

Cold War Design: Battling the Red Menace

The 1950s in America were a time when many people were prepared to sacrifice their liberties in the face of what was seen as a pervasive Communist threat. Here are the graphics of paranoia.

By Steven Heller



Today, anti-Red propaganda from the late '40s to the mid-'50s looks as quaint as turn-of-the-century patent medicine ads. The words and images seem so overheated that it's hard to believe they were ever taken seriously. Yet this postwar rhetoric so colored Americans' lives that the very word "Communist" (or "Commie" or "Pinko") provoked irrational fear. Communism was represented not as an ideology with a range of political agendas and tonalities, but as a pervasive evil—a disease that had to be rooted out of capitalist culture through the identification and quarantine of infected members. This paranoia bred its own contagion. Red-baiting was practiced so widely, and with such devastating effect, that many Americans were willing to relinquish their constitutional rights (and to abet the violation of the rights of others) to avoid harassment and even persecution.

"The Cold War was Stalin's war," writes William G. Hyland, the editor of *Foreign Affairs* and author of *The Cold War: 50 Years of Conflict*. "He started it in 1939, when he struck a devil's bargain with Adolf Hitler to destroy Poland, partition the Baltic and Eastern Europe, and unleash World War II." Two years later, Hitler invaded the USSR, forcing Stalin into his alliance with America and Britain. The seeds of conflict over postwar Europe were planted before the Nazi invasion and sown at the Big Three summits, especially at Yalta, where Stalin was permitted to maintain his hold over Eastern Europe and retain the much-disputed Nazi/Soviet spoils. Stalin's Cold War was not about ideology or winning hearts and minds, but a straightforward power struggle, confined, as Stalin himself declared, to the range of the Red Army. The Cold War might have turned hot had Stalin not died in 1953, before he could muster his resources. Yet it was certainly hot enough to cause conflict on many fronts, including the American home front, where zealous pursuit of real and imagined Reds became a national pastime.

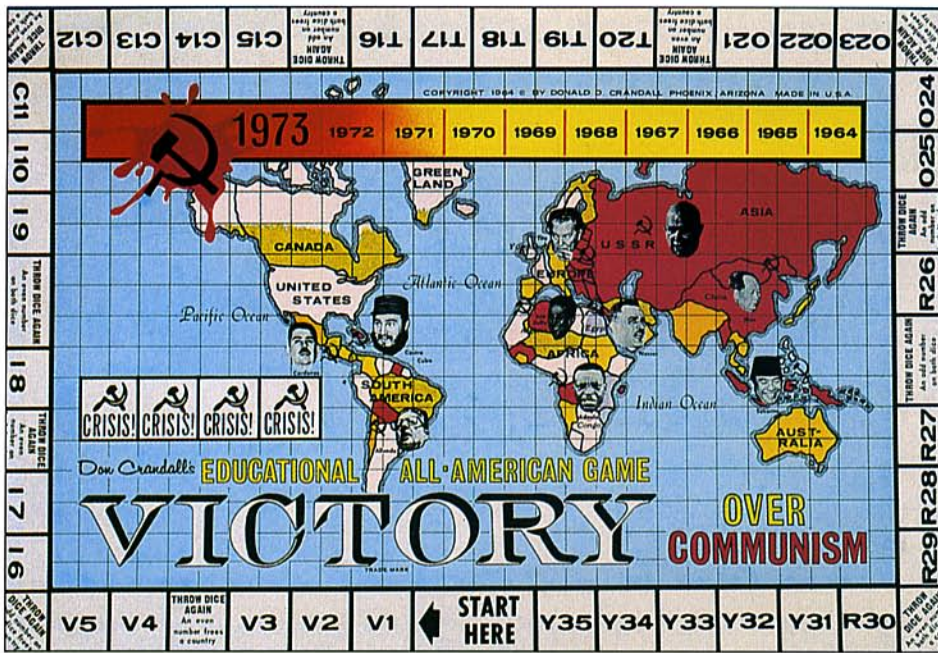
Of course, anti-Red fervor was not new to American society. Before World War I, politicians, businessmen, the clergy, and the press had conditioned the public to fear and loathe radicals. In editorial cartoons, socialists, anarchists, syndicalists, and Communists were portrayed indiscriminately as bomb-throwing thugs. After the 1917 Russian Revolution, communism became the nemesis of America's business and industrial leaders, who feared a labor force incited by Reds to oppose their own

often-exploitative practices.

Jingoism was touted as an antidote to social disruption. Huey Long once warned that if fascism ever came to America, it would be on a program of Americanism. And John Steinbeck expressed the relationship between Communist and agitator when a character in his 1939 novel *The Grapes of Wrath* explained: "A red is any son of a bitch that wants thirty cents when we're paying twenty-five." As Steinbeck illustrated, any idea that questioned the status quo was "un-American." Such ideas were often exaggerated to appear threatening enough to necessitate government intervention.

In 1938, Congress established the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) to investigate "the cancers in our midst." Its chairman was Martin Dies, a representative from Texas and a fanatical anti-Communist. Despite the growing menace of fascism, HUAC had only one real mission. "On the first day of hearings," reported *Life* magazine, "the Committee . . . heard testimony about the American Nazis. The next day it switched to communism and stayed there, opening its doors to anybody who cared to call anybody else a Red." The Dies committee became a bellwether of anti-radical sentiment in America. Not just anti-Communist, it was also anti-do-gooder, anti-urban, anti-intellectual, anti-second-generation American, anti-Jew, and anti-those holding "unsettling ideas about the condition of the negro." Even Shirley Temple was accused of endorsing a French Communist newspaper after inadvertently appearing in an interview on its pages.

