was "certainly in a dangerous position of poisoning the minds of the youth of this country" and that someone in the state government should certainly be made aware of this situation. Hoover said he was "at a loss to understand why the Board of Education [in Colorado] which had sparked this controversy had not given as much attention to finding out who the Communists were as they were giving to finding out who furnished the information to the Governor of Colorado."⁶³ The Attorney General was convinced by Hoover's argument and agreed to continue the Program, including the dissemination of information about teachers.⁶⁴

On the same day that the Attorney General approved the continuance of the RP, John Steinbeck wrote to the FBI concerning the plight of a teacher who had been fired for being a suspected subversive. Steinbeck was a member of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom (see chapter II). Writing the FBI, he expressed concern for violations of academic freedom but juxtaposed an expressed concern about the evil of Communism.

63 Memorandum for Mr. Tolson, Mr. Boardman, Mr. Belmont, Mr. Nichols from J. Edgar Hoover, November 9, 1954.

64 Office Memorandum to Mr. Hoover from (Attorney General) Herbert Brownell, Jr., November 10, 1954.

We live in a country where each citizen's rights are important to the freedom of the entire national community. I am proud that the American Committee for Cultural Freedom has undertaken to work on behalf of this young teacher. The Committee has investigated the young man's background, and is fully satisfied that there can be no question of his loyalty to the United States and his opposition to Soviet totalitarianism. We will fight his case determined to see that justice is done.⁶⁵

Here again, the argument is established on fifth amendment grounds. Steinbeck argued that the man was innocent and should be reinstated. In the same breath, however, he accepted that "loyalty to the United States" and "opposition to Soviet totalitarianism" were reasonable limits to first amendment rights.

But Hoover was little concerned about the ACCF or Steinbeck. He had been buoyed by the RP's 'accomplishments' recently reported to him. "Since the inception of the Responsibilities Program on February 17, 1951," read a memorandum sent to Hoover on the 10th, "the Bureau has authorized the field to disseminate information on approximately 908 Security Index Subjects."⁶⁶ In early December, Hoover was so confident about the Program's future that he ordered the investigation of twenty-two "newly

65 Letter to the FBI from John Steinbeck, member of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, November 10, 1954.

66 Office Memorandum to Mr. L.V. Boardman from A.H. Belmont, November 10, 1954.

elected Governors...in order [that] no delay will be expected in disseminating information under the RP."67

In February of 1955, the editors of the Denver Post published a pamphlet of the collected 'Faceless Informers' articles by Lawrence Martin. It was effectively the last blow to the Program. When the Attorney General received a copy on March 3, 1955, and was informed that it was receiving wide distribution, he concluded that the 'Responsibilities Program' should be brought to a close.68

On March 7, 1955, Hoover sent a letter to all SAC offices. In it he concluded that since,

the state authorities...have failed to handle properly the information furnished them by the Bureau on a confidential basis under the Responsibilities Program, the Bureau has found it necessary, with the concurrence of the Attorney General, to discontinue all dissemination under this program.69

The final tally of the 'Responsibilities Program' was reported to Hoover just before it was ended. By December 15, 1954 information had been disseminated on 794 individuals. 429 were employed in education, 129 in city government, 109 in public utilities, 83 were in state

67 Office Memorandum to L.V. Boardman from A.H. Belmont, December 3, 1954; Office Memorandum to SAC Albany from the Director, FBI, December 7, 1954.

68 Office Memorandum to the Attorney General from the Director, FBI, March 3, 1955.

69 Letter to All Special Agents in Charge from J. Edgar Hoover, March 7, 1955.

government, and 44 in county and various other positions. It was estimated that 56% "no longer held the position they occupied at the time this information was disseminated."⁷⁰ These numbers did not include the many name checks done for governors like Earl Warren. These numbers cannot measure the fear and concern that teachers and other public employees must have lived with throughout these years.⁷¹

As a measure of how far the anti-Communist attitude had permeated the political spectrum, there is the tale of Hubert Humphrey. In January of 1955, Assistant to the Director L.B. Nichols met with Senator Hubert Humphrey to talk confidentially about FBI operations:

I talked to Senator Humphrey on January 3, 1955, and in the strictest of confidence advised him of the Responsibilities Program... the Senator stated that he had always thought there was something like this taking place; that it was one hundred percent correct; and he thought it was a proper use of Bureau files.⁷²

70 Office Memorandum to L.V. Boardman from A.H. Belmont, February 16, 1955.

71 For a good discussion on blacklisting in education, Ellen W. Schrecker, No Ivory Tower, (New York, 1986). For a contemporary look at 'subversives' in education from a decidedly liberal perspective, see Robert W. Iverson, The Communists and the Schools, (New York, 1959). For and earlier era of persecutions of educators see, Mary Furner, Advocacy and Objectivity, (Lexington, 1975); and Clyde Barrow, Universities and the Capitalist State, (Madison, 1990), pp. 186-220.

