BUILDING THE ABSENT ARGUMENT: THE IMPACT OF ANTI-COMMUNISM ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF MARXIST HISTORICAL ANALYSIS WITHIN THE HISTORICAL PROFESSION OF THE UNITED STATES, 1940-1960

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ABSTRACT

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This study poses the question as to why Marxism never developed in the United States as a method of historical analysis until the mid-1960s. In this regard, the only publication attempting to fully address this question was Ian Tyrrell’s book *The Absent Marx: Class Analysis and Liberal History in Twentieth-Century America*, in which he argued that the lack of Marxist historical analysis is only understood after one examines the internal development of the profession. This internalist argument is incomplete, however, because it downplays the important impact external factors could have had on the development of Marxism within the profession.

Keeping this in mind, the purpose of this study is to construct a new argument that takes into account both the internal and external pressures faced by historians practicing Marxism preceding the 1960s. With Tyrrell as a launching pad, it first uses extensive secondary source material in order to construct a framework that takes into account the political and social climate prior to 1960. Highlighting the fact that Marxism was synonymous with Communism in the minds of many, it then examines the ways in which the government tried to suppress Communism and the impact this had on the academy. It is revealed that the government, with the help of academic officials, effectively rooted out Communist scholars from the academy and as a result kept Marxism on the fringes of academic life. Using primary source documents, it ends with a case study focused on American historian Herbert M. Morais, through which it is shown not only that Morais was forced out of the academy because of his association with the Communist Party, but also that he was an early practitioner of Marxist historical analysis.
The findings of this study show that it was a combination of both internal and external pressures that contributed to the failure of Marxism to take hold as a valued method of analysis within the historical profession of the United States. Moreover, additional case studies are needed if we are to ever understand the full impact of these pressures. As a result, it is advised that historians use the framework presented in this study as a template from which to conduct research of their own, so that one day we will have a complete answer to the question as to why there was no Marxist historical analysis in the U.S. prior to the mid-1960s.
Dedicated to Herbert M. Morais...

...and all those who have suffered repression in the name of “freedom.”

Your combined story is one that future generations must learn by heart...

...lest we continue to repeat our past mistakes.
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When looking back on the past eight months that constituted the time spent on this thesis, I cannot help but wonder what the final product would have looked like if I had not been so fortunate to receive assistance from so many kind individuals. First and foremost, this endeavor would not have even gained proper footing if it were not for the generous support and friendship of Dr. Marvin E. Gettleman. Before contacting Marvin on a whim, I had a general idea of what direction I wanted this study to take, but no way of getting there. Because of his generosity I was able not only to obtain copies of the Morais Documents, but also a wealth of information and a greater appreciation for the academy and those who have called it home. This thesis would not have been possible without him.

I would also like to send my deepest thanks to the outstanding scholars who served on my committee. My advisor Dr. Douglas J. Forsyth was invaluable throughout the process. His comments, insight, diligence, and willingness to help ensured my passage through the often troubling waters of historical writing with more ease than would have been possible otherwise. Dr. Don K. Rowney provided his knowledge, constructive criticism, and most importantly, a compassionate ear throughout the entire process. Throughout my time at Bowling Green State University he has been a constant inspiration and I feel privileged to have been able to work under and learn from him. Many thanks are also due to Dr. Timothy Messer-Kruse. He took me on as a graduate student and opted to serve on my committee without any prior knowledge of my abilities or previous scholarship. Still, despite this, he provided valuable criticism and was always available to help any way he could when I needed his guidance. In all, what follows in the proceeding pages is a testament to their collective effort to make my thesis as strong as possible.
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Introduction

Why Was There No Marxist Historical Analysis in the U.S.?

In 1906 German economist and sociologist Werner Sombart published his now famous book *Why is there no Socialism in the United States?*\(^1\) While Sombart’s insights into this question are thought provoking, revealing, and still relevant today, for historians interested in the impact of Marxism on American academia, Warren I. Susman posed a still more interesting question over sixty years later.\(^2\) For it was in 1974 that Susman’s essay “Socialism and Americanism” was published, within which he inquired as to why “no school of historical scholars in the tradition of the English *Past and Present* group, for example, [exists in America] to make it possible for us to understand our past and present.”\(^3\)

The journal *Past & Present* to which Susman refers is a well-known academic journal. More importantly, a large portion of the “*Past and Present* group” he mentions were also commonly known as the “British Marxist Historians.” Arising from The Historian’s Group of the Communist Party during the 1930s, the British Marxist Historians made important contributions to British historiography through their self-consciously designed Marxist-inspired social history.\(^4\)

With members including Maurice Dobb, Christopher Hill, E. P. Thompson, and Eric Hobsbawm, by the late 1950s and early 1960s the British Marxist Historians had developed a specific

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4 “There is little doubt that the rise of ‘social history’ in Britain as a field of study, and especially of ‘history from below’ or the ‘history of the common people,’ owes a great deal to the work of the members of the group.” Eric Hobsbawm, “The Historians’ Group of the Communist Party,” in *Rebels and Their Causes: Essays in Honour of A.L. Morton*, ed. Maurice Cornforth (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1978), 44.
program of study that used “class-struggle analysis” as the basis for all further historical inquiry.\(^5\) As one might expect, this focus sprang from their studies of Karl Marx and his theories about the important function of classes in history. With this in mind, these scholars advanced “history from below,” or the notion that social history focused on the lower and working classes is just as, if not more, revealing than the history of politics and “great men.”\(^6\)

Conversely, aside from W. E. B. DuBois, there appears to have been little to no self-consciously Marxist history written by academic historians in the U.S. until 1965 when Eugene D. Genovese’s book *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South* was published. In fact, one is hard-pressed to find academic historians actively engaged in Marxist history during the two decades spanning between 1940 and 1960.\(^7\) It is also true that few historiographers have bothered to write about Marxist historical analysis as it developed in the United States, or thought to ask the question as to why it took so long for it to blossom.\(^8\) Part of this may have to do with the fact that Marxism has and will always have been bound up with Socialist and Communist Parties (which as Sombart indicates held little sway in the U.S.), but the issue is far more complex.


On one level, the perceived lack of interest in Marxism as a useful historical lens may be placed on the long-standing association of Marxism with foreigners.\textsuperscript{9} Paul Buhle has noted that this belief during the mid-to-late nineteenth century caused immigrant radicals to isolate themselves in their own movement, in turn strengthening the perception of Marxism as something strange and un-American.\textsuperscript{10} In addition, we must also take into consideration the role totalitarian states like the Soviet Union played in unintentionally propagating a negative image of Marxism in twentieth century America. As early as 1938 Norman Thomas, the six time presidential candidate for the Socialist Party of America, wrote that one major hindrance to the party’s progress was “the belief that socialism is bound up with the slavery and stagnation of the totalitarian state.”\textsuperscript{11}

As Marxism is at its core a philosophical system, one must also consider the role of anti-intellectualism in America as a possible explanation for the dearth of Marxist scholarship. Historian Elizabeth Sanders wrote that Socialism often repelled farmers and other potential supporters because of the role urban intellectuals played in the movement around the turn of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{12} In his Pulitzer Prize-winning book \textit{Anti-Intellectualism in American Life}, historian Richard Hofstadter made light of American society’s distrust of intellectuals and the specific distaste radical labor had for Marxist intellectuals who got their education at “some fancy university” instead of the “hard school of human experience.”\textsuperscript{13} In a similar vein, and paralleling Thomas, William E. Leuchtenburg wrote in 1955 that anti-intellectualism played a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{9} For a discussion of Marxism and Socialism in America and its early foreign character see Paul Buhle, \textit{Marxism in the United States} (London: Verso, 1991).
\item \textsuperscript{10} Buhle, 21.
\item \textsuperscript{11} Norman Thomas, \textit{Socialism on the Defensive} (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1938), 164.
\item \textsuperscript{12} Elizabeth Sanders, \textit{Roots of Reform: Farmers, Workers, and the American State 1877-1917} (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 30.
\end{itemize}
significant role in attacks on Roosevelt and the New Deal by Republicans and the conservative wing of the Democratic Party. These detractors branded what was going on in Washington as a “conspiracy of intellectuals who were undermining the institutions of the republic” and warned that they were surely influenced by Communism.\(^\text{14}\) This not only implied that to be an intellectual made you an acolyte of Marx, but it also drew a connection to the belief that Communism and its ideology Marxism were (and for some still are) both inherently bad for the U.S.