By the end of 1938, J. Parnell Thomas, a devout committee member and future HUAC chairman, called for a sweeping investigation of the W.P.A.'s Federal Theater and Writers' Project, which he determined was a "New Deal propaganda machine" (thus a hotbed for Communists), as well as of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations. None of his allegations was a revelation, since many leftists were relatively open about being members of pro-Communist groups. Even famed United Mine Workers leader John L. Lewis, a registered Republican, enlisted Communist support, believing that labor and communism were logical bedfellows. In the 1930s, liberals, by no means devout radicals, made alliances with Communists owing to their mutual opposition to fascism, racism, and exploitative workplace practices. And while anti-



2.



3.

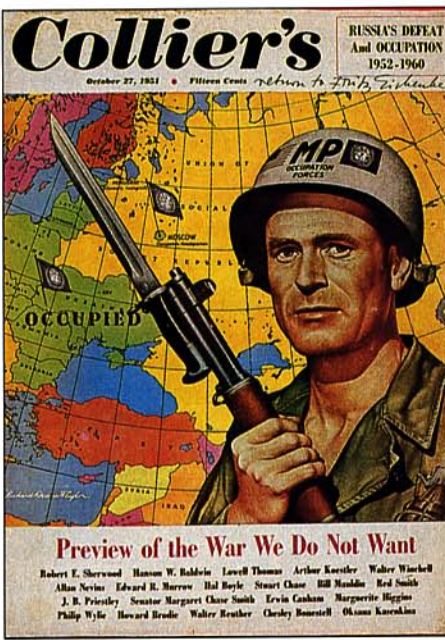
1. Senator Joseph McCarthy (far right) questioning witness in a Red-hunting Congressional session, 1951.
2. Victory Over Communism board game, 1960. "Wipe 'em out and you win!"
3. Poster for Victory Over Communism board game.

Communists may have found some justification for suspecting that Communists were gaining support among more moderate leftists, their concern was excessive: Official party membership was still minuscule. Although exact numbers were never available, the consensus among journalists was that there were fewer than 20,000 card-carrying members at the very height of party membership.

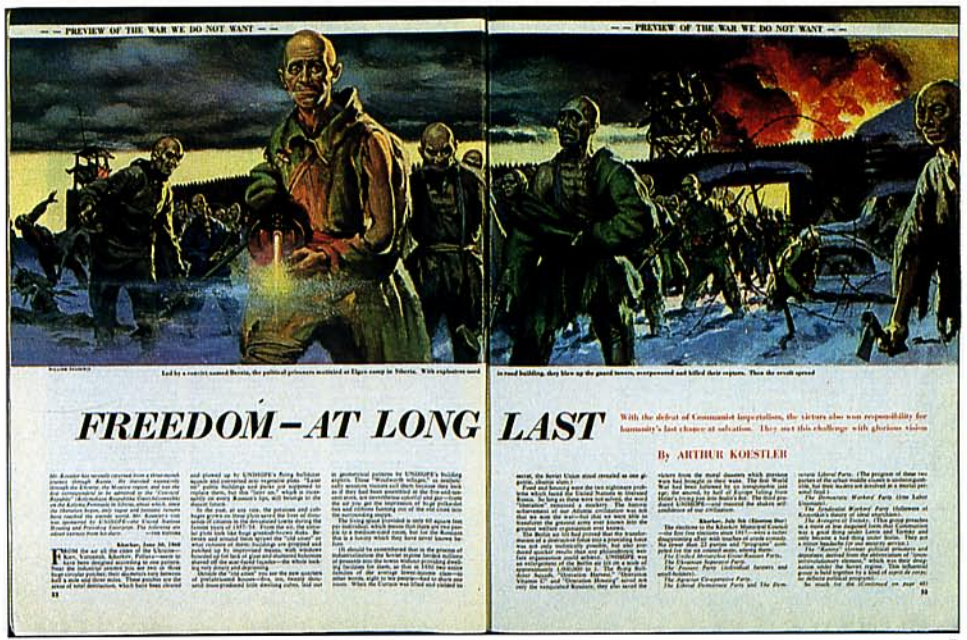
During World War II, Americans preferred Reds to Nazis, and propaganda was focused on forging bonds with our Soviet comrades-in-arms. While official government posters and institutional advertising portrayed the Big Three allies marching toward victory against the Axis foes, Hollywood films like *Mission to Moscow*, *North Star*, and *Song of Russia* effectively sanitized Stalin's dictatorship. James Agee, writing in *The Nation*, characterized *Mission to Moscow* as "the first Soviet production to come from a major American studio." After the war, these films would be investigated by HUAC as irrefutable evidence of Communist infiltration in the film industry. And Russians, known affectionately as "Ivan" during the time of the American-Soviet alliance, would be dubbed "Boris" in anti-Soviet propaganda, including vintage Cold War comic books where characters aggressively urged each other to "give Boris a taste of Old Glory!"

Peace was only months old when Congressman John Rankin of Mississippi, who once declared in a congressional session that the Ku Klux Klan was a "100 per cent American institution," forced a vote that made HUAC a standing committee of the House (rather than a special committee that would have to be renewed at the start of each congressional session). Although he did not accept the chairmanship of the committee after Dies retired, Rankin all but ran its proceedings.