72 Office Memorandum to Mr. Tolson from L.B. Nichols, January 7, 1955.

If "the happy warrior" was able to take this view, might it suggest that the "New Frontier" implied only new 'techniques of freedom'?

CONCLUSION:
POLITICS, IDEOLOGY, CULTURE AND LIBERAL ANTI-COMMUNISM

Political freedom does not include the right to seize power, but...it does include the right to affirm revolutionary doctrines or doctrines that have revolutionary implications. Otherwise [the Founding Fathers] would have turned their backs on their own actions, on the American Revolution, and restricted the area of proposals for social change.

-- I.F. Stone¹

I

The 'McCarthy Era Inquisitions' have passed into our history books as excesses somehow endemic to the fifties, but can the same be said about the political/cultural environment in which these 'inquisitions' occurred? The McCarthy Era is deceptively self-contained and too easily cast in the black and white kinoscope images of the time. Since the death of Senator McCarthy in the late fifties, America has seen more than one revival of his style of politics. Indeed, two recent Presidents have reached the country's highest political office without having to jettison the baggage that they shared with McCarthy and the period that bears his name.²

1 Andrew Patner, I.F. Stone: A Portrait, (New York, 1988), p. 98.

2 Richard Nixon, who predated McCarthy as the premier anti-Communist politician with the Alger Hiss case; and Ronald Reagan, who while President of the Screen Actors Guild, testified before the HUAC as a "friendly" witness. Indeed, it was while Ronald Reagan was President of the Screen Actors Guild in 1953 that the guild introduced a loyalty oath, and required its officers to sign affidavits that they were non-Communist. See David Caute, The Great Fear,

Of greater concern, however, is the suggestion that the political/cultural environment which originally encouraged McCarthy has not passed, and further, that anti-Communism as official government policy has been, and is presently, the general framework within which the society works -- at least from the top down.³ Recent events offer convincing support for such an assertion.

Take for example the 1988 race for the U.S. Presidency. Republican candidate George Bush veiled his redbaiting thinly when he accused Democratic candidate Michael Dukakis of being a closet liberal and a "card-carrying member of the

(London, 1978), p. 505.

Evidence also suggests that during the years of the Reagan Presidency there was a return to a 'blacklist' much like that of the fifties. For instance, after the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, well established Actor Ed Asner found that he could not find work after actively protesting the American aid to the Nicaraguan Contras. Also, in 1985, Canadian writer and naturalist Farley Mowat was denied entry into the United States for reasons never clearly stated. A press officer for the United States State Department later felt it necessary to point out that Mowat belonged to a "proscribed organization" but refused to say what it was. They were referring to Mowat's membership in the New Democratic Party, the third largest political party in Canada. See Farley Mowat, My Discovery of America, (Toronto, 1985).

3 My Thinking on the organization of American society after World War two is largely influenced by C. Wright Mills, White Collar, (Oxford, 1951); and The Power Elite, (Oxford, 1956). His work is suggestive as to how much power people like J. Edgar Hoover could wield in the Post war society. For a strong critique of Mills' thinking in relation to the intellectual trends of the fifties see Richard H. Pells, The Liberal Mind in a Conservative Age, (New York, 1985), pp. 249-261.

ACLU".⁴ Dukakis found himself running from the "L-word", and from his membership in the American Civil Liberties Union, as though he had to hide his progressive proclivities or risk being 'exposed'. Rather than being castigated for pursuing McCarthy-type politics, the redbaiting by Bush was never questioned; it had tacit, and at times active, public acceptance.⁵ More than just political, however, anti-Communism has contemporary cultural meanings as well, connecting with the cultural crisis underpinning the decline of the "American Century".⁶

Back in Dukakis' home-town of Brookline Massachusetts, redbaiting was being used in the local school system to control educational content. Social studies teachers there had come under fire in public meetings and in the local press, accused of being "'ideological leftists' who [were] 'antiwestern': radicals, feminists and sixties holdovers who have subjected [their students] to political propaganda on foreign and domestic issues."⁷

4 Interestingly, Bush refused even to say "liberal", opting for the more sinister sounding "L-word".

5 By 'redbaiting' I am suggesting the tactic of marginalizing ideas by associating them with utopian visions.

6 Lasch, Minimal Self; and Culture of Narcissism.

7 Bruce Shapiro, "Red-baiting Comes to Brookline," The Nation, (May 21, 1990) pp. 689,706-709.

The Bush tactic and the events in Brookline suggest that an environment still exists which works to limit the use of ideas within a certain ideological framework -- what might be called an American Ideology. However, an 'American ideology', limiting ideas and freedoms, can be difficult to identify in a society which presents itself as 'pragmatic' rather than 'dogmatic', and presents its 'system' as independent of public agency and public responsibility.⁸ As E.P. Thompson has pointed out, "the illusion of self-motivated freedom disempowers people from confronting the determinism of the larger social process."⁹

Ideas and assumptions, hopes and intentions, even the very definitions and understanding of language have been actively shaped to allow certain subjective values and ideas to be accepted as pragmatic, objective truths.¹⁰ It was during the McCarthy era that this "new language of incantation" came into being; "we no longer confront[ed] the world with ourselves as we [were], but [rather, we

⁸ See Christopher Lasch, The Culture of Narcissism, (New York, 1981), pp. 369-397. By 'system' I am referring to the 'economic' capital order which is supposed to have its own natural rhythm of existence. 'Capitalism', by this definition, is not an ideology but a 'pragmatic' fact.

