

McCarthyism and the "Red Scare"

McCarthyism was a movement started and perpetuated by US Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin in the 1950s. The senator was strongly opposed to the spread of communism throughout the world, and as a result, he started investigating people in the US for possible communist ties. In the eyes of many people, these investigations went too far by violating people's rights to free speech and often ruining their lives by publicly tarnishing their reputations. Senator McCarthy was eventually censured by the body of the Senate for abusing his powers. As time went on, it was proven that some of the people McCarthy investigated actually were foreign spies, but there were also many totally innocent people subjected to his interrogations.

A fear of communism spread during the 1950s, partially because of several cases where communists groups rose to power in several different countries. Many people feared that this could happen in the US, and some were concerned that high-ranking government officials might already be secret communists waiting for an opportunity to use their power to aid a foreign enemy.

McCarthy used his power to help stoke the fires of these fears, and he eventually started publicly investigating people. Some were just regular middle-class citizens, but he also investigated a lot of high-profile people, including many in Hollywood. There were many reasons why McCarthy chose who he did — sometimes he had actual evidence against them, but in many cases, people were simply involved in organizations that he considered subversive, or they were acquaintances of someone else he was investigating.

McCarthy first attracted national attention in February 1950, with the charge that the Department of State had been infiltrated by Communists. Although his accusation was never substantiated, during the next three years he repeatedly accused various high-ranking officials, intellectuals and the Hollywood establishment of subversive activities. McCarthy pursued alleged communists with a fervor. He was a master at controlling the media and received enormous publicity. Suspected communists would be hauled in front of McCarthy's committee like a common criminals, often with no evidence at all. McCarthy's chief prosecutor was a New York Lawyer named Roy Cohn. Cohn has obnoxious and abrasive. He hated everyone, especially communists. When Cohn and McCarthy had someone in front of their committee they were merciless. They demanded that the "witness" turn in other suspected communists. Since most of the accused were never involved in any communist activity this was difficult. McCarthy would scream "I have a list" and wave a piece of paper demanding information. The list was never made public. Thousands of Americans lost jobs and careers during McCarthy's witch hunts.

People targeted during the era often found it difficult to find employment afterward. This was often the case even if they were eventually acquitted of any guilt. In part, this was because of the fear that any association with someone who had been investigated might make an individual or company look suspicious.

Eventually, evidence came to light that McCarthy had targeted some people as a way for him to exert influence. For example, he allegedly focused on some US Army officers as a way to threaten them into favoring draftees who were closely acquainted with certain senators. This is the kind of evidence that was in many ways responsible for McCarthy's downfall. Over time, the term "McCarthyism" has been used to describe any kind of movement where people use rumor and innuendo to publicly attack individuals for a belief or political leaning.

<http://www.wisegEEK.org/what-is-mccarthyism.htm>

The Quick 10: 10 Celebrities Named in the Communist Scare

It was 60 years ago -June 8, 1949- that the FBI named a slew of celebrities as members of the Communist Party. They may have been right to suspect some, and others were just completely ridiculous, but either way, here are 10 people who were accused at some point during the Red Scare.

1. **Helen Keller.** We think of her as nearly saint-like woman based on the amazing story of how she learned to communicate despite being blind and deaf. But as an adult, she was fairly radical in her political thinking and the FBI definitely took notice. Although a "formal investigation" never took place, the FBI did monitor Keller enough to know that she sent "loving birthday greetings to Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, a prominent communist leader, on her 65th birthday."

2. **Leonard Bernstein,** the composer and conductor, fell under the FBI's watchful eyes for more than 30 years. He was targeted as a communist during the whole McCarthy era, even though he swore on an affidavit that "I am not now or at any time have ever been a member of the Communist Party."□ The FBI was never able to officially verify that he was a member of the Communist Party, but they continued to monitor his activities when he supported Vietnam protestors and became friends with a member of the Black Panthers. In fact, in 1970, J. Edgar Hoover documented his intentions to run a smear campaign against Bernstein specifically because of his Black Panther ties.

3. **Burl Ives** was called out in the 1950 *Red Channels* pamphlet, a brochure that named 151 supposed Communists in the entertainment industry who should be avoided. He adamantly denied being a Communist and said that any union activity he had participated in was simply to keep in touch with "working folk."□ Because of his cooperation with the House Un-American Activities Committee, he was removed from the blacklist. However, friends such as Pete Seeger felt that Ives had sold them out in order to get back to work and severed ties with him for many years.