Rankin's rabid conservatism was evident in his insistence that Albert Einstein was a foreign infiltrator, as well as in the observation, reported in the *Congressional Record*, that "communism . . . hounded and persecuted a Saviour during his earthly ministry, inspired his crucifixion, derided him in his dying agony, and then gambled for his garments at the foot of the Cross." Rankin's witch hunts and propaganda campaigns were later co-opted by others. By 1950, when Senator Joseph McCarthy gained prominence, HUAC had already established a record of intimidation—alarming thousands of Americans by not allowing



4.



5.

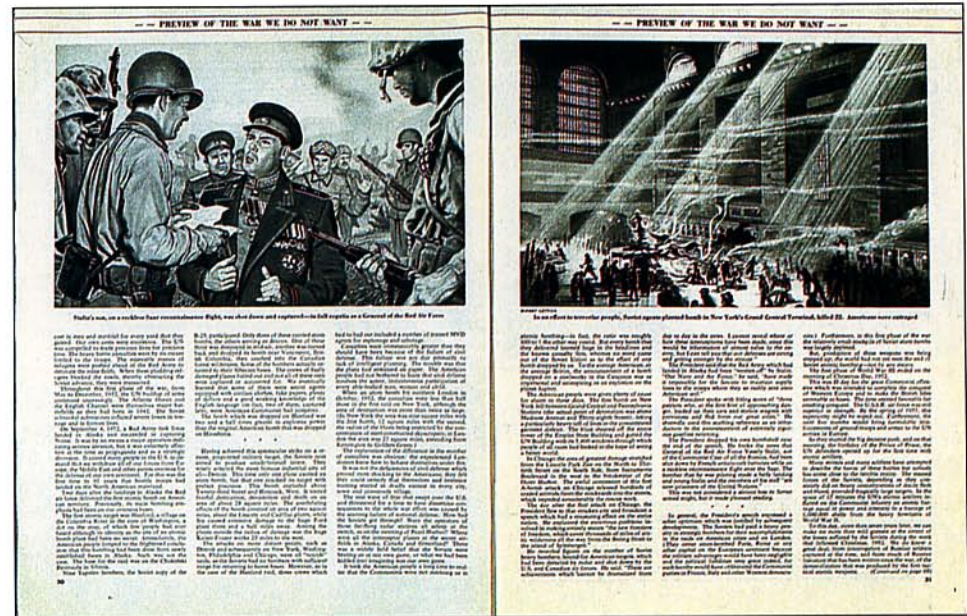
for rules of evidence, cross-examination, or the ability to confront one's accuser (the common practices of congressional committees).

Every president from Roosevelt to Kennedy condemned HUAC for its excesses, but nevertheless tolerated its existence. Truman decried it as "the most un-American thing in America"; Eisenhower remarked that "we are descended in blood and spirit from revolutionists and rebels—men and women who dared to dissent from accepted doctrines." Even comedian Jimmy Durante said, "Don't put no constrictions on da people. Leave 'em ta hell alone."

HUAC's first significant postwar probe of Reds in Hollywood might be construed as an investigation into how Communist ideas were propagated in America. During the '30s and '40s, Communists were indeed part of the film industry. Most of those involved were not ideological puppets, but idealists who sought to imbue films with socially relevant messages. Even the slightest perceived threat, however, propelled HUAC to conduct hearings. While many renowned actors, directors, and writers refused to cooperate with the committee (Frank Sinatra was an outspoken opponent), the level of fear was raised to such a pitch that the Motion Picture Alliance sent emissaries to Washington to make certain, in the spirit of conciliation, that the committee rooted out the true Reds. The dapper Adolphe Menjou was a self-proclaimed Red-baiter: "I make no bones about it," he chortled in a committee session. "I'd like to see them all in Russia."



6.



7.

Despite the committee's failure to find convincing proof of the alleged Communist subversion of the film industry, it made life miserable for many industry members. Among its successes were the imprisonment of the Hollywood Ten (left-wing writers and directors who took the Fifth Amendment) and the institution of a system of loyalty review boards that violated basic civil liberties. HUAC also laid the groundwork for blacklists that brought Hollywood moguls and media executives to their knees. To appease the committee, most film producers pledged not to employ Communists or any others who were thought to be fellow travelers. It was in this climate of hysteria that a number of anti-Red feature films were produced, including *I Married a Communist*, *Red Menace*, and *I Was a Communist for the F.B.I.*, films that seem entertainingly campy from today's vantage point but were dead serious at the time, and whose advertising posters were melodramatic, often lurid depictions of the evil in our midst. Some of the most absurd examples of anti-Communist cautionary films, targeted at soldiers and schoolchildren, were made at the studios' expense, often by reputable industrial and training filmmakers in return for protection from the committee's inquiries.

HUAC, with the collusion of newspapers that supported and propagated the Red scare, scored enough public-relations victories to ensure widespread attention, support, and fear. The most sensational of these was the Hiss-Chambers affair, which erupted in 1948 and seemed to confirm that Communists had infiltrated the highest echelons of government. This case was also notable for catapulting a junior congressman from California into political prominence. Richard Nixon was a member of the committee investigating allegations made by Whitaker Chambers, a senior editor at Time magazine and self-confessed former member of the "Communist underground" in America, that Alger Hiss, then head of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and a former State Department official, was a member of the Communist party and a spy for the Soviets.