Still, the connection between these factors and the development of Marxist historical analysis within the U.S. is mere conjecture without further study. Indeed, an extremely broad analysis is necessary if we are to ever truly understand what caused the lack of Marxist historical analysis within the United States historical profession. Such a study would fundamentally consist of two parts. First, in order to understand the role of Marxism within the profession it is necessary to examine the profession internally, what Novick aptly calls an \textit{internalist} study. Upon doing so we may then begin the second stage, the purpose of which should be to pinpoint external factors that influenced its development. Novick refers to this simply as an \textit{externalist} study.\(^\text{15}\)

Thankfully, historian Ian Tyrrell has already accomplished the first step in this two-fold process through his excellent study \textit{The Absent Marx: Class Analysis and Liberal History in Twentieth-Century America}.\(^\text{16}\) Beginning his analysis with Charles Beard and ending with the New Left, Tyrrell writes that the only way to account for the lack of Marxist analysis is to trace the development of America’s historical method and its reliance on scholarship based in


\(^{15}\) Novick, 9.

empiricism and liberalism. He is so confident in his thesis that he sees it as the sole reason for such an absence, claiming that a reliance on external factors like anti-communism is not enough to explain why American history lacks a Marxist slant. This argument may seem to carry weight at first glance, but upon further investigation it is quickly discovered that his omission of external forces like anti-Communism actually serves to weaken his argument.

Due to the work of historian Ellen Schrecker we know that there existed several hundred Marxist professors and students in the 1930s and 1940s, all of whom had connections to the Communist Party. She demonstrated how these academics were silenced under the oppressive weight of anti-Communism in the 1940s and 1950s, resulting in the eradication of Marxism from the academy until the rise of the New Left in the 1960s. During that twenty-year interval, Marxists were actively targeted within American universities. For example, the work of the late professor of social history Sigmund Diamond has shown that the Federal Bureau of Investigation used administrators within universities to root out and fire suspected Communists. In addition, the Association of American Universities declared in 1953 that the greatest threat to academic freedom was Communism and professors holding such beliefs were unfit to teach. But evidence of anti-Communism’s affect on the academy is not limited to McCarthy and the 1950s. There are even earlier examples of anti-Communism and its toll on the academic community.

During the 1930s there were numerous academic collectives located around the country. These collectives could be found at almost every university including Yale, the University of Illinois, Princeton, Harvard, and Reed. Surprisingly enough, Schrecker maintains that the highest

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18 Diamond himself claims to have been a victim of this persecution when he was denied an administration position at Harvard because he was once a member of the Communist Party. See Sigmund Diamond, *Compromised Campus: The Collaboration of Universities with the Intelligence Community, 1945-1955* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
19 Diamond, 221.
number of academic Communists was actually located at the City College of New York (CCNY), where there were over forty Communists on staff. Yet, for all of Schrecker’s excellent work on these academics, her work deals with academic Communists in general and is not really dedicated to a close examination of a particular field. As a result, there has yet to be a full-length study on Marxism in the historical profession of the U.S. from 1940 to 1960 that would help to better clarify the role of Marxism within the profession and to better explain how it was eliminated.

If such a study were done it would most certainly have to include a young Marxist historian by the name of Herbert Montfort Morais. Receiving his doctorate in History from Columbia University, Morais went on to teach at Brooklyn College and publish while being actively involved in the Communist Party. His early work, though informed by Marxism, was well received and in 1934 Columbia University Press published his first book, *Deism in Eighteenth Century America*.

Yet despite his early success, a major academic press never published his work again. This was due largely to the fact that his career in academia was cut short during a two-year span running from 1941 to 1942. It was during this time that he and more than fifty other faculty members were named as Communists during hearings held by a special New York state joint legislative committee known as the Rapp-Coudert Committee. Led by Herbert A. Rapp and Frederic R. Coudert, Jr., the committee’s mission was to determine the cost of public education while exposing “subversive activities” within the educational system. As a result of the committee’s investigation, Morais resigned from his position at Brooklyn College and went on to

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20 Schrecker, 141.
teach at schools run by the Communist Party and to eventually work in the research department of the United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (UE) in mid-1940s.\textsuperscript{24} During this time Morais had two books published by the Communist printer International Publishers Company and went on to publish several more including his most popular, \textit{Labor’s Untold Story}.

First published 1955 and now in its third edition, \textit{Labor’s Untold Story} has reached a remarkable 27 printings.\textsuperscript{25} Billed as “the history of the American people,” \textit{Labor’s Untold Story} presents the history of America’s working class from the mid-nineteenth century to the merger of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in 1955. What is most stunning about Morais and \textit{Labor’s Untold Story}, however, is that despite the book’s popularity a major academic press never published it, nor is Morais well-known.

It is the contention of the author that the primary reason for such obscurity is that the external factor of anti-Communism managed not only to get him fired, but also to push him on the outside fringes of the historical profession. It is for this reason that Morais serves as the perfect case study through which to better understand the effect of anti-Communism on the development of Marxist historical analysis in the U.S. during the twenty-year span from 1940 to 1960. By juxtaposing against Tyrrell’s central thesis that anti-Communism did not have a debilitating effect on the development of Marxist historical analysis within the historical profession, we will move closer to completing the second step in the process towards a better understanding of both the historical profession and the standing of academic Marxism within it.

Thus, the following work signifies the opening remarks on the much-needed argument that anti-Communism \textit{did} have an important impact on the development of the usage of the

\textsuperscript{24} Incidentally, the UE was charged in 1949 with being controlled by communists and expelled from the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). We will return briefly to this point in Chapter IV.

Marxist historical method within the U.S. historical profession. It is by no means a complete study, and much work still needs to be done, but what it does do is to get this previously absent argument up to the point where additional case studies can be added to solidify it. In this regard, the reader is encouraged to imagine that the argument is being built like a house. First, an examination of Tyrell’s thesis and an assessment of Marxist historiography in the U.S. leading up to 1940 (Chapter 1) combine to lay the foundation of the house. Then, a sweeping study of the anti-Communist fervor that was building in America, the government response, and the common perceptions about Communists that fueled it (Chapter 2) are erected as the house’s frame. Next, having a frame within which to place it, another sweeping examination of anti-Communistic attacks on the academy are examined so as to better illustrate the impact felt on the academy as a whole (Chapter 3). In this way the plumbing, electrical lines, and roof are put into place and all that is left is to furnish the house so that it is complete. Thus lastly, using documents of Morais’s related to his experience with Rapp-Coudert and his publications, the case study of the Rapp-Coudert Committee and the career of Herbert M. Morais (Chapter 4) are seen as just some of the furnishings of the house, with many more still to be added before the argument can be considered complete.

Henceforth, this study should be seen as just a small portion of the work that still needs to be done. That being said, Morais’s career begins the process by which we can see not only that Marxist historians did exist in the 1940s and ‘50s, but that it was external pressures, not internal ones, that forced them further to the fringe of academia, not internal ones. However, before the case study can be brought to the forefront, before the house can be furnished, it is first necessary to lay concrete and form the foundation upon which to build the rest of the argument. Therefore, we begin in the first chapter with the thesis put forth by Tyrrell in The Absent Marx.
Chapter 1

The Internalist Argument of Ian Tyrrell

After reading Ian Tyrrell’s *The Absent Marx* one reviewer commented that the work, while important, fell short because its “emphasis is clearly on a dynamic internal to the discipline” at the expense of the external.\(^1\) This, of course, should be of no surprise to the reader as we have already briefly pointed out Tyrrell’s seeming disregard for the significance of external conditions. However, it is of importance to us that we take time to outline Tyrrell’s argument. As stated in the introduction, the process by which we can begin to uncover the reasons for the lack of “scientific socialist” history in the American historical profession is two-fold.\(^2\) In light of the fact that I believe Tyrrell’s work to be the first step in this process, it is only fitting that the first chapter be devoted to him. Henceforth, we will now discuss *The Absent Marx: Class Analysis and Liberal History in Twentieth-Century America.*

A Lack of Scientific Socialism

Tyrrell opens *The Absent Marx* with the exclamation that professional historians in the United States have “tended to equate the Marxist tradition with the crudities of revolutionary sloganeering,” and to that end used the Progressive model of history to strip class analysis “of its

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2. The term “scientific socialist” is being used at times instead of “Marxist historical analysis” not just for the sake of smoother reading. This was the term used by Engels when he referred to historical materialism. In his book *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Engels wrote that one could reach back into the past and empirically observe the march towards Socialism. To this end, it was the job of intellectuals and others to write history that theoretically expressed the proletariat’s historical mission to destroy capitalism. He called this historical expression and its theory, historical materialism, “scientific socialism.” Though today no one would argue that this brand of history is scientific by any means, Communists during the time period examined in this thesis would have seen it this way and as such, the term seems appropriate for this endeavor. See, Frederick Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, trans. Edward Aveling (New York: International Publishers Co., Inc, 2004).
intellectual context of political economy.”³ In doing this, Tyrrell laments the profession’s inability until the mid-1960s to make use of Marxist analysis as a lens from which to view the past. Up to that point, he writes, U.S. historians had missed out on the “investigation of hegemonic ideologies, of the cultural dimensions of class, of the complexities of social formation” and other phenomena in history that could be better exposed and analyzed via scientific socialism.⁴

Tyrrell maintains that the key to account for this gulf in scholarship is to focus on the internal development of historical methods within the profession. Though he freely admits that McCarthyism had a plausible impact on the field, he strongly states that anti-Communism is not enough to explain the lack of scientific socialism in the histories published between 1940 and the mid-1960s.⁵ Instead, he asserts, one must dive deep into the history of the profession as it developed for it is only there that one can find the real reason scientific socialist analysis never flourished.