⁹ E.P. Thompson, "Last Dispatches From the Border Country," The Nation, March 5, 1988, p. 311.

¹⁰ See Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature, (Oxford, 1977), pp. 145-206; and Raymond Williams, Keywords, (Oxford 1981). Both works discuss the active power of language and how its changing definitions affect society.

confronted the world] with our 'image'." This new language paradigm pitted the "free world" and "free enterprise" against the "Communist conspiracy" and slavery.¹¹

Part of this 'new language of incantation' necessarily involved the reshaping of the past. Though not as transparently as historians in the Stalinist regimes, liberal-progressive historians have had a lasting influence on their society and have skewed the way in which Americans have come to understand their past history. Their historical work becomes a means to reflect and reinforce certain values in the present.¹²

The "McCarthy Era", as an historical event, was absorbed by this liberal-progressive tradition, and treated -- like so much else in American history -- as another 'good

11 Dalton Trumbo, "Honor Bright and All That Jazz," in The Time of the Toad, (New York, 1972), pp. 150-151.

12 I am referring to the way in which history has become an activist tool for re-enforcing the values of the present order. For examples of how the American past has been skewed into a liberal context, see Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Jackson, (Boston, 1953); Daniel Boorstin, The Americans, (New York, 1958); and Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition, (New York, 1955). Compare these works to those by Alfred Young, The Democratic Republicans of New York, (Chapel Hill, 1967); David Brion Davis, The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, (Ithaca, 1975); Richard J. Twomey, Jacobins and Jeffersonians, (New York, 1989); and Eric Foner, Tom Paine and Revolutionary America, (New York, 1976). These works are more sensitive to ideology and context. The three former works impose on the past a liberal-progressive perspective which is relevant to the present, but not sensitive to the pastness of the past. Though the later three are the most recent works, it is the tradition of the former which still holds sway in much of the contemporary historiography.

flight' won.¹³ In the process, "McCarthyism" became a deceptive word. It implied that the 'Inquisitions' of the fifties were the result of one man or one movement. It implied, too, that with McCarthy's political demise, his anti-Communist 'witch hunt' died too.¹⁴ But McCarthy was not an aberration; he was the product of typical politics to an extreme.¹⁵ He "was merely the most successful demagogue to exploit a form of politics that had earlier been

13 There are numerous examples of this. See, for instance, Eric F. Goldman, The Crucial Decade, (New York, 1956).

14 The demise of McCarthy, and Hoover's Responsibility Program, at about the same time, did signal the end of the overt efforts to engage in repressive tactics. Even those who fought McCarthy from the left saw his censure as the effective end of McCarthyism. On May 13, 1957 I.F. Stone wrote in his Weekly, "While the Senate last week was burying McCarthy, the Supreme Court was burying McCarthyism." His judgment that the Warren Court had removed the crass McCarthy tactics was essentially correct. However, the decisions of the Warren Court merely signaled the rise in a new form of the same thing. See I.F. Stone, The Haunted Fifties, (New York, 1963), pp. 196-204.

15 His platform fell well within the confines of the conservative tradition in America, albeit to an extreme. See Michael Paul Rogin, The Intellectuals and McCarthy, (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 261-285. Rogin's work was able to disprove Daniel Bell's assertion that McCarthyism was a populist phenomenon, the result of WASPS' anxiety about their changing social status in relation to ethnics. Rogin discounted this by examining, in great detail, voting behavior and populism. See Daniel Bell, The New American Right, (New York, 1955). For an extension of Rogin's work see Athan Theoharis, "The Politics of Scholarship: Liberals, Anti-Communism, and McCarthyism," in Robert Griffith and Athan Theoharis, The Specter: Original Essays on the Cold War and the Origins of McCarthyism, (New York, 1974), pp. 262-281.

legitimized by the Truman Democrats."¹⁶ It was the existing political environment that spawned Joe McCarthy, not Joe McCarthy who spawned the existing political environment. The cruder anti-Communism of the HUAC was defeated, but what replaced it, or rather what outlived it, was a refined version of the same thing.

The older linear progressive historiography has helped to strip Americans of an ability -- in a politically and culturally legitimized way -- to think laterally about their society, past and present.¹⁷ It is this which allows them to

¹⁶ Jezer, The Dark Ages, p. 98n. See also Rogin, The Intellectuals and McCarthy, p. 219. McCarthy rode the wave of fear resulting from the "loss" of China to the Communists and the Russians exploding a nuclear device. He is best understood in the context of his successful exploitation of "popular concern[s] over foreign policy, structured by existing political institutions and political cleavages."