The story began when a newspaper reporter leaked to a committee member that Chambers, in a closed session before a New York grand jury, was identifying Communists he had known in his past life, one of whom was Hiss. In appearances before the committee, an indignant, well-spoken Hiss denied ever having been a Communist

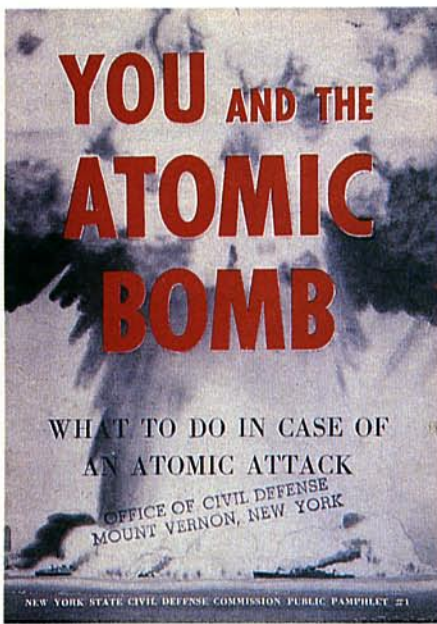


8.

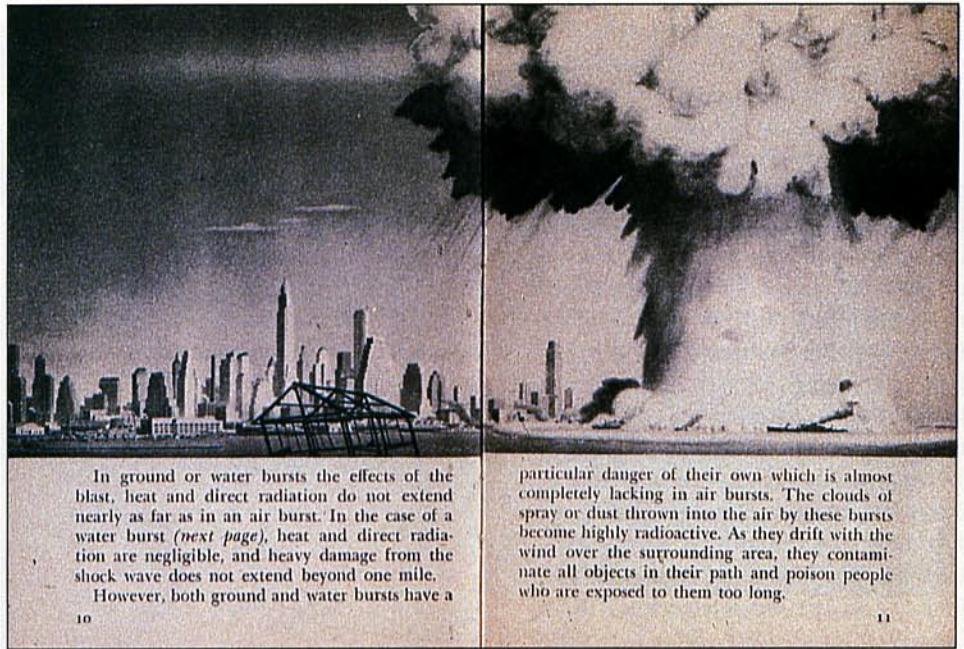


9.

4. Cover of a special issue of Collier's magazine, "Preview of the War We Do Not Want," projecting an armed conflict with the Communist world, 1951. Artist: Richard Deane Taylor.
5. "Freedom at Long Last" for prisoners in the gulag, from Collier's special issue. Artist: William Reusswig.
6. "The Third World War"—a little radiation is a small price to pay for victory—from Collier's special issue. Artist: Cresley Bonestell.
7. "The Third World War," from Collier's special issue. Artist: Birney Lettick.
8. Time magazine, March 1953. Portrait of Stalin by Boris Artzybasheff.
9. Time magazine, September 1961. Photo of Khrushchev by Carl Mydans.



10.

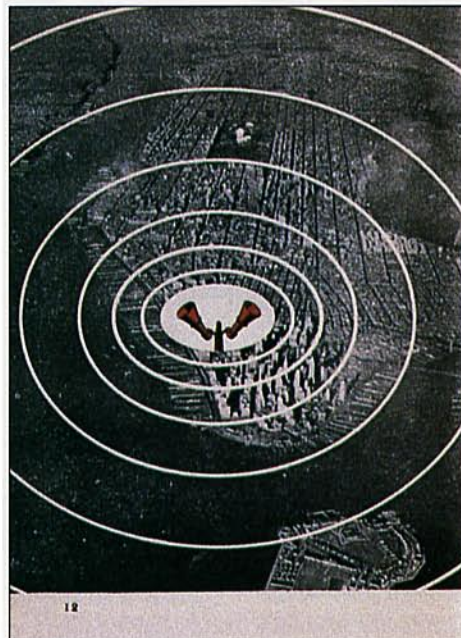


In ground or water bursts the effects of the blast, heat and direct radiation do not extend nearly as far as in an air burst. In the case of a water burst (*next page*), heat and direct radiation are negligible, and heavy damage from the shock wave does not extend beyond one mile. However, both ground and water bursts have a

particular danger of their own which is almost completely lacking in air bursts. The clouds of spray or dust thrown into the air by these bursts become highly radioactive. As they drift with the wind over the surrounding area, they contaminate all objects in their path and poison people who are exposed to them too long.