He begins with the emergence of the “Scientific School” of U.S. historians in the 1880s. Inspired by the historical method used in Germany, they perceived the discipline of history to be a science like biology. If based solely in facts, history would lead to interpretations that would reveal a universal past based solely in truth and void of philosophical inquiry. Leaders of this school, such as Herbert Baxter Adams, felt therefore that the best way to uncover the past was to focus on questions involving the evolution of institutions and political history at-large.⁶ At its core, the central idea was that human progress was linked to the advancement of institutions and

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³ Tyrrell, 4-5.
⁴ Ibid., 5.
⁵ Ibid., 7.
⁶ See Novick, 21-46; Higham, History, 87-104.
as facts became available historical truth would appear. This method remained prevalent until the 1920s when the Scientific historians came under challenge by a group of younger historians who saw the American past in relation to the many progressive reform movements that had taken place throughout the history of the nation.

Labeled the “Progressive School,” these men “sought to put history to work for the social good by investigating the social and economic roots of abstract ideas.” As Ernst A. Breisach wrote, they saw the course of human history to be embodied in advancement and as such “they also wished to know which forces propelled human events along that path of progress…to guide history along its proper course.” In other words, they sought not just to update scholarship but also to inspire their readers to reform the institutions of the United States at the same time. This was achieved by portraying the nation as having always been divided in conflict.

Whether it was conflicts between liberals and conservatives, city-dwellers and farmers, or the rich and the poor Progressives saw America as a nation that struggled internally only to reach an agreement and (in a sense) be reborn through democratic reform. Tyrrell views Progressive historians as vitally important to the development of the American historical method because they strengthened U.S. historiography in a way that placed barriers around it, making the penetration of scientific socialist analysis particularly hard. Paramount to this process was the historian Charles A. Beard.

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7 Tyrrell, 15-16.
8 Ibid., 16; Two extremely helpful works about the Progressive School are Richard Hofstadter’s classic study The Progressive Historians and Ernst A. Breisach’s excellent book American Progressive History. For more see Richard Hofstadter, The Progressive Historians: Turner, Beard, Parrington (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968); Ernst A. Breisach, American Progressive History: An Experiment in Modernization (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993).
9 Breisach, 78.
10 Ibid., 43.
11 Rapson, 1; Also see Higham, History, 171-212.
12 Tyrrell, 19.
Born in 1874, Beard saw economic forces as the primary energy that moved society forward. This was best reflected in his 1913 book *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*, in which he argued that the Constitution was molded by men whose economic well-being was negatively affected by the Articles of the Confederation. Consequently, Beard argued that the Constitution was primarily the result of a struggle between economic interests, not philosophical wisdom as was usually thought and portrayed. At first glance we could mistake this for historical materialism. However this presumption is destroyed and Tyrrell’s assertion about the Progressives strengthened upon further investigation into Beard’s influences.

As noted by Tyrrell, Beard and many other Progressives were influenced by Edwin R. A. Seligman’s 1902 book *The Economic Interpretation of History*. In this work, Seligman argued that Marx’s historical materialism and the economic interpretation of history were separate ideas that only appeared to be similar at a cursory glance. He wrote that,

We might agree that economic factors primarily influence progress; we might conclude that social forces rather than individual whim, at the bottom make history; we might perhaps even accept the existence of class struggle; but none of these admissions would necessarily lead to any semblance of socialism. Scientific socialism teaches that private property in capital is doomed to disappear; the economic interpretation of history calls attention, among other things to the influence which private capital has exerted on progress.

Here, and throughout the book, Seligman was more or less saying that Marx’s own ideas about socialism should not deter someone from applying the economic interpretation of history because it can show the relation of economy to the progression of society (without the socialistic

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15 Ibid., 106.
stigma). In essence, as Richard Hofstadter wrote, such an interpretation illustrated society’s slow progress toward improved conditions. As the moneyed class improved their life, over time it was necessary for the rest of society to improve as well and the resulting democratic struggle between interest groups caused positive reform, a hallmark of Progressive history.

Seligman had an important impact on Beard who, as a result, did not see class in Marxian terms. Instead, he saw it as a special interest political group in democracy and other Progressives followed suit. The backlash against historical materialism was evident as Frederick Jackson Turner stressed the European origins of Marxian socialism, while James Harvey Robinson and Carl Becker (like Beard) accepted the validity of Seligman’s argument at the expense of scientific socialism. This resistance to scientific socialism’s “foreignness,” and the revolutionary undercurrent that came with it, made its acceptance in the American historical profession extremely difficult. Henceforth the Progressive model of history, with its focus on conflict and progress towards reformed democracy, became the dominant historical method in America until the birth of “Consensus History” after World War II. It achieved this, Tyrrell writes, because it liberally,

Explained history in terms of an interaction of social and economic forces on the one hand and individuals on the other, championed the concept of progress, became allied with the reform impulse in American history and academic life, and advocated the realization of individual freedoms in a democratic setting.

16 In this case and for future reference the usage of the lower case spelling “socialism” refers to the ideas associated with it, where as “Socialism” refers to ideas embodied in a form of government. In the case of “Communist,” this is used to refer to a member of a political party. Therefore, “anti-Communist” would be not only against Communism (as a form of government), but also those ideas and individuals that helped to form the Communist Party.
17 Hofstadter, The Progressive Historians, 198-200; Also see Higham, History, 178-180; Novick, 96; Fitzpatrick, 55-57.
18 Breisach, 105-106.
19 Tyrrell, 22. For more on the origins of Consensus History see Fitzpatrick, 188-194.
20 Tyrrell, 9.
This tendency was further reinforced and then advanced into “Consensus History” during the 1930s and 1940s, due largely to the increased role of historians within the government and public sphere. With the emergence of the New Deal, historians began to shift their focus towards the government. They became involved in various archival projects, worked in numerous New Deal agencies, and were employed by the government to record accounts of World War II. In fact, President Franklin D. Roosevelt was so insistent on their employment that over fifty government agencies established programs utilizing historians over the course of his presidency.\(^{21}\) Overall, it is estimated that around fifty percent of professional historians between the ages of 24 and 40 were directly involved in activities related to the war. Examples include Irving Bernstein, who worked at the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Caroline Ware, who worked in the Office of Price Administration, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., who worked in both the Office of War Information and the Office of Strategic Services.\(^{22}\)

This influx in government employment served two purposes. First, the involvement in New Deal programs reinforced the idea of human history as a story of progress towards a more democratically perfect society. Said differently, Roosevelt’s platform represented the Progressive notion that the U.S. was moving forward through the conflict between interest groups towards the victory of minorities and democracy against the powers of business and the potentially tyrannical majority.\(^{23}\) Secondly, the war helped to nationalize academic history in the United States, eventually resulting in an attachment to the state and a reshaping of historiography. Instead of focusing on the conflict of interest groups leading to democratic reform, historians gradually sought to illustrate the unity of America throughout the past and to write about the

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\(^{22}\) Tyrrell, *Historians in Public*, 187-188.
\(^{23}\) Rapson, 4; See also Fitzpatrick, 53-55.
numerous presidents, legislation, and policies that glorified the country. This attachment was embodied in “Consensus History,” and consequently furthered the marginalization of scientific socialist history in the U.S.

Coming to prominence in the 1950s, Richard Rapson wrote that the Consensus Historians portrayed America as a “homogenous land, [where] the great majority of its people share the same aspirations, and [where]…much of the nation’s stability can be traced directly to the existence of this operative consensus.” Including academic heavyweights like Hofstadter and C. Vann Woodward, the Consensus school rejected economic interpretations of history as too overly deterministic. They also ignored notions of class conflict, viewing them as being unfounded because America did not have the feudalistic heritage of Europe and the resulting social hierarchy. Americans were born free and class warfare simply did not exist in its past.

Promoting an absence of class conflict in history was best embodied in Hofstadter’s book *The Age of Reform*, in which he argued that the major social movements in American history (such as Populism) were more conservative in nature than others might want to admit. Covering the years between 1890 and 1941, he wrote that the political tradition of revolt in the U.S. was never about equality as it had been in Europe. In actuality, it was always about the average citizen being given greater opportunity to obtain wealth that other citizens already had. The tradition of agitation was about expanding one’s opportunity to achieve wealth in the current

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24 Tyrrell, *Historians in Public*, 156.