¹⁷ A number of historians have helped to develop the thinking on the restrictive qualities of an advanced capitalist society which is also the restrictive qualities of anti-Communist ideology. Such restrictions help to minimize the dissent which has been the best critique of a given social structure. What remains are only the ideas conducive to the wellbeing of one system and those dissenting ideas which are innocuous enough to be ignored or malleable enough to be absorbed as 'reforms'. The results of this system have been tangible in America.

The "legitimized" left and right in American politics have both actively supported and promoted the liberal capitalist system. For a troubled society in need of real choices this political "struggle" between "liberal left" and "conservative right" has meant no choice at all. The failures of the liberal progressive steamroller -- leveling society in the only way it knows how -- have left a pervasive sense of cynicism in its wake. The "enlightened liberals" who have set the cultural and historical agenda for a generation have shrugged their shoulders at a loss for words. Fighting the good fight, which has defined and motivated liberal America since the turn of the century, no longer answers questions and solves problems. For

dismiss the events of the McCarthy Era while at the same time accepting its basic underpinnings. Nearly fifteen years after the McCarthy Era ended, Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. argued that "...rational anti-Communism...remain[s] a moral necessity for anyone who cares about democracy and individual freedom."¹⁸ How this differs from McCarthy's intentions just two decades earlier is subject to discussion, but clearly it suggests a tangible anti-Communism. And two decades hence, we still hear of the necessity of fighting the "evil" of Communism, and the "illusions [of Communism that] continue to hold for so many writers and intellectuals who remain as obdurately blind today to the values and virtues of democratic capitalism as [others like them did] in 1950."¹⁹ It is an ideological contradiction, suggesting something about activism in the 'legitimate' American political landscape, to repress ideas in the name of freedom, and restrict choice in the name of

discussions about the dynamics of culture see Christopher Lasch, The Culture of Narcissism, (New York, 1975) and The Minimal Self, (New York, 1984); Raymond Williams, Culture, (London, 1981); See also Marty Jezer, The Dark Ages, (Boston, 1982) for a discussion of how post WWII capitalism, specifically through the fifties, has dictated the definition of American cultural and political choice.

¹⁸ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., The Vital Center, (London, 1949, 1970 edition) p. xix.

¹⁹ See Norman Podhoretz's introduction in Richard H. Crossman, The God That Failed, (New York, 1983ed), pp. xviii-xvii.

democracy.²⁰

II

American capitalism has succeeded politically over socialist options in part by arguing that it alone can guarantee liberal political freedoms, and yet ironically its own survival depends on maintaining a status quo which cuts against the democratic grain. The political freedoms that are the supporting pillars of capitalism are the very source of capitalism's instability. This contradiction only becomes more pronounced as advanced capitalism relies more and more on overt government intervention and direct assistance. There is a pressing and persistent need for big business and big government together to cultivate mass support and mass loyalty which cuts across class lines. The development and redefining of the socializing institutions -- schools, the media, the family, and work -- have played their role in the diversion and outright elimination of dissent.²¹ But perhaps as much as these, the use of

20 The repression of ideas in the name of freedom and the restriction of choice in the name of democracy have a long history in America. See Leonard W. Levy, Jefferson and Civil Liberties, (New York, 1963).

21 For an excellent discussion of the development of schools in this context see Christopher Lasch, "Educational Structures and Cultural Fragmentation," in The World of Nations, (New York, 1962), pp. 250-269, and Culture of Narcissism, pp. 221-261. For a discussion of the same quality about family, see Christopher Lasch, Haven in a Heartless World, (New York, 1977); for some discussion on work in this context, see Lasch, The Minimal Self, pp. 23-

intelligence agencies has been an effective way of undercutting important social movements for change. What remains to be done is the linking together of these elements to appreciate repression in a democratic society as a whole; it is their cumulative effect that has established the boundaries within which repression is practiced.

Certainly, it cannot be argued that the 'success of capitalism' has eliminated any need for basic social change in America; in fact the contrary is true.²² Though there are numerous reasons for the failures of socialist groups to attract a mass following, such failures may be explained by the growth and effectiveness of intelligence gathering organizations like the FBI. These organizations have been aggressive in designating and disseminating America's anti-Communist ideology. This raises an important question: what role does repression play in advanced societies?

There is a tension in advanced societies between overt repression and more subtle forms of coercion established in cultural forms. Indeed, this is one of the problems that Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci wrestled with while in the confines of a prison cell. However, in the context of this study, the question can be partially answered by widening the scope of research to include both the work on overt

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22 "Practically ethical, moral, and cultural justification for the capitalist system has now been destroyed by capitalism." See Michael Harrington, The Accidental Century, (New York, 1966), pp. 77-110.

repression and the work on more subtle types of coercion. My suggestion here is that there are connections that need to be illuminated and better utilized to fully understand the events of the fifties, as well as the events of the present, without returning to the liberal understanding of repression. In the post-Cold War period, we can not afford to lose time or ground by offhandedly dismissing leftist scholarship as having crumbled along with the Berlin Wall. I am suggesting that the repression in America did not, and does not, exist because of Communism, Socialism, or Fascism, but rather it existed, and exists, because of an intrinsic quality of our advanced society. If we are to understand the true nature of domestic repression we must discard the notion that freedom, as defined by its liberal exponents, is the only alternative to McCarthy-like repression. In this context, the insightful social critiques of C. Wright Mills, Christopher Lasch, Michael Harrington, Raymond Williams, E.P. Thompson, and others have not been invalidated in the post-Cold War order; indeed, they are more important than ever since the "free-market god" is now being worshiped in the former Communist countries of eastern Europe. They become more important, too, as they point the way towards the re-establishment of academic values which transcend cheap political activism.