11.

or even knowing Whitaker Chambers. The veracity of a man with such impressive credentials was hard for the committee to challenge, until Nixon came up with a plan to trap Hiss into committing perjury. The Nixon strategy involved proving that Hiss did indeed know Chambers under an alias, and that he had allowed him to stay in his apartment while Chambers was working for the Communist party. Nixon succeeded in shedding enough doubt on Hiss' story to have him indicted for perjury and twice tried in a New York federal court. The first trial resulted in a hung jury, with a furious Nixon threatening to investigate its members and the judge himself for impropriety. The second jury voted to convict. Hiss' fate was sealed not only because of the surge of Cold War hysteria, which caused many of his liberal supporters to turn their backs on him, but also because of evidence presented by Chambers that became famously known as the Pumpkin Papers. These were secret microfilmed documents (some of them typed on a Woodstock typewriter belonging to Hiss' wife), which Hiss allegedly gave to Chambers, who later hid them in a hollowed-out pumpkin on his farm. Although it was never proven that Hiss had been a Communist agent, he received the maximum sentence for perjury: five years. And Nixon's success gave credence to the Red-infiltration theories that fueled HUAC and the FBI for years to come. As Joseph C. Goulden writes in *The Best Years: 1945-1950*, "The Hiss case caused an entire generation of young Americans . . . to draw a



What to Do in an Air Raid

A radar network and a force of volunteer airplane spotters is being established to detect a possible enemy attack. If enemy raiders are sighted, air raid sirens will be sounded. But we must also consider the possibility that the enemy will be able to evade our defenses and deliver a bomb before a warning can be sounded.

Sneak Attack

In case of a sneak attack there are several things you can do to protect yourself, even though you may not be able to reach shelter.

The blinding flash of the explosion will be your first warning. If you are in the open, immediately fall to the ground face down next to a building wall, if possible, so you will be shielded from falling brick and stones. Close your eyes and cover your face, neck and arms. This will give you some protection against the deadly radiation and scorching heat.

If you are on the street, dodge into a doorway if

12.



Ball of fire one second after burst.

The Atomic Bomb

We hope that your closest acquaintance with an atomic bomb will be in reading this pamphlet. But if you are to understand what to do if an A-bomb should fall on your city, you must first know what an A-bomb does.

An atomic bomb set off in mid-air, about 2,000 feet from ground level, is more destructive than either a water or ground burst, so we must consider this kind of attack as the most likely.

Air Burst

Here is what happens in an air burst: at the instant of the explosion, a brilliant fireball appears in the sky and quickly grows to about 900 feet in diameter. It could probably be seen for 50 miles in daylight, 200 miles at night. From this fireball, brighter than 100 suns, deadly heat and radiation burst out in all directions. The heat flash is dangerous up to 2 miles, but the radiation intensity falls off rapidly after 4,000 feet. In the first second, half of the radiation has already passed. In three seconds heat and most of harmful radiation are over.

Following the heat flash, a tremendous shock

13.

stultifying blanket of conformity over their heads. Why would one wish to experiment with a deviant political philosophy that half a lifetime later could be branded subversive?" He continues, "Whether Hiss was guilty or innocent is irrelevant in the broadest of contexts: much of America's faith in itself died along with his conviction, and thereafter the nation looked not to its idealists for guidance, but to its McCarthys."

Senator Joseph McCarthy, a self-styled Communist-fighter, alleged that the federal government was riddled with Reds. Only two weeks after Alger Hiss' conviction in 1950, McCarthy stood before a Republican women's club in Wheeling, West Virginia, brandishing a document that purportedly included the names of government infiltrators. "While I cannot take the time to name all of the men in the State Department who have been named as members of the Communist party and members of a spy ring," he proclaimed, "I have here in my hand a list of 205 that were known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist party, and who nevertheless are still working and shaping the policy of the State Department."

Nineteen-fifty also saw the advent of a major East-West confrontation, when North Korea invaded South Korea, a crisis that followed hard on the heels of the Communist assumption of power in China the year before. The Korean "police action," which dragged on for three years, found U.S. soldiers (under the auspices of the United Nations) for the first time in actual armed conflict with Communist forces (North Koreans and, later, Chinese). With the war as a backdrop, McCarthy's various investigations fueled anti-Communist activity and, owing to the accessibility he was afforded via the new mass medium of television, made him a force to be reckoned with on the political scene.

McCarthy's reign of terror lasted until 1954, when he accused the U.S. Army of coddling Reds. The ensuing Army-McCarthy hearings, aired on television, resulted in McCarthy's public humiliation. Having pushed his demagoguery too far, he could not sustain his credibility after attacking one of the most revered of American institutions. Shortly thereafter, he was censured by the U.S. Senate.

In 1953, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, admitted Communists, were executed for having passed A-bomb secrets (allegedly obtained from Ethel Rosenberg's brother)

This is an EDITORIAL



DAILY NEWS
EST. 1897 BY JOHN EDWARDS CO. INC. NEW YORK, N.Y. PICTURE NEWSPAPER Trade Mark Reg. U.S. Pat. Off.

New York 17, Friday, May 14, 1948*

REPRINTED FROM
THE N. Y. DAILY NEWS

ARE YOU A RED? THEN DON'T SEE THIS MOVIE

If you're a Communist or fellow traveler, you are urgently advised to stay the hell away from the moving picture discussed herein. It can be practically guaranteed to run your blood pressure to bursting point, make you foam at the mouth, and maybe even cause you to throw a fit in the aisle.

Dana Andrews Gene Tierney

Andrews and Gene Tierney, directed by William A. Wellman.