4. **Pete Seeger** was a member of both the Young Communist League and the Communist Party and made no bones about it. "My father, Charles Seeger, got me into the Communist movement,"□ he said, but later apologized for "following the party line so slavishly, for not seeing that Stalin was a supremely cruel misleader."□ When he was called to testify in front of HUAC in 1955, Seeger refused to plead the Fifth, but also refused to name any names. He was held in contempt of Congress and was sentenced to serve 10 years in jail for it, but the conviction was overturned. Still, Seeger was required to tell the feds anytime he intended to leave the Southern District of New York. To this day, he considers himself a Communist, saying, "'I still call myself a communist, because communism is no more what Russia made of it than Christianity is what the churches make of it.'□

5. **Artie Shaw,** also named in the *Red Channels* pamphlet, was brought before HUAC in 1953 for statements supporting the Communist Party and for allegedly attending a couple of meetings. Shaw didn't dispute that he had been present at a number of gatherings, but said that it was simply because of his interest in social justice and world peace. "I hate to admit that I was a dupe, but I guess I was," he told the committee. But if you believe Olivia De Havilland, Shaw was definitely behind Communism all the way. During a meeting of the Independent Citizens' Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions when Shaw started talking about how the Soviet constitution should be the standard-setter when it came to democracy. Years later, she recalled, "He said to me, 'Have you read the Russian constitution?' And I said, 'No I haven't -- and how recently have you read ours?'"

6. **Zero Mostel** was named to the list of suspected Communist Party members in 1952, and although he didn't appear before HUAC until 1955, the accusation was enough to kill his career. When he finally got to testify, Zero took the opportunity to exercise the comedic chops which had been in hibernation since the public accusation "□ when the committee's counsel asked, 'Mr. Mostel, are you or are you not a Communist?'"□, Zero leapt out of his chair. He acted like he was grabbing for the attorney's throat and started yelling, "That man called me a Communist! Get him out of here! He asked me if I'm a Communist! Get him out of here!"□ He pretty much owned the trial after that, mocking the counsel and indirectly refusing to name names (directly refusing to name names would have landed him a jail sentence like Pete Seeger's). Needless to say, this didn't win them over, and he remained blacklisted.

7. **Charlie Chaplin** was such a worry to the FBI during the Red Scare that J. Edgar Hoover tried to have him deported. When he left the country in 1952 to promote his movie *Limelight*, Hoover collaborated with the Immigration and Naturalization Service to

revoke Chaplin's re-entry permit. Instead of fighting it, Chaplin made the choice to stay in Europe, making his home in Switzerland. He issued the statement,

"...Since the end of the last world war, I have been the object of lies and propaganda by powerful reactionary groups who, by their influence and by the aid of America's yellow press, have created an unhealthy atmosphere in which liberal-minded individuals can be singled out and persecuted. Under these conditions I find it virtually impossible to continue my motion-picture work, and I have therefore given up my residence in the United States."□

He only ever came back to the U.S. very briefly "" to collect an Honorary Oscar in 1972.

8. Langston Hughes was involved in several Communist-supported groups and activities, but was never actually a party member (according to him, anyway" obviously HUAC felt otherwise). Because the Communist Party of the United States often used his poetry in their newspaper and because Hughes had expressed interest in Marxist ideas in the "30s, Hughes was called to testify in 1953. He refused to give up any names, but freely answered all questions around his own writing and political views. He said he had never joined the Communist Party because "It was based on strict discipline and the acceptance of directives that I, as a writer, did not wish to accept." After the hearing, he started to distance himself from some of his more radical poetry.

9. and 10. Orson Welles and Dolores del Rio. Despite being a strong Roosevelt supporter "" then-wife Rita Hayworth once told Hedda Hopper that Welles was going to South America on a secret mission for Roosevelt "" Orson Welles was considered one to watch by the FBI. A 1941 memo from the Bureau stated that "This office has never been able to establish that Welles is an actual member of the former Communist Party or the present Communist Political Association, he has consistently followed the Communist Party line and has been active in numerous front organizations." They placed him on a list of people who should be taken into custody should the U.S. have a national emergency, and it was recommended that his phone be tapped. Although he said otherwise, many speculate that the Red Scare and all of the accusations were the reason that Welles left the U.S. for Europe from 1948 to 1956. Del Rio was presumably blacklisted simply for her close relationship with Welles "" they dated from 1938 to 1941.