What this study shares with many of the liberal studies of the period is an interest in the mechanisms of overt repression; I do not fault these studies on the grounds that

they choose this as their focus. Where I find fault with other studies is in their failure to examine the limitations of Liberalism: they accept the position of the newspaper editors studied in chapter five. To approach the study of repression without trying to understand the underlying ideology of both its enemies and exponents is to miss what is most insidious.

Unlike repressive regimes around the world, repression in a democracy can only be achieved on the heels of a pressing national emergency, for only then is it permissible to override the first amendment rights the intelligence organization is supposed to respect. So in a perverse irony "a permanently endangered national security [becomes] the illegitimate child of the First Amendment."²³ Americans have become so imbued with the anti-Communist ideology that they are often unable to appreciate its influence; words that were accurate semantic descriptions became charged with conspiratorial menace. 'Class', or 'Socialism', or 'Capitalism' each became filled with an all or nothing intensity.²⁴

²³ Frank Donner, The Age of Surveillance, (New York, 1980), p. 6.

²⁴ A good example of this redefining of words is found in J. Edgar Hoover, The Master's of Deceit, (New York, 1958), 339-351. Here, in the glossary, Hoover "redefines" words associated with Marxism and the left giving them a sinister, threatening twist.

Anti-Communism has come to be the glue that holds potential class divisions together. Anti-Communism acts as a means to counterbalance the "disappearance of shared values, which give identity and exclusivity to a society." It has given "a common agreement on the 'stigma of unworth,' Communism."²⁵ Thus Americans, unsure of what they are, can at least say what they are not. It could then be argued that without the Communist foil, as it is defined by the intelligence organizations, the status of capitalism becomes threatened. While it cannot fully explain it, this study perhaps has illuminated the way in which this ideological penetration occurred at an important point in time.

The FBI was the political organization whose counterrevolutionary mission it was both to define the threat to America and prescribe its solutions. The success of the FBI in establishing the context within which Americans have come to understand movements for social change is due largely to the work of J. Edgar Hoover. Hoover literally redefined the language of, and popular understanding of, subversion in America.

III

The FBI Responsibilities Program File and the Dissemination of Information Policy File offer an opportunity to test old assumptions about the McCarthy era

²⁵ Donner, The Age of Surveillance, pp. 10-11.

against a new source. For more than a generation work on the McCarthy era has been, paradoxically, a part of the history itself; many historians have been both chronicler and participant. This activism has charged the McCarthy Era with a political and ideological power that has, at the very least, made real historical work on the period a difficult task. Presumably, this study would offend the sensibilities of Schlesinger or Boorstin not because of intrinsically poor work, but rather because it challenges, at a fundamental level, the wisdom of prescribing 'techniques of freedom' at all. Indeed, this is the file's strength. It allows us the power to dismiss, or at least identify, the activism of liberal historical work as ideologically "tainted". With the file as a base, one is able to construct a sound argument that is not only contrary to the liberal view, but goes a long way towards discrediting it.

The source suggests that McCarthy was an almost superfluous figure in the greater context of the repression; his demise was far less symbolic of anti-Communism's demise than the liberals have argued. This is not to suggest that McCarthy was innocuous; indeed, his 'crimes' were substantial, the suffering he caused quite real. However, McCarthy as a mastermind or as a central figure in the repression is more the creation of liberal historiography, hollywood, and the contemporary media than of history.

This study also demonstrates the central role of J. Edgar Hoover in the repression. Hoover was not only more

influential than generally acknowledged, but was the individual most responsible for the machinery of repression. This is not a new realization; in 1954 I.F. Stone publicly suggested the involvement of the FBI in McCarthyism. However, there has been a noticable reluctance to pursue the FBI's involvement. That thirty-five years have passed with only a few works isolating the FBI's role suggests something deeper than dearth of sources. As more and more files are forcibly released it becomes more and more obvious that many of the chroniclers of the repression were either directly involved with the FBI, or shared sympathies with the work of the FBI and the decisions of the Supreme Court; they not only accepted the prevailing 'techniques of freedom', but contributed to their making as well.

The real strength of this source was its ability to trace the deeper changes in the political and ideological make-up of the nation as a result of the repression. In conjunction with the work of other scholars, it reveals the emergence of a liberal anti-Communism that moved from a political forum to an administrative one. And further, that in the process of shifting, it established an ideological context for repression. That is, it established the context within which the liberals developed and advocated "Techniques of Freedom."