This is the picture which the Communists, their fellow travelers, their false front societies and their stooges in press and radio are trying to smear, talk down and otherwise choke off, now that the Reds have failed in their original effort to keep it from being produced at all.

You can understand this Red rage when you've seen "The Iron Curtain." It is fact stuff, a true story—the story of the Soviet spy ring heading up in the Russian Embassy at Ottawa which was finally betrayed to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police by an embassy code clerk named Igor Gouzenko.

Another free ad: You can get the official Canadian report on which the picture is based by sending a post office money order or check for \$1, made out to Receiver General of Canada, to The King's Printer, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, and asking that gentleman to send you a copy of the Report of the Royal Commission on Espionage in Canada, June 27, 1946.

In "The Iron Curtain," you are shown how Soviet spies worked just after the war to crack the secrets of the atom bomb; what smart rats they were in some ways and what dumb ones in others; how intense and fanatical is the Communist determination to undermine and finally overthrow democracy everywhere; how, in general, Stalin's fifth column operates in all countries outside the Iron Curtain.

The whole thing is done with the skill of a premier director—meaning it is tops in entertainment value and drama as well as a first-class documentary film.

"IT'S A CORKER!"
—says WINCHELL

"A MASTER-PIECE!"
—says N. Y. Mirror

MOVIE OF THE WEEK!
—says "LIFE"

MOST EXCITING DRAMA EVER FILMED!
—says N. Y. News

20c

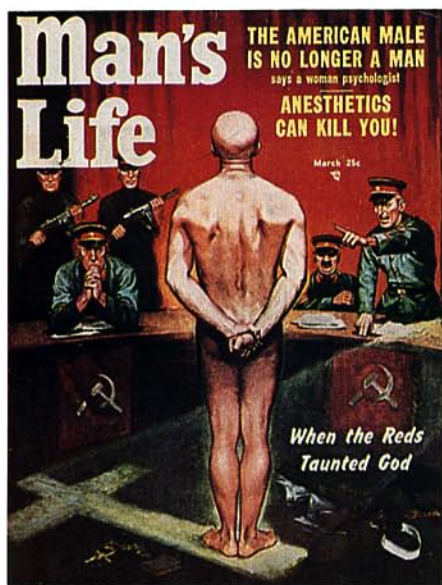
DANA ANDREWS • GENE TIERNEY

"THE IRON CURTAIN"

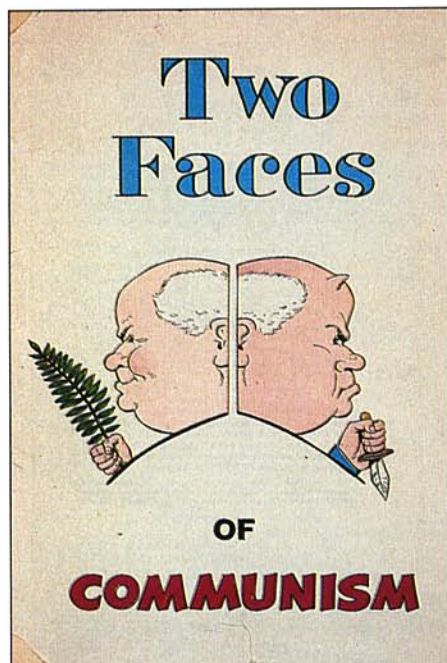
14.

10-13. Cover and spreads from New York State Civil Defense Commission pamphlet, "You and the Atomic Bomb," 1955. Pamphlets like these, while they depicted the horrors of atomic attacks, promoted the survivability of such attacks.

14. Ad for *The Iron Curtain*, one of the first of the anti-Communist films, 1948, featured a typically rabid editorial from the New York Daily News.



15.



16.



17.

to the Soviets. The guilt or innocence of the couple is irrelevant to critics who still argue that their death was a political assassination, and that the Rosenbergs were rushed to judgment *because the Commies got the bomb they could never have invented it themselves some commie pinko rats must have given it to them.* The Rosenbergs were the likeliest choices.

The American Legion, newspaper chains such as Hearst and Scripps-Howard, and various ad hoc businesses and “patriotic” organizations took it on themselves to provide investigators with information on the Communist conspiracy. They also contributed to the volumes of anti-Communist literature. The media were hardly at the forefront of free expression. Many publishing houses gave ultimatums to employees who were called to testify before HUAC: Cooperate or be fired. Others would not publish or commission work from suspected Reds. Media executives supported the blacklist by subscribing to publications like *Red Channels*, a regularly updated list of known or suspected Communists. Many also availed themselves of the services of American Business Consultants, formed by three former F.B.I. agents who provided background checks to any employer who questioned the loyalty of a potential employee. These services were not mandated by law, but those who ignored them risked harassment.

In *The Best Years*, Goulden reprints a typical advisory from the American Legion newsletter, entitled “Summary of Trends and Developments Exposing the Communist Conspiracy.” A primer on how to pressure the media or other businesses into taking the Communist threat seriously, it advised citizens to “organize a letter-writing group of six to ten relatives and friends to make the sentiments of Americans heard on the important issues of the day. Phone, telegraph or write to radio and television sponsors employing entertainers with known front records. DON’T LET THE SPONSORS PASS THE BUCK BACK TO YOU BY DEMANDING ‘PROOF’ OF COMMUNIST FRONTING BY SOME CHARACTER ABOUT WHOM YOU HAVE COMPLAINED. YOU DON’T HAVE TO PROVE ANYTHING. YOU SIMPLY HAVE TO SAY YOU DO NOT LIKE SO-AND-SO ON THEIR PROGRAMS.”