25 Rapson, 1; Of these historians Novick wrote, “‘Consensus’ became the key word in postwar attempts to produce new interpretative framework for American history, focusing attention on what had united Americans rather than what had divided them.” Novick, 333; For more see Novick, 333-335.


system, not to tear it down and reconstruct it in a more humane manner. Therefore, the roots of this agitation lay in conservatism and traditional liberalism, not radical thought.\textsuperscript{28}

These historians also continued to box out scientific socialism by applying social science techniques, like those used in sociology, to their historical analysis. Admitting that history could be relative to the time in which it was written, Consensus historians began to employ concepts and methods from the social sciences in the hope that they would help to firm up the empirical foundations of the discipline, as well as to better illuminate historical problems. These techniques were also encouraged to help combat emerging notions that history had little to no significance for society.\textsuperscript{29} For Tyrrell, these techniques further shielded the discipline from scientific socialist distinctions by allowing historians to examine realities such as social class without having the word “class” be loaded with radical connotations.\textsuperscript{30} As he observes, “if social science helped to guard the liberal tradition against the influence of reactionary forms of empiricism, it also served to preempt the chance that more radical methodologies might take root.”\textsuperscript{31}

Hence, by the end of the 1950s the historical discipline was firmly entrenched. Through its internal development the profession became attached to positivist notions of the American past and the democratic institutions associated with it. Whether they perceived the murky years gone by as a story of competing interest groups struggling democratically or a legacy of unity and progress, the techniques employed by the Progressive and Consensus historians ensured that scientific socialism remained on the fringe of the profession. Rejected by the internal

\textsuperscript{28} An example: Monopolies stunt economic opportunity for others, thus they must be regulated so that others have an open door to make their way towards wealth and prosperity via hard work and ingenuity. See Hofstadter, \textit{The Age of Reform}, 10-18.
\textsuperscript{29} Novick, 387.
\textsuperscript{30} Tyrrell, \textit{The Absent Marx}, 94-101.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 101; For the emergence of social science into history and the resulting mini-crisis, Novick, 382-387.
development of the discipline, those scientific socialist historians that remained were suppressed into irrelevancy by anti-Communism, largely in the form of McCarthyism. Though Tyrrell admits that McCarthyism set back scientific socialist histories and stunted their growth, the reader may recall that he firmly believes that a “reliance on McCarthyism is not enough to explain why in America there was not a Marxist slant.” However, now that we have outlined his argument we can see that Tyrrell’s assumption that internal forces are stronger than external ones is perhaps unfounded.

Any doubt is only reinforced by his evaluation of the scholarship that did exist during the decade leading up to the 1940s and 50s. As Tyrrell notes, the 1930s saw the publication of numerous scientific socialist histories. That being said, these histories are insignificant to Tyrrell because they were mostly written by what he refers to as “political journalists, trade union activists, and untenured faculty rather than established scholars.” Though they used terms such as “class” and “capitalism,” Tyrrell maintains that they followed Beard in using economic interpretation as a lens to view the past and in doing so embraced the liberal-democratic historiography already in place. In addition, most of these individuals were members of the Popular Front.

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33 Novick also briefly mentions these works, writing that there were notable scientific socialist works by Louis Hacker, W. E. B. DuBois, and Roger Shugg; See Novick, note 71, 249; We will briefly address these in the next section, but it is important to note that Shugg’s work *Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana* is commonly mistaken by Novick, Fitzpatrick, and others to be a scientific socialist analysis when in reality it is not. One must only look at the preface of the 1968 reprint where he writes: “The title…has misled so many readers into expecting the book to be a neo-Marxian study of local history, even though I warned them in my original preface that I had no such purpose or intention. My first choice of a title for this book was "The Plain People of Louisiana," but a librarian who read the manuscript told the publisher that he would classify it as sociology, not history…[so] with the brashness of youth, I adopted the librarian's phrase as my title.” See Roger W. Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana: A Social History of White Farmers and Laborers During Slavery and After, 1840-1875* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), xi.
34 Tyrrell, *The Absent Marx*, 32.
35 Ibid., 30; These leftists, in all fields tried to “make Marxism compatible with America’s intellectual tradition…The attempt to make Marxism the logical extension of traditional progressive values may have set political theory [alone] back fifty years.” Diggins, 152.
Enacted by the Communist International (Comintern) in 1935, the Popular Front implored Communists to unite with Socialists and liberals against the dangers of Fascism, as well as to support American democracy and embrace patriotism. In response, historians in the American Popular Front embraced the same movements for democracy and individual rights that Progressive historians did. Moreover, the sheer volume of works produced by Progressive scholars meant that Popular Front historians relied on these Progressive publications for empirical data, causing subsequent Popular Front historians to often reach similar conclusions. As a result, these historians were largely ignored and, to make matters worse, new radical ideas from Italy and Germany that could have become influential were blocked by the emergence of Fascism. Finally, the potential impact from the influx of immigrant radical Jewish scholars, largely in the form of the Marxist Frankfurt School at Columbia, was severely blunted because most of their publications were in German and they typically stayed clear of American academia.

The end result was that these “unprofessional” scientific socialist works were largely neglected, making their authors easier to target and suppress for their supposed subversive political activities. Still, I would argue that neglect and persecution does not signal destruction, as evidenced by the emergence of “New Left” historiography in the 1960s, which contained

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36 Diggins, 174; The Comintern, Communist International, or Third International was an international Communist organization that was founded by the Soviet Union in 1919. The organization would hold World Congresses in which Communist Party members from all around the world would attend. At these congresses, various objectives and plans would be outlined for the world-wide Communist movement.

37 As Diggins commented, “To a large extent the deradicalization of intellectuals was a result of the impact of European totalitarians upon American political thought.” Ibid., 191.

38 Tyrrell, _The Absent Marx_, 32-33; Martin Jay, the historian of the Frankfurt School, sums up nicely the affect had from the schools insistence on publishing in German and remaining isolated: “The costs this entailed were obvious. Although often in some contact with the regular faculty at Columbia, the Frankfurt School remained generally outside the mainstream of American academic life…the Institu off from potential allies in the American intellectual tradition.” See Martin Jay, _The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research 1923-1950_ (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), 289.

39 Diggins, 174.
distinctly Marxist elements.\textsuperscript{40} I would also argue that these early works were more important than Tyrrell may believe them to be.

It is necessary that a moment be taken to review several of the scientific socialist works published in the 1930s. We must do this because they prove two important points moving forward. The first is that they illustrate how non-professional and professional historians alike were publishing scientific socialist history in the 1930s. This establishes a base from which to examine the second point, which is that anti-Communism helped to suppress the development of this method of scholarship in the historical discipline more than Tyrrell is willing to admit.

Therefore, we will now complete our internalist study with a glimpse at some of the scientific socialist historical analysis being written in 1930s America.

Scientific Socialist History in the U.S., 1930-1940

As mentioned above, both Tyrrell and Novick make note of histories written in the 1930s that contain a scientific socialist slant. Novick, mentioning them in a footnote, says that Marxist history was for the most part non-existent during this period.\textsuperscript{41} Conversely, Tyrrell lists a few histories but debased them as unprofessional and seemingly unimportant as a result.\textsuperscript{42} On the other hand, it is my belief that this is not the case and as such we will briefly examine some of the histories that were written during the decade leading up to the outbreak of anti-Communist fervor.\textsuperscript{43}


\textsuperscript{41} Novick, note 71, 249.

\textsuperscript{42} Tyrrell, \textit{The Absent Marx}, 31-32.

\textsuperscript{43} Leading into this section a special thanks must be given to historian Paul Buhle for his research into earlier Marxist historiography. See Buhle, “American Marxist Historiography, 1900-1940,” 5-36.
One of the first scientific socialist histories of note published in the 1930s was Anthony Bimba’s *The Molly Maguires* (1932). Using trial records and additional primary source material to compose his account, Bimba weaved a compelling narrative about the men “labeled Molly Maguires whom bourgeois and ‘labor’ historians alike have branded murderers and assassins.” With obvious Marxist underpinnings, Bimba portrayed the events surrounding the execution of the Mollies as a battle between miners and coal interests who wished to prevent them from unionizing. With this in mind, he branded the Mollies as “martyrs of the class struggle…in the first major class battle in American labor history.”

Though Bimba was not a professional historian, *The Molly Maguires* was not his first foray into the ranks of those writing history. In 1927 he released the *History of the American Working Class*, a book that Paul Buhle regards as one which “brutalized history in favor of a proper [Communist Party] ‘line.’” Though *The Molly Maguires* may not be a “professionally” written history, or have a sophisticated presentation of historical materialism, it certainly does not butcher the past in the name of a Communist Party (CP) platform. By and large it is a work inspired by Marxism in the vein of what we, with the help of Engels, have defined as scientific socialist history.