With the release of source documents, like the one that this study is based upon, the liberal understanding of the McCarthy era is revealing itself to be empty of truth. As

historians look at the new evidence, they should recognize that there is a vital connection between politics and culture and ideology, that the paths to power are serpentine and elusive, and that any qualitative history of the period needs to include all of these elements. When this is firmly established, there can be a re-examination of the fifties that yields far more substantial historical understanding than the liberals have been able to offer. Meanwhile, we are left to question whether there exists the freedom to choose alternative social options in a democratic society that encourages 'Techniques of Freedom', and whether the liberal tradition, in this as in other ways having shown its fascination with manipulation, technique, and power, as well as its apparent inability to respond to the crisis of culture and values as successfully as conservatives have done, may find itself a victim of its own lack of nerve.

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There has been, throughout the eighties, a renewed interest in the events of the fifties. Even Hollywood has offered at least one major film recounting the blacklist [The Front]. It leads one to question whether there was something intrinsic about the eighties that would support such an interest. It is true that the eighties have seen a greater availability of primary sources; but such availability is secondary, in a way, to certain historical inquiries; the dearth of sources should not have hindered the asking of new questions.

Another possible impetus for the renewed interest in the fifties was the Reagan Era. Ronald Reagan brought with him an interest in covert operations, a disregard for the Constitution and the law, and a somewhat nostalgic return to the simplistic anti-Communist arguments of the fifties (the 'evil empire' as a description of the Soviet Union would be a case in point). Part of this administrative attitude included darker hints at renewed domestic political repression.

In this context, much of the new eighties scholarship on the McCarthy era represents, I believe, a liberal effort to defend the besieged 'Vital Center'. The Reagan Era's hints at political anti-Communism were motivation to

mobilize the kinds of liberal arguments that toppled Senator McCarthy thirty-five years earlier.

A brief examination of some of this newer scholarship, in addition to older works, seems to support this point. The few recent works that try to break through the older liberal arguments are consistently undermined by concurrent work that perpetuates liberal arguments.

I

As stated at the outset, the Responsibilities Program must be seen in a greater context of contemporary events and movements. As a result this study is greatly indebted to many works which have been vital in establishing a broader understanding of the McCarthy Era and the Fifties. Though many works draw conclusions that are in contention with conclusions drawn in this study, they are of value in that each work establishes certain details and facts.

Two liberal works that have tackled the post World War Two period in broad sweeps are Stephen E. Ambrose, Rise to Globalism, (New York, 1971), and Eric F. Goldman, The Crucial Decade and After, (New York, 1956). Ambrose examines the United States in an international context from 1938 through to the present, and Goldman, focusing primarily on the fifties, looks at both the domestic and international role of America. Both works are decidedly liberal in their presentation and as a result defend some biased conclusions about Communism and American anti-Communism. However, they

are both valuable for their details and their attention to wider themes.

An interesting work to read in counterpoint to Goldman and Ambrose is Marty Jezer's, The Dark Ages, (Boston, 1982). Though not a scholarly work, it thoroughly challenges the the standard liberal view of the post war period. If Jezer's Marxian view is sometimes a bit simplistic -- drawing one-to-one correlations between capitalism and the repression -- it is not altogether wrong. Certainly, it is far more 'right' than much of the so-called scholarly work that refuses to incorporate what historical materialism has to offer.

In addition to Jezer, the works by C. Wright Mills, in particular C. Wright Mills, White Collar, (Oxford, 1951) and The Power Elite, (Oxford, 1956), are important sociological studies of post World War two American society. These two works are among the first to suggest important links between culture and politics. Further, Mills' work emphasizes the intricate, often elusive connections in society. His work, though not specifically about repression, is able to identify the context within which the repression was able to be effective. Taken as a whole, these works establish political and cultural movements which give the specific focus of this study more relevance.

Purposefully, I have avoided most works about Senator Joseph McCarthy. There has been an effort, conscious or no, to make him larger than life and consequently this has

distorted much of the historical work about the period. Though some scholarly studies after the fifties have recognized McCarthy as a somewhat secondary character in the repression, his popular image has not yet been to be cut down to size. This said, there are a few works that discuss McCarthyism in the context of the House Committee on Un-American Activities which are also necessary to establish a sense of context.