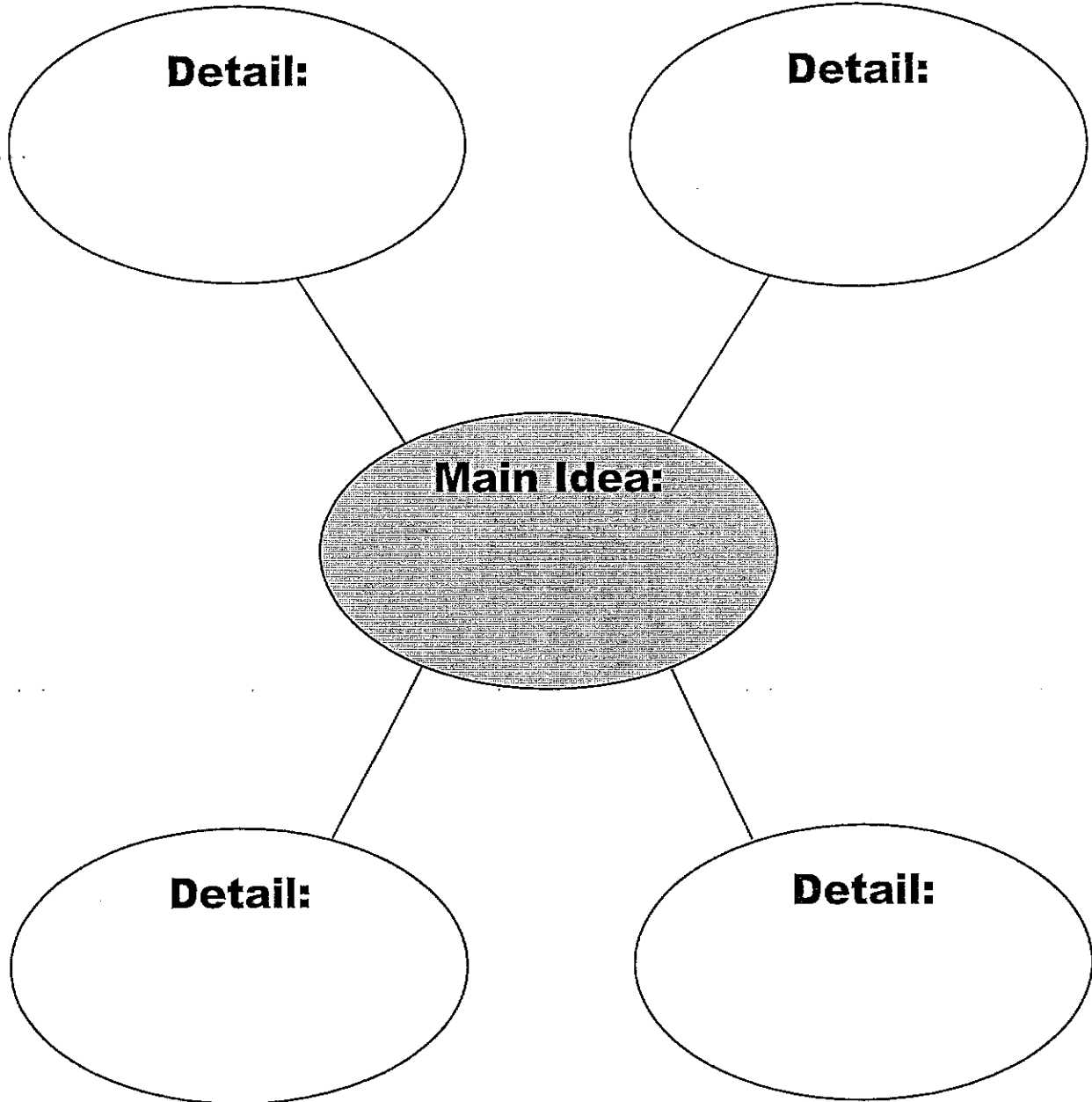
Read the full text here: <http://mentalfloss.com/article/21953/quick-10-10-celebrities-named-communist-scare#ixzz2lHyQXjh3>

Name

Date

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

Main Idea and Supporting Details



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