One of the most popular non-professionals writing scientific socialist history in the 1930s was Lewis Corey. An Italian immigrant originally named Louis C. Fraina, Corey was an avowed communist until the late 1920s when he became a non-activist publishing works on economically centered topics. His 1934 book *The Decline of American Capitalism* chronicled the steady fall

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45 Bimba, 10.
46 Ibid., 16-17.
48 Ibid., 27
of capitalism in the United States from the 1880s to the 1930s.\textsuperscript{49} Seen as one of “the outstanding economic treatment[s] of America by a Marxist,” Corey argued that capitalism was not going to work its way out of the Great Depression because it could no longer expand to new markets and that this could only mean one thing: the decline of capitalism would continue and the time had come for a new stage of history.\textsuperscript{50}

Throughout the book Corey used references to Marx and his ideas in order to examine how capitalists made money, decided wages, expanded their markets, and used technology to their benefit. In addition, Corey discussed Marxism at length throughout the book and even went as far as to say that Marxism was in fact scientific.\textsuperscript{51} Taking a line in the tradition of scientific socialist thought, he wrote that the bourgeois revolution was necessary because it allowed a new propertied class to achieve power in order to move society closer to the stage of Socialism.\textsuperscript{52} To this end he wrote, “the decline of American capitalism and its class-ideological crisis set in motion the forces preparing a new American, the coming communist, revolution.”\textsuperscript{53}

Corey continued this trend the following year in his book \textit{The Crisis of the Middle Class}, which Buhle says was the most popular “Marxian-oriented” history written during the late 1930s.\textsuperscript{54} Though once again a non-professional history, \textit{Crisis} is significant because of the last chapter entitled “Middle Class and Socialism.”\textsuperscript{55} This chapter holds special interest because of its purpose, which was to explain how Socialism is the most desirable system for middle class individuals. Over the course of the book Corey explained how the middle class helped to create

\textsuperscript{49} Lewis Corey, \textit{The Decline of American Capitalism} (New York: Covici, Friede Publishers, 1934).
\textsuperscript{50} Buhle, “American Marxist Historiography, 28 and Corey, 56-67; This was an obvious reference to historical materialism.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 550.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 544-45.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 541.
\textsuperscript{54} Buhle, “American Marxist Historiography,” 27; Lewis Corey, \textit{The Crisis of the Middle Class} (New York: Covici, Friede Publishers, 1935.)
\textsuperscript{55} Corey, \textit{The Crisis of the Middle Class}, 332-365.
and nourish the modern capitalistic system by promoting the ideas of liberty and democracy. He then explained that despite their desire for more equality, the middle class had been constantly held back by capitalists. This idea comes to a head at the end of the book, in which he extolled the virtues of Marxism and the coming movement towards Socialism. In structuring his book this way we see, just as in *The Decline of American Capitalism*, history being used to inform the proletariat of the possibilities of revolutionary Socialism, just as Engels urged.

Of course, this validates in some ways the definition of scientific socialism that was outlined in the appendix of this thesis. Both the works of Bimba and Corey demonstrate varying levels of understanding in regards to historical materialism and the ideas of Marx. In addition, using a Marxist lens they both strived to inform men and women about their current situation and the promise of what Socialism can hold. More importantly though, for this thesis, is the fact that they both try to inform their readers historically. Despite Tyrrell’s insistence that these histories are invalid due to their “unprofessional” nature, they are scientific socialist histories nonetheless in that they apply the materialist conception of history (albeit a less sophisticated form) as a launching point from which to understand and inform others about the past and future. Tyrrell’s notion is further shattered as we move on to examine some of the histories written that were in fact composed by professionally trained historians.

We begin with W. E. B. DuBois who, having received a doctorate in history from Harvard, produced a notable piece of scientific socialist history in 1935. *Black Reconstruction* began with the idea that the core motivation behind the Civil War was the South’s attempt to break from the spread of industrialism and Northern capital in order to preserve its way of life. DuBois then argued that the war saw a “general strike” in the South, with slaves and poor whites

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56 Ibid., 13-14 and 365.
becoming disenchanted with the war and slowly rebelling against the plantation class. Blacks continued this rebellion during Reconstruction, when with the help of Northern armies they fought against the dying plantation class to establish their own public schools, fight for contracts protecting labor, achieve new voting rights, pull themselves out of poverty, and spread democracy. In the end however, these efforts were thwarted as white laborers, worried about their economic condition, soon aligned with wealthy Southerners against Northern capital and blacks to regain control over their governments. The result was that the plantation class was crushed, black laborers became poorer and locked in debt-ridden peonage, and most importantly the rift was set between white and black labor. This rift was one of the leading events that would affect the development of universal class-consciousness (meaning black-white) among U.S. laborers. Sadly though, as Paul Richards notes, we do not often think of DuBois as a Marxist historian and it is hard to judge how his writing may have impacted the historical profession at the time because of the “widespread practice among profession historians of ignoring the contributions of black writers.”

Still, scientific socialist history continued to be written and a few years after Black Reconstruction International Publishers Company released two books in 1937 under the series title “A History of the American People.” These books were Jack Hardy’s The First American Revolution and James S. Allen’s Reconstruction: The Battle for Democracy, 1865-1876. As

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59 Ibid., 80-81.
60 Ibid., 219, 325-430 and 669.
61 Ibid., 130-131.
62 Ibid., 487-579. “It as not until after the period which this book treats that white labor in the South began to realize that the had lost a great opportunity, that when they united to disfranchise the black laborer they had cut the voting power of the laboring class in two.” Ibid., 353.
Buhle points out, both histories were written during the early years of the Popular Front when Communists were not only attempting to create a historiography that challenged Fascism, but also painting Communism as the logical extension of America’s democratic traditions. Hardy’s *The First American Revolution* reexamined the American Revolution with special emphasis on class, as it was the “underprivileged masses who took arms to secure freedom.” It recounted their heroic fight for “a dream of democracy which has never been realized” and argued that the revolution was spurred on by merchant capitalists. At the end the potential of the narrative is weakened because Hardy, as Buhle noted, overstretched himself in creating analogies linking the Revolutionary leaders to Lenin and Earl Browder, at the time the leader of the CP in the U.S. In addition, Hardy also used the last chapter to convince readers that the American Revolution was about the people progressing to a better life, but as of 1937 capitalism had ceased to be useful in continuing the processes begun by the Revolution. It was a “declining stage” that must be swept aside by the inheritors of the American tradition: the proletariat. Yet despite its obvious hyperbole, the book was an attempt to produce scientific socialist history nonetheless, only to be outdone by James S. Allen’s book on Reconstruction.

In *Reconstruction: The Battle for Democracy, 1865-1876* Allen depicted Reconstruction as the second step in a two-fold process of ushering in a new stage of history. More complex and less populist than Hardy, Allen illustrated his understanding of and belief in the materialist conception of history throughout the volume. In short, he wrote that the Civil War was the first step in the process to secure the future for industry. Through the violence of the war chattel

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66 Hardy, 127.
67 Ibid., 96.
68 Buhle, “American Marxist Historiography,” 22 and Hardy, 126.
69 Hardy, 127-128.
slavery was destroyed, leaving room for a political struggle to take place in which the industrial capitalists of the North sought to consolidate their control of the South. Once this was achieved, the industrial kings of the era were then free to usher in the next stage of human history: industrial capitalism.\(^\text{70}\) In addition, Allen investigated the various class dynamics throughout the period, concluding that the conflict and resulting political struggle made America more democratic and thus should be considered an important chapter in America’s revolutionary and democratic heritage.\(^\text{71}\) Clearly, Allen’s understanding of historical materialism was more involved than Hardy’s and as a result his history is the better of the two. However, one must wonder what accounts for this.

We do not know much about Hardy, and it is likely that the name “Jack Hardy” was a CP member alias. But we do know that James S. Allen was an instructor in Pennsylvania before he became an activist, and we can only tentatively assume that his book is better as a result of his academic training and experience. Still, Tyrrell dismisses Allen’s book as having been written by an unestablished, untenured ex-faculty member who had only the Popular Front’s ideals in mind and no intention of producing a complex Marxist history.\(^\text{72}\) However, we should not discount the possibility that Allen could have been an established academic if he wanted to continue teaching. In addition, we have seen that Reconstruction was a more sophisticated treatment of history through a Marxist lens, and as such it readily applies as a Marxist history based on our definition of scientific socialism. Even more compelling, though detrimental to Tyrrell’s argument, is the involvement of the editor of the two volumes: Richard Enmale.

Enmale was an established historian considered knowledgeable in the field of U.S. History. By 1937 he had already edited three books, including a collection of letters and essays

\(^{70}\) Allen, 207.
\(^{71}\) Ibid., 208.
\(^{72}\) Tyrrell, The Absent Marx, 32.
written by Marx and Engels on the U.S. Civil War. Most notably, in 1934, he published a well-received book through Columbia University Press.\(^{73}\) The problem though is that his real name was not Richard Enmale, which was only his CP pseudonym. His actual name was Herbert M. Morais, the subject of the case study of this thesis, and his involvement serves as proof that established historians were producing scientific socialist histories. Moreover, by 1940 there were other established or soon-to-be established historians producing similar works.