For a detailed look at the work of the HUAC and its like minded committees see David Cate, The Great Fear, (London, 1978) and Walter Goodman, The Committee, (New York, 1968). Cate's work is notable for its inclusiveness of detail. Paul Rogin, The Intellectuals and McCarthy, (Cambridge, 1967) placed McCarthy in a political context. This work effectively countered the work in Daniel Bell, The Radical Right, (Garden City, 1963) which had placed McCarthy in a Populist context. Perhaps inadvertently, these works emphasized the Senator and contributed to the McCarthy monolith. So long as he was seen at the center of the repression, a liberal reading of the events was likely -- his demise implying the victory of democratic forces. A recent work on the McCarthy era demonstrates that this is still a popular position. Richard Freid, Nightmare in Red, (Oxford, 1990) is sensitive to the wider context of the repression and places it into the context of political repression that existed throughout the century. However, Freid ultimately makes a liberal argument insofar as he

maintains his focus on political means of repression. He argues that a return to McCarthyism during the Reagan Era was a fear with little basis. The success of the Vital Center kept Reagan from reclaiming political repression for the Right. Such a conclusion however, only suggests the success of the liberal, administrative, and ideological forms of repression. The 'Vital Center' still holds fast.

Two works are notable for their effort to place the rise of McCarthyism in the Democratic governments of the forties and early fifties: Richard Freeland, The Truman Doctrine and the Origins of McCarthyism, (New York, 1974) and Athan Theoharis, Seeds of Repression, (Chicago, 1971). Both are important revisionist works that are critical of the Truman administration's role in the establishment of government condoned repression of Americans.

There are a few collections of primary source material that are of note here. David Brion Davis, The Fear of Conspiracy, (London, 1971) is an intriguing collection of speeches and statements by prominent Americans from the Revolutionary era through to the late sixties that establishes a long history of leading Americans' fear of subversion. Also, there is Eric Bentley, Thirty Years of Treason, (New York, 1971) which contains transcripts from testimony given to the HUAC throughout its thirty year existence.

A number of works have been helpful in establishing an historical continuity of certain political or cultural

traits in the American polity. Frank Warren, Liberals and Communism, (Bloomington, 1966) looks at the liberal anti-Communism between the World Wars. Mary O. Furner, Advocacy and Objectivity, (Lexington, 1975) and Clyde W. Barrow, Universities and the Capitalist State, (Madison, 1990) each look at the repression of educators at the turn of the century and help to establish that the actions implicit in the Responsibilities Program had historical precedents.

Leonard W. Levy, Freedom of the Press from Zenger to Jefferson, (New York, 1966) and Jefferson and Civil Liberties, (Cambridge, 1963) were studies about Jefferson's efforts to establish 'Techniques of Freedom' in the early 19th century despite his libertarian reputation. Again such works are important to absorb as they establish historical precedents for repression.

Russell Jacoby, The Last Intellectuals, (New York, 1987) is an interesting contemporary critique of the intellectual. I believe it has much to suggest about the cultural results of a generation guided by liberal anti-Communism.

Robert Iverson, The Communists and the Schools, (New York, 1959) is a contemporary study which is valuable, classic liberal argument of the time; it castigates the McCarthy approach to anti-Communism as extreme, but applauds the Hoover approach as responsible. Ellen Schreker, No Ivory Tower, (New York, 1986) is the best work to date on the repression of leftist educators in this century. It is

a detailed, well conceived, well written work that deserves much attention. If it is deficient in any way, it is in the unwillingness to discuss the ideological side of the political repression. This kind of study, as is true of most of the works sighted here, tends to simplify the mechanics of repression by conceiving it only in political terms. This argument too often leads to a liberal conclusion once the overt political machinery of repression is removed.

There has been a consistent failure of the wider academic community to look at the McCarthy Era with cultural, hegemonic concerns in mind. The considerable body of work by Christopher Lasch has been part of the scholarship for more than 25 years, but has yet to be generally accepted as a means to help understand repression in a democratic society. In particular, his chapter on the anti-intellectualism of the intellectuals in The New Radicalism in America, 1889-1963, (New York, 1965) is an absolutely vital study. That it has been largely ignored by historians of the McCarthy Era, suggests only how successful liberal 'historians' like Schlesinger and Boorstin have been. If we are to move beyond a Cold War understanding of the fifties there must be a recognition and inclusion of his work. It is a telling irony that such an important observation coming from the midst of the repression has been fragmented from an inclusive study of the period. This is not to suggest that the cultural concerns have been ignored

altogether; there has been a number of works that have continued what C. Wright Mills began in the fifties. Notable works in this area are, E.P. Thompson, The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays, (New York, 1978); Raymond Williams, Culture, (London, 1981), Keywords, (London, 1983), and Marxism and Literature, (Oxford, 1977); Michael Harrington, The Accidental Century, (New York, 1966); Christopher Lasch, The Agony of the American Left, (New York, 1969), The Culture of Narcissism, (New York, 1979), The Minimal Self, (New York, 1984), and The World of Nations, (New York, 1973). Each work has its own strengths and weaknesses insofar as it may explain some cultural characteristics of repression; however, it is important to emphasize inclusion of such work in future studies of repression. This is an argument for synthesis. Almost all political studies of the period are negligent in that they do not make cultural, ideological concerns part of their work.