The American Legion was also behind attacks on comic books during the mid-’50s. A letter published in one Legionnaire newsletter forthrightly stated: “We parents

and the teachers and the principals do not like the horrors created by the comics. Are the Commies behind these books which appear in print by the thousands?” As a result of this forced hysteria, the comics industry instituted a self-regulating Comics Code not only to prohibit the depiction of horror and violence, but to uphold “American values.” Nevertheless, violence against Communists was often depicted in comics sanctioned by the code.

Comic books became a popular medium for anti-Communist groups. In Houston, the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade mailed its *Two Faces of Communism* to anyone who sent in a self-addressed stamped envelope. The premise was predictable: The youth of America were oblivious to the Communist menace, but after 36 pages they would appreciate its threat and be persuaded to help others see the light by starting a Teens for America group. A 1947 comic published by the Catechetical Guild Education Society in Minneapolis, entitled *Is This Tomorrow?*, offered a cautionary scenario in which America was overrun by Russians. The reason for vigilance was made clear: “Today there are approximately 85,000 official members of the Communist Party in the United States. There are hundreds of additional members whose names are not carried on the Party rolls because they are acting as disciplined fifth columnists of the Kremlin.” Who can argue with a comic book, although the number of American Communist Party members was far lower than 85,000, and the fifth column was just a myth?

Paranoia was also diffused through pulp magazines and newspapers, which offered a prurient mix of evil Reds and lascivious women in danger—or, for that matter, lascivious women duping handsome, all-American hunks into trading U.S. secrets for sex. Other pulp fare included “eyewitness” accounts of how Soviet secret police “taunted God” in one small Eastern European town or, in another scenario, loaded “the blood wagon” with hostages. Actually, many of the stories in *Men’s*, *All Male*, *Men’s Stories*, and *Siren*, were originally about Nazis; only the uniforms had been changed.

If some Americans were still ignorant of the Red menace, a plethora of pamphlets and books explaining communism’s devious strategies were distributed through mainstream publishers. One example is *The Red Plot Against America*, by Robert Stripling and Bob Considine. Stripling was



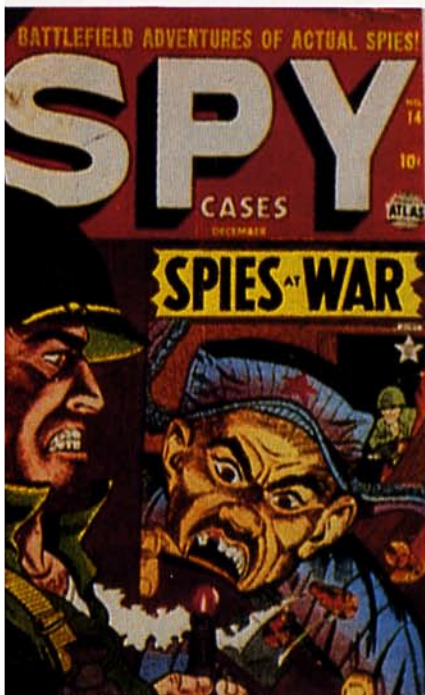
18.



19.



20.



21.

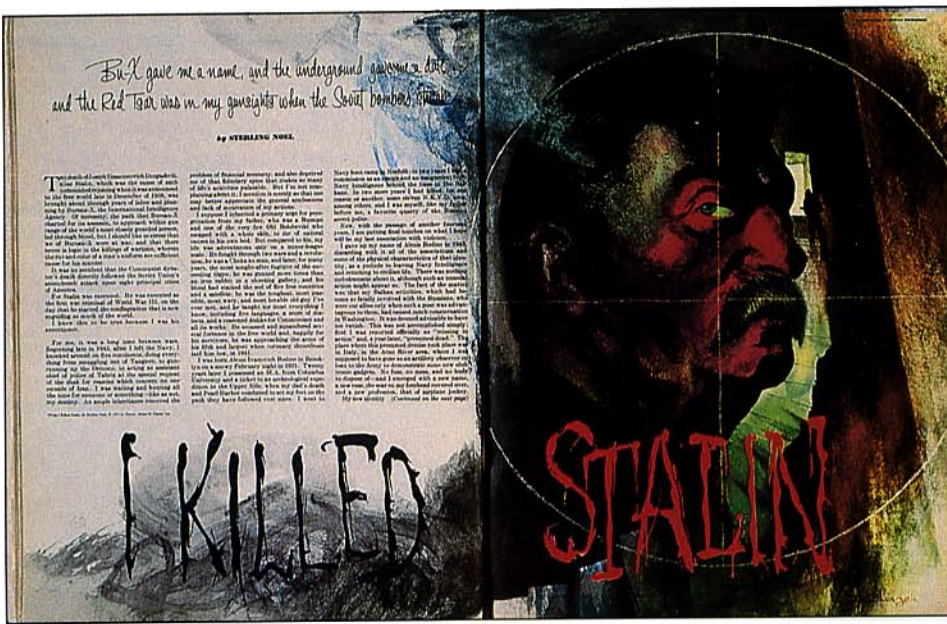


22.



23.