Irving Mark, a professor at Brooklyn College with Morais, published *Agrarian Conflicts in Colonial New York, 1711-1775* in 1940, which depicted a struggle between various classes over property as one of the key causes of strife during the century.\(^{74}\) Louis M. Hacker, economic historian and future dean at Columbia University, wrote and published *The Triumph of American Capitalism: The Development of Forces in American History to the End of the Nineteenth Century* the same year.\(^{75}\) Hacker, an avowed Marxist at the time, used *The Triumph of American Capitalism* to illustrate how capitalism stunts the growth of democracy.\(^{76}\) He even went as far as to have a chapter asking if capitalism had been good for America, reaching the conclusion that in the long-term it had not. Coupled with these histories were ones written by CP members, an example being Bruce Minton and John Stuart’s *The Fat Years and the Lean*, which reinterpreted the New Deal in the same vein as earlier scientific socialist histories from the 1930s.\(^{77}\)

There were also academic journals dedicated to scientific socialism created in the 1930s. *Science & Society* was founded in 1936 by Communist academics and still operates today. The

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\(^{76}\) Buhle, “American Marxist Historiography,” 27.

journal initially focused on all disciplines, with historical pieces being written by Mark, Morais, and a young Herbert Aptheker.\(^78\) However, by 1939 the journal had come under pressure because of its perceived failure to attack enemies of the Popular Front. When merged with the added weight from those demanding that the journal take a line closer to the Soviet Union, most of the academic Left had “withered away” so that by 1940 there existed no historian on the editorial board who did not comply with the party line.\(^79\) Even then, the journal hosted an important international debate in the 1950s on the transition from feudalism to capitalism between Marxist economist Maurice Dobb, American Marxist economist Paul Sweezy, and numerous other Marxist historians such as Rodney Hilton, Georges Lefebvre, and Christopher Hill.\(^80\)

Other journals include the Marxist Quarterly, Partisan Review, and The Modern Quarterly. The Partisan Review (1934) and The Modern Quarterly (1933) were more literary, political, and sociological than historical in their content, but they constituted part of a tradition of scientific socialist thought that was brewing in the 1930s academic and intelligentsia scene.\(^81\) Hacker, Corey, and other intellectuals such as George Novack founded the Marxist Quarterly around the same time. Novack and Hacker published a few historical essays; however the journal collapsed after a few issues when its chief financial backer pulled out his money and redirected it into the vault of Science & Society.\(^82\)

During this decade two young Marxist-oriented historians were also coming out of graduate school. One, Aptheker, graduated from Columbia University and went on to produce scientific socialist histories in the 1940s and 50s that focused on African Americans. Joining the

\(^{78}\) Buhle, “American Marxist Historiography,” 22-23.
\(^{79}\) Ibid., 23; It should be noted however that the journal recovered and to this day remains the flagship Marxist journal in America.
\(^{82}\) Ibid., note 37, 34.
Communist Party in 1939, Aptheker’s political views and scientific socialist history without a doubt prevented him from getting a job.\textsuperscript{83} Though he continued to publish books and articles in journals such as the \textit{Journal of Negro History}, it was not until 1969 that he would receive a full-time appointment.\textsuperscript{84} The other graduate student, Philip S. Foner, suffered a similar fate.

Receiving his doctorate in history from Columbia, along with his brother Jack, Philip went on to secure an appointment at City College by the end of the decade.\textsuperscript{85} His career as an educator was cut short, however, during the Rapp-Coudert hearings, after which he lost his appointment and could not get a full-time position for over twenty years.\textsuperscript{86} Just like Aptheker though he continued to write and produce scientific socialist histories like his ten-volume study of U.S. labor, which began with his 1947 publication \textit{History of the Labor Movement in the Untied States, from Colonial Times to the Founding of the American Federation of Labor}.\textsuperscript{87}

Because of their beliefs, these men and others lost promising careers in academia and were pushed to the fringe of the historical profession. While their work certainly wasn’t ignored, they were heavily criticized for their overt use of the scientific socialist lens. Still, they soldiered on and were revived in the 1960s by a new cohort of historians who saw them as “heroic predecessors in the struggle to advance a more politically engaged and inclusive history.”\textsuperscript{88}

When combined with the select publications mentioned above these men form a collective of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{83} Aptheker was such a devoted communist that he wrote the CPUSA’s official defense of the Soviet Union’s invasion of Hungary in 1956. See Novick, 422.
\item \textsuperscript{84} Fitzpatrick, 222-226; His first full-time appointment was at Bryn Mawr College. Aside from this, he held a few part-time positions at smaller institutions like the Bronx Community College.
\item \textsuperscript{85} It should be noted that Morais, Aptheker, and Foner all received their doctorates at Columbia University. As far as I am aware a study has yet to be produced that collectively examines these individuals and their experiences during graduate school. One is badly needed, as they could be called the first collective of Marxist historians in the United States and in the process provide perhaps the strongest link between the radical historians of the 1930s and those of the 60s.
\item \textsuperscript{86} Fitzpatrick, 226-227; These are the same hearings that caused Morais to lose his job and will feature prominently in our case study in chapter four.
\item \textsuperscript{88} Fitzpatrick, 223.
\end{itemize}
individuals and historical publications that were scientific socialist in both their method and interpretation. Through them we see that despite Tyrrell’s insistence, not only was scientific socialist history being written, but also professionally trained historians were actively taking part in this historiographical movement.

Still, we must not exaggerate their significance. These studies were on the fringe of the mainstream profession. But of course, this then begs the question as to why the fledgling movement sputtered so quickly and then all but disappeared from academia in the 1940s and 50s. Though we must concede to Tyrrell in the fact that it was hard for them to gain strong footing, as their method was not fully accepted by the profession at large, it would be folly to assume that this alone led to the complete ostracism of Marxist historical analysis from the academy. Just a cursory glance at the careers of Aptheker and Foner illustrate the power that external forces like anti-Communism can have on the lives of academics. Hence, in truth, the internalist argument of Tyrrell has taken us as far as it can go in explaining the gulf of scientific socialist history in the 1940s and 50s. If we are to fully understand what happened, we must now break with Tyrrell and look externally to the specter of anti-Communism, the force of which set scientific socialist history back for twenty years.
Chapter 2

The Externalist Argument Part I: Anti-Communism

In America the majority raises very formidable barriers to the liberty of opinion: within these barriers an author may write whatever he pleases, but he will repent it if he ever step beyond them. Not that he is exposed to the terrors of an auto-da-fé, but he is tormented by the slights and persecutions of daily obloquy. His political career is closed forever, since he has offended the only authority which is able to promote his success. Every sort of compensation, even that of celebrity, is refused to him. Before he published his opinions he imagined that he held them in common with many others; but no sooner has he declared them openly than he is loudly censured by his overbearing opponents, whilst those who think without having the courage to speak, like him, abandon him in silence. He yields at length, oppressed by the daily efforts he has been making, and he subsides into silence, as if he was tormented by remorse for having spoken the truth.

Alexis de Tocqueville

Democracy in America, 1835

1. What is Communism?
A conspiracy to conquer and rule the world by any means, legal or illegal, in peace or in war.

2. Is it aimed at me?
Right between your eyes.

House Committee on Un-American Activities

100 Things You Should Know About Communism Series, 1949

Returning to France after having toured the United States in the early nineteenth century, Alexis de Tocqueville set to work on his penetrating analysis of a fledgling nation still finding itself in the wake of the battle for independence and the creation of a solid working government. Among many other insights written in this still highly-regarded book, entitled De la démocratie en Amérique (Democracy in America), is his observation of the “little true independence of mind

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and freedom of discussion” that existed throughout the country. As seen in the lengthy quotation above, Tocqueville was particularly interested in the power the majority had over the nation in regards to individual liberty of opinion. More specifically, he clearly alludes to the majority’s ability to stifle politically unorthodox individuals while pushing them to the fringes of society.

Tocqueville’s assessment was not unique; the student of history in the twenty-first century need not look hard for examples of societal and governmental backlash against politically unorthodox individuals in the United States. Whether it was attacks on radical labor movements like the International Workers of the World (IWW), political organizations like the Socialist Party, or radical immigrants, it is safe to say that politically unorthodox Americans have long been viewed with a feeling of uneasiness (warranted or not) by the majority and those serving in Washington.

Still, conceivably no episode in recent history better depicts this uneasiness than the Cold War that unfolded between the U.S. and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) from the end of World War II until the Soviet collapse in 1991. At its core a conflict of ideologies, the ensuing struggle created an atmosphere in which failing to conform ideologically could cost someone their job, see them branded a traitor, or worst of all land them in one of Stalin’s forced labor camps. And though no one in the U.S. was forced into a labor camp, people did lose their

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3 Tocqueville, 306.
5 As Chris Harman notes, “Anyone in either camp who dared to oppose this monstrosity [by speaking out against their government’s policies] could expect to be labeled a supporter—or even an ‘agent’—of the other.” Chris Harman, A People's History of the World (London: Verso, 2008), 546.
jobs, were blacklisted, and had their lives altered forever by the anti-Communist hysteria that swept across the nation under the catch-all phrase of “McCarthyism.”

Among those caught in this wave of repression against political unorthodoxy were American academics. Brought before Congressional and State investigative committees these individuals were persecuted for past membership in the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA). Most refused to speak on First and Fifth Amendment grounds and were then issued contempt and/or perjury charges by Congress. Once such action had been taken, the defendant in question was re-investigated by his academic institution, then promptly fired for incompetence and blacklisted. Though Ian Tyrrell vastly downplays the affects of the anti-Communist hysteria, the truth is that it led to the final decimation of the study and usage of Marxism in the academy and resulted in this form of analysis being shut out of the historical profession until the early 1960s.

However, before we can begin our discussion of anti-Communism and the academy, we must first set the stage. This chapter, using a wide variety of secondary literature and some primary sources, will do so as it provides a short overview of the CPUSA and the actions taken by the government to control Communism. Initially this may some like an unnecessary step, but if we are to better understand what happened to Morais and other academics it important to first grasp the larger picture of what happened between 1940 and 1960 beforehand. Subsequently, it will be easier to put into context what happened to academics. If anything, the following also demonstrates what can happen to a democratic nation when the majority jettisons reason in favor of fear and turns on its fellow citizens.

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6 Though rightly identified with the actions of Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy, scholars who study anti-Communist repression in the United States use the term “McCarthyism” when referring to all “mid-century varieties of extremist anti-communism, generally attended by forms of political repression” from c.1935 to c.1960 or even later; Richard M. Fried, *Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 223.
The Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA)

In their almost apocalyptical book *What We Must Know About Communism*, Harry and Bonaro Overstreet warned that the free world was being haunted by the specter of Communism and it was the responsibility of every American citizen to educate themselves so they could then be prepared to do “what needs to be done.” Yet, was there an actual conspiracy taking place? Moreover, what exactly was the Communist Party and what did it do to incur such persecution? To answer these questions, this brief section will examine the Communist Party in America from 1930 to the start of its heavy persecution after World War II.

From the beginning, Communism in America was up against a wall. Emerging from the struggling Socialist movement disgruntled left-wingers broke off in 1919 to form their own, more revolutionary, parties. The first, the Communist Party (CP), was composed of mostly foreign-language groups while the second, the Communist Labor Party (CLP), was composed entirely of non-immigrant Americans. Naturally the two parties began to fight, with the CP labeling the CLP as a sham party because of its non-existent immigrant membership. How could the CLP claim to be the party of the proletariat when nearly sixty percent of wage laborers in the U.S. were of foreign origin? They could not, charged the CP, and only the foreign-language

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7 Harry Overstreet and Bonaro Overstreet, *What We Must Know About Communism* (New York: Pocket Books, Inc, 1960), x.
8 Theodore Draper wrote the definitive studies of the early years of the CPUSA in the late 1950s and early 1960s. They are extremely detailed and, as a result, extremely dense. See Theodore Draper, *The Roots of American Communism* (New York: The Viking Press, 1957) and Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia: The Formative Years* (New York: The Viking Press, 1960).
dominated CP was in the position to properly represent the masses. While these two competed with each other, the Red Scare began to whip up hysteria about politically unorthodox individuals and the political parties they called home.

Slowly emerging from the wake of World War I, the American public turned its animosity away from Germany and toward Bolshevism. Calling for the worldwide destruction of capitalism, historian Robert K. Murray noted that Bolshevism “ran counter to all accepted American traditions of political philosophy and economy.” Political unorthodoxy soon became a warning sign that someone could be a potential Bolshevik, and a very concerned federal government used every conceivable outlet to spread this idea amongst the population. In a short amount of time it seemed that everyone was taking the government’s lead. On every level of society, from anti-union capitalists and politicians to white supremacists and war veterans, groups were exploiting the public’s fears in order to achieve their own ends. Labor strikes were characterized by authorities as plots lead by radicals to dislodge the current government, immigrants were viewed as even more dangerous than before as the primary offenders in spreading these radical ideas, and unorthodox political parties like the CP and CLP came under siege.

It was a dangerous time, culminating in the January Raids of 1920 led by Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer. An organized effort to deport politically unorthodox individuals like Communists and anarchists, the Raids came on the heels of a series of arrests in November of a year prior. Over the span of three months more than 2,000 people were deported, including 249

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10 Murray, 34.

11 Ibid., 58.

12 Ibid., 103 and 165.
anarchists on the ship Buford in late 1919. Of the 249 exiled, the majority of them had never committed an illegal act against the country. It was their belief system, their thoughts, which got them into trouble, not their actions. This is an important distinction to remember as we move into the mid-twentieth century where academics and others were consistently persecuted on the basis of what can be called, for all intents and purposes, Orwellian “thought crime.” For the two Communist parties the raids could not have come at a worse time. Already struggling to retain members because of infighting, the Red Scare sent them underground and running for shelter. Now hemorrhaging members, losing over 25,000 in just four short months, the two parties decided to fuse and became the United Communist Party (UCP) in May 1920. All too characteristically however, this happy union was short lived as 8,000 Slavic members broke off to form a new Communist Party soon after. Moscow tried to unite the two parties in 1921, but its efforts failed as additional minor sects continued to spring up, such as the Industrial Communists, which later became known as the Proletarian Socialist Party.

The raids also helped to develop paranoia of sorts among Party members. From that point on it was accepted procedure that individuals would keep their membership secret from the public at large. Looking back, we know now that their insistence on secrecy was one of the things that made them look so sinister to the general public and the government. But at the time, it was seen as an important shield against societal persecution, even if it kept them on the outside. It was more important that the movement survive than anything else.

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13 It is a testament to the level of hysteria that 250 soldiers guarded these 249 individuals during the voyage. Ibid., 207.
14 Ibid., 207.
15 Draper, The Roots of American Communism, 197-209.
16 Ibid., 206.
17 Bell, 124-126.
After a few years in hiding it was decided that the underground Communists should come up for air. In 1923 they managed to create an extension organization aboveground known as the Workers’ Party of America. Its successes were minuscule, though, as factional infighting continued between those who wanted to create a mass party and those who wanted to maintain revolutionary orthodoxy. By order of the Comintern, one faction led by Jay Lovestone was expelled from the party in 1928 for not sticking with the international line that the collapse of capitalism was eminent everywhere. The same year another faction was expelled for being Trotskyist. It was a tumultuous time and for some the future of the Party no doubt seemed to be on shaky footing.

Finally, in 1929 the factions had aligned with the help of the Comintern under the leadership of Earl Browder and William Z. Foster. Their new name, the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA), section of the Communist International, symbolized their affiliation with the worldwide Communist movement under the guidance of the Soviet Union. Still, the years of factionalism kept the CPUSA even further on the fringes of American life than it might have been otherwise. By the time of the merger not only had membership dropped below 8,000, but the majority of members were still foreign born. In addition, the years from 1928 to 1934 were known as the Third Period of International Communism, when the Comintern insisted that parties keep their doctrine pure of outside influences and focus on the “imminent collapse of capitalism and the coming revolution.” This meant further isolation from the larger political scene and isolation from other elements on the Left like the Socialist Party. There was

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19 Ibid., 13-14.
20 Ibid., 15.
21 Fried, 12.
work to be done if the CPUSA ever wanted to become a force in American politics. The Great Depression gave it the opportunity it craved.

Initially the CPUSA struggled to make an impact in the 1930s because of its assumption that the Depression would bring on the collapse of capitalism and lead to the revolution of the proletariat. Though it was active in social movements searching for solutions to help those out of work and to end racial discrimination, it did so under the belief that labor would be galvanized to act, when in reality workers’ spirit seemed to weaken. Indeed, “the economic breakdown of capitalism did not free the way to victory: hunger, poverty, and the threat of unemployment undermined any offensive action undertaken by workers.” This changed in the middle of the decade, when Party leaders began to realize that if workers were to ever achieve class-consciousness it would be through a democratic and unionized struggle for reform within the current order, not revolution.

To this end, Communists were an important component to the development and expansion of industrial unionism under the umbrella organization the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), which was first formed in 1935 as an alternative to the American Federation of Labor (AFL). Because of their efforts in organized labor and their more mainstream platform, the CPUSA slowly began to gain trace respectability amongst the voting public. The Party was also lauded for its programs in adult education. An essential component

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22 As Daniel Bell wrote, “The ‘third period’ of American communism—the early depression years—was characterized by aggressive policies of organizing unemployment demonstrations, exacerbating strikes, promoting ex-servicemen’s leagues, and even creating, in imitation of the German communist, a military arm, replete with uniform, called the ‘Red Front.’” Bell, 140.
23 Ottanelli, 47.
24 Ibid., 135.
26 An example of this platform was the 1932 Presidential election, when the Party reduced its political demands from 130 to six. Among these were calls for the creation of unemployment and social insurance, opposition to wage reduction, promotion of farm relief, and equal rights for African Americans. The results were promising,
to the development of class-consciousness, the Party saw education as a priority and in this regard became one of the early leaders in adult education. Attended by thousands of students, usually workers, schools such as the New York Workers School, Samuel Adams School in Boston, and the California Labor School offered classes in everything from Marxism and economics, to contemporary Europe and a history of the American working class.\textsuperscript{27}

These small gains were further aided by the creation of the Popular Front in 1934. As a response to the growing threat of Fascism, the Comintern instructed all Communist Parties to cut back on their revolutionary rhetoric and work with other political parties. Almost overnight the CPUSA began working with Socialists and liberals. In conjunction with the Democratic Front movement (1937-1939), the CPUSA became supporters of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the previously abhorred New Deal, and “defenders and heirs of bourgeois democracy.”\textsuperscript{28} On the other hand, the bulk of the population still regarded the CPUSA with uneasiness and politicians in Washington repeatedly tried to act against it. For all the good will that the Party tried to create, its previous role as a strictly revolutionary organization had alienated many.

Theodore Draper was correct when he pointed out that the CPUSA was different from other radical parties because of its close affiliation and membership to an international organization.\textsuperscript{29} The doctrine of Communism called for the worldwide revolution of the proletariat. In order to coordinate such efforts Communist parties around the world operated

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\textsuperscript{28} Klehr., 210.

\textsuperscript{29} Draper, \textit{American Communism and Soviet Russia}, 12.
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under the guidance of Moscow, where revolution had successfully established a Communist government. It only made sense. The problem was that part of the ill will towards the Party came from the never-ending fear that it was completely controlled by Moscow and acted on its behalf. An old joke about the Party’s apparent dependence went: “Why is the Communist Party like the Brooklyn Bridge? Both are entirely suspended by cables.”

These anxieties were fueled in 1939 with the signing of the non-aggression treaty between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. Once again, in an effort to stay in line with the worldwide movement, the CPUSA abandoned its Popular Front rhetoric and switched to declarations of peace, non-aggression, and accusations against that the Roosevelt Administration was profiting from the suffering of other nations. Though it did not decrease its still meager membership of around 48,000, momentum began to shift against the Party in Washington. And despite a reprieve due to the wartime alliance between the Soviets and the U.S., once the war ended the CPUSA’s time ran out. Political unorthodoxy would not be tolerated, especially if it had international ties.

Perceptions of the Party

At its height the CPUSA never commanded more than 70,000 members. And yet after the war, one would think based on the political rhetoric coming out of Washington that the still fledgling party had millions of members waiting for the signal to overthrow the government. This was best epitomized in 1947 when the managing editor of *National Republic* magazine,

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30 Fried, 12.
31 The Party did attempt to maintain its alliance with its Popular Front allies, but after Earl Browder was arrested in late-1939 on a passport violation and eventually sent to prison for over a year the Party completed the shift to the Comintern’s policies. Ottanelli, 193-194.
32 Philip J. Jaffe, *The Rise and Fall of American Communism* (New York: Horizon Press, 1975), 11; Though one author lists total Communist membership in the 1930s as between 200,000 and 250,000, most of these individuals joined and then left the Party in under a year. Klehr, 413.
Walter S. Steele, testified before Washington that there were 5,000,000 Communist “tools” in the country!\(^{33}\)

Current events were not in the favor of the Communists either. The Soviet Union was supporting Communist struggles around the world and, in countries such as Greece and Turkey, these movements were threatening to succeed. In 1948, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia took power and the Soviets blockaded Berlin. The following year China fell to Communists under the leadership of Mao Zedong, the Soviets exploded their first atomic bomb, and several months later, in 1950, the Korean War broke out. Domestically, U.S. State Department employee and United Nations official Alger Hiss was accused of espionage in 1948 and was later convicted on perjury charges, proving to many that the government was infested with Communist spies. As if this were not damaging enough, the CPUSA had returned to its “cataclysmic view of social change” and actively opposed U.S. actions abroad (such as the Marshall Plan). In many minds, these actions confirmed its image as a foreign controlled party and assisted its critics who wanted to push it even further onto the political fringes and into literal nonexistence.\(^{34}\)

Aside from current events, those who wanted to marginalize and destroy the CPUSA were also aided by the common perceptions of the time about the Party and its membership. First and foremost, as has been already noted, it was strongly believed that the Party was a tool of the Kremlin. A series of Gallup Polls taken between 1946 and 1949 confirms this fact, with sixty-five percent of the population believing in 1949 that the CPUSA was loyal solely to Moscow.\(^{35}\) Linked to this belief was another popular notion that all Communists were “soldier[s] in an organization,” unable to think for themselves and thus constituting a liability to the security of


\(^{34}\) Ottanelli, 216.

the nation against foreign invasion.\textsuperscript{36} Taking matters a step further, one notorious study, \textit{Report on the American Communist}, insinuated that a large majority of party members were physically handicapped, had repressed homosexual tendencies, and were by and large “weak, physically unattractive, or emotionally unstable.”\textsuperscript{37} It even went as far as to say that though the CPUSA and the Ku Klux Klan were both sure to attract bigots and hide behind a veil of secrecy, at least the Klansman “supports the cotton industry by using a goodly amount of cloth to preserve his secret.”\textsuperscript{38}

It was also widely believed that New Deal organizations and unions were infested with Communists. On the subject of infiltration into unions, we have already seen that organizing labor was a major priority of the CPUSA and as a result there were in fact many Communists throughout the movement. Hence, it was believed that this involvement in unions placed Communists in a unique position to disable U.S. industry in the event of war. The belief was so strongly held that between 1949 and 1950 the CIO expelled 11 unions for supposedly being dominated by Communists. Though they had once been a major force in the creation and growth of the organization, they were no longer welcome because of the CIO’s desire to stay in the good graces of Washington.\textsuperscript{39} By 1954, 59 out of 100 unions had rules in place preventing Communists from holding office, 41 forbid sympathizers from holding office, and 40 forbid membership by Communists outright.\textsuperscript{40} To make matters worse, for both the Party and those

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{37} Morris L. Ernst and David Loth, \textit{Report on the American Communist} (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1952), 127 and 165.
\item \textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 113.
\item \textsuperscript{40} A Communist “sympathizer” could mean a number of things: it could mean an individual who agreed with a portion of the CPUSA platform, someone who felt sorry for the way its members were being treated, a member of a front organization, or more broadly defined by enemies of the Party it could mean anyone who resisted informing on Party activities or Party members.
\end{itemize}
afraid of it, secrecy was still a major component of Party membership. This meant that anyone could be a Communist; it was impossible to know for sure. As we shall see, it was these fears that led to the first major post-Palmer Raids attack against Communists in 1938.\textsuperscript{41}

Also tied into all these anxieties was the notion that anyone who sympathized with the Party’s platform was also a tool of the Kremlin’s conspiracy to take over the world.\textsuperscript{42} This included “front organizations,” or as the Federal government defined them, any organization that had CPUSA members on the executive board, allowed Communists to speak at its functions, or cooperated with the Party or unions known to be controlled by Communists. It was members of these organizations who made up the largest portion of Steele’s estimation in 1947. Proclaiming that though there were only around 100,000 official members in the Party, which figure was inflated to begin with, there were an additional 4.8 million who belonged to front organizations and presumably did not realize they were pawns of Moscow.\textsuperscript{43} By 1961, the Federal government had identified over 800 organizations and 150 publications that served as fronts for the deceptive business of Communistic conspiracy.\textsuperscript{44}

On the other hand, it bears noting that up until recently scholars have not had access to any proof that the Party was actively trying to infiltrate the government in order to commit treason against it. We do know that as early as 1933, even with the expansion of the government because of New Deal agencies, most Communists that worked for the Federal government were scattered among hundreds of thousands who were not. There were in fact Communist groups concentrated in the Department of Agriculture and the National Labor Relations Board, but these

\textsuperscript{41} Filippelli, 2.
\textsuperscript{42} For an interesting take on the psychological warfare being waged by Communists against U.S. citizens, see House Committee on Un-American Activities, \textit{Communist Psychological Warfare (Brainwashing): Consultation with Edward Hunter}, 85th Cong., 2nd sess., 1958.
\textsuperscript{43} House Committee on Un-American Activities, \textit{Testimony of Walter S. Steele}, 19-20.
groups tried to shift policies left-of-center, not plot to overthrow the government. Conversely, with new documents made available since the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union, we also now know that during the 1940s between 100 and 300 Americans passed on information to the Soviets. That being said, by the end of 1951 there were no functioning American agents spying for the Soviet Union and it is still debatable as to whether the efforts of these spies made any sort of difference in the outcome of world events. Of course it is not the purpose of this thesis to debate such issues, but it is clear that the combined impact of the perceptions listed above caused fears to mount continually. As is to be expected, these ideas and fears permeated into popular culture.

Production studios used the Communist menace to fuel profits and the Federal government used cinema to keep citizens alert to the never-ceasing threat of attack from the Red Menace. An example of Hollywood using public fears for profit was *The Woman on Pier 13*. Released in 1949 it told the story of an ex-CP member who was trying to make a life for himself, only to be threatened by the Party that if he refused to help them destroy worker-employee relations at the Cornwall Shipping Company they would kill him. The movie not only depicted Communists as dangerous, conspiratorial, mobster-types