Contemporary works of the period deserve some attention. Arthur M. Schlesinger deserves much derision for his activism, his blatant anti-Communism, and his intellectual arrogance. The Vital Center, (New York, 1949), often shares political compatibility with J. Edgar Hoover's The Master's of Deceit, (New York, 1958). Schlesinger is relentless in his belief that the liberal "techniques of freedom" demand a curtailed democracy. He shares responsibility for creating an atmosphere where traditional

intellectual pursuits are considered suspect if they are critical of the ruling order. He has damaged the historical profession by perverting it into a political, activist tool for the ruling elite. His work continues to ingrain anti-Communism/anti-Radicalism into the intellectual and cultural psyche of the nation.

Another anti-Communist activist in the historical profession is Daniel Boorstin. In particular his Decline of Radicalism, (New York, 1970), though written to address the movements of the sixties, carries on the tradition of dismissing those who criticize the established order at a fundamental level.

In counter balance to Boorstin and Schlesinger, I.F. Stone was an oasis in the scholarly desert during the period. His Weekly, and his numerous books, are perceptive and concise and powerful. He stood virtually alone in his time, clearheadedly challenging the repression around him. He deserves much, but has received little. It is distressing to note that Stone is all but ignored in every study of the period. Though it may be too simple an explanation, it seems a man of the independent left has no friends. Stone has paid the price too long and should be used as a rich and vital source in any study of the period. In particular his The Haunted Fifties, (New York, 1963); The Hidden History of the Korean War, (New York, 1952); and The Truman Era, (New York, 1953), are each filled with extraordinary insights.

Two books by Richard Pells, Radical Visions and American Dreams, (New York, 1973), and The Liberal Mind in a Conservative Age, (New York, 1985) are both interesting and important works that study the intellectual from the 20's through to the end of the 50's. Pells is sensitive to the social environment of the intellectuals and their role in that society.

Victor Navasky's, Naming Names, (New York, 1980) was among the first of the new McCarthy Era books published in the eighties. In many ways it was typical, contributing to the defense of the "Vital Center". By choosing to discuss those who named names before the HUAC, Navasky skirts a qualitative examination of the period and instead condemns those who were willing to talk. This is appalling and irresponsible. It is a work that is ignorant of the many studies that emphasize those who created the culture of repression. It serves the liberal cause to inflict lashes of moral righteousness upon those who named names. Navasky should know better. This book is well written and there are chapters of interest that can be useful in a study of the period. However, its general thrust is offensive; it implies that the McCarthy Era might never have happened if no one had named names.

Athan Theoharis and Kenneth O'Reilly spearheaded the investigation of the FBI and its role in the repression. In particular, O'Reilly's, Hoover and the Un-Americans, (Philadelphia, 1983) was one of the first works to establish

the central role of J. Edgar Hoover in the repression. If it suffers from a liberal perspective it should not diminish its role in opening up new avenues for important scholarship. Theoharis, too, in his Seeds of Repression, (Chicago, 1971) and his The Specter, (New York, 1974) helps to expand the understanding of the fifties beyond McCarthy to the institutions of government. This could also be said of Frank Donner's, The Age of Surveillance, (New York, 1980). This work is an exhaustive examination of the intelligence agencies in the business of repression. More than any other work on the subject, Donner comes closest to suggesting a culture of repression. Donner unabashedly recognizes that institutions like the FBI are, in effect, political police. This recognition allows for a perceptive study of the role of intelligence agencies in democratic societies.

One recent book has been able to break through some of the liberal rhetoric of the period, at least politically, and looks at the FBI allied with the liberal anti-Communists. William W. Keller, The Liberals and J. Edgar Hoover, (Princeton, 1989), was the first substantial work to look to the FBI and not impose a decidedly liberal understanding of its actions. He helped to establish the role of liberal politicians in the institutionalization of repression. However, Keller is unable to recognize the cultural aspects of the shift, and ultimately, he makes a liberal argument, suggesting the the liberal-FBI entente was

broken in the early 70's by public pressure. He is unable to break through to the cultural ramifications of the argument he is making. Keller's work is important, however, in that he seems to be aware of the political shift precipitated by the liberals. More work is needed in this area.

Martin Sherwin's, A World Destroyed: The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance, (New York, 1977) is a valuable and important study of the effect of the Bomb on world politics and its effect on American foreign policy. Jesse Lemisch's, On Active Service in War and Peace, (Toronto, 1975) is a wonderful monograph that punches through the non-activist claims of liberal historians. And finally, Dalton Trumbo's, The Time of the Road, (New York, 1972) which includes an article published originally in The Nation [1965], "Honor Bright and All That Jazz," is indispensable to a study of the period if for no other reason than for the beauty and power of its words and message.

About the primary source of this study, much can be said. However, two important points need to be addressed here. The first has to do with the general format of the source. It was arranged only somewhat chronologically, and it generally suffers from poor organization. It was a struggle to find documents that corresponded to others. A companion book was to be published in the winter of 1990. Perhaps it will be of assistance to others who will use the source. The second point is its value to the scholarship.

This source has allowed a different picture of the repression than that painted by liberal historians like Schlesinger and Boorstin. It demonstrates how self-serving liberal scholarship has been and should help to discredit liberal activism in future historiography.

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