15. Cover of Man's Life, 1953, illustrated an article on the evil doings of the Red satans.
16. "Two Faces of Communism," 1961, a comic book exposé of the Communist menace.
17. Cover of a cautionary tale about what life would be like under communism, 1951.
18. T-Man, the "World-Wide Trouble Shooter," falls into the merciless Red killers' trap, 1951.
19. Title page from "Hunt for a Hatchetman," T-Man, 1951.
20. In Spy-Hunters, "America's Unsung Heroes," slimy subversives are relentlessly exterminated, 1951.
21. This issue of Spy Cases, 1951, uncovers a new Yellow Peril in Korea.
- 22, 23. Pages from Battlefield, 1953, expose the Red threat from China.



24.



25.

24. Spread from Esquire, 1953, in which the Red scare invades high-tone fiction. Artist: Gustav Rehberger.

25. This film poster, 1957, hints at sexual as well as ideological perversity in the Kremlin—odd considering that the Soviets always exhibited a severe sexual prudery.

26. Page from Men's magazine, 1962, appears to suggest that the feared NKVD was running a kind of call-girl service. Artist: Gil Cohen.

27, 28. Front and back of *Fight the Red Menace* cards, published by the Children's Crusade Against Communism, 1955.

the chief investigator for HUAC for 10 years, and Considine was a columnist for the International News Service and a television commentator who declared at Ethel Rosenberg's execution, "She's met her Maker and will have a lot to answer for." In addition to half-baked assertions about Communist influence in the U.S., the book included 500 questions and answers "about communism in the U.S.A." Among them:

What is the difference between a Communist and a Fascist?

None worth noting.

What would happen if Communism should come into power in this country?

Our capital would move from Washington to Moscow. Every man, woman and child would come under Communist discipline.

Could I belong to the Elks, Rotary or the American Legion?

No. William Z. Foster, the head of the Communists in the United States, says: Under the dictatorship, all the capitalist parties—Republican, Democratic, Progressive, Socialist, etc.—will be liquidated, the Communist Party functioning alone as the Party of the toiling masses. Likewise will be dissolved all other organizations that are political props of the bourgeois rule, including chambers of commerce, employers' associations, Rotary Clubs, American Legion, YMCA, and such fraternal orders as the Masons, Odd Fellows, Elks, Knights of Columbus, etc.

The mainstream American press also contributed to the paranoia. Time magazine (which in the early '60s coined the term "peacenik" to link anti-nuclear and pro-peace activists to Moscow) perpetuated the stereotype of the Red Demon on many of its covers, some of which were illustrated by the Russian émigré Boris Artzybasheff. Other national magazines overtly and covertly kept the fear of Russia percolating. A special issue of Collier's in 1955 vividly recorded the hypothetical "War We Do Not Want," in which American troops, under the flag of the United Nations, fight and win a tactical nuclear war against the USSR. Unfortunately, Moscow, Washington, and Philadelphia are irradiated in the bargain. This issue was written by some of America's most respected journalists. Even Bill Mauldin's popular World War II cartoon characters, Willy and Joe, were called up to fight in the nuclear war.

Bolstered by this lemming-like media attention, politicians found that anti-communism worked for them. For most, it provided a ready-made popular cause that both assured national prominence and

satisfied the xenophobic elements of their constituencies. But for some, the only thing better than anti-communism was no communism. Based on reports from HUAC that the U.S. was in danger from an international conspiracy working through "force, violence, sabotage, deceit, etc.," the McCarran Act—originally proposed in 1948 as the Mundt-Nixon Bill and passed in 1950 as the Internal Security Act (over the veto of President Truman)—mandated that Communists and Communist front groups register with the government. This involved giving not only one's own name, but the names and addresses of all other members in an organization. The McCarran Act further allowed for the building of concentration camps to intern those considered dangerous to the security of the U.S. And in addition to the American Communist party, which it effectively shut down, the act required that trade unions, free-speech movements, peace and anti-nuclear movements, and Southern integration organizations register with the government, though many refused to do so. In short, the act effectively undermined the First, Fifth, Sixth, and Eighth Amendments.

It seems difficult not to recognize the irony in the following statement on a *Fight the Red Menace* trading card, one of a series published by the Children's Crusade Against Communism: "A man is going about his business. A heavy hand falls on his shoulder. He is under arrest. Why? Perhaps he has criticized the political system that has taken over his country by force. And some stool pigeon has reported him. For this is happening in a police state, where no one is free to debate what is good for the country. One must accept, without protest, the ideas of the men in power. And we must never let the Reds turn our free America into that kind of fearful place."

With the end of the Korean War and the downfall of McCarthy, anti-Red hysteria began to ebb. Though the Cold War lasted another 35 years, the paranoia of the 1950s never returned in so pervasive and debilitating a manner. But the artifacts from that period, amusing as they often are, tell a chilling story.

Steven Heller is a senior art director at the New York Times. His recent books are *The Savage Mirror: The Art of Contemporary Caricature (Watson-Guptill)* and *Borrowed Design: The Use and Abuse of Historical Form (Van Nostrand Reinhold)*.



26.



27.

CHILDREN'S CRUSADE AGAINST COMMUNISM

53. Every Tenth Man

At a slave labor lumber camp like this one, a worker may die from exhaustion, from starvation or from cold. He starves if he produces too little. His supervisors are usually common criminals. At this camp a prisoner had tried to escape and failed. The other prisoners were lined up and every tenth man was shot as a lesson to all. The remaining "lucky" ones were made to stand at attention in the freezing cold until they dropped unconscious.

FIGHT THE RED MENACE

© 1985 WTW Productions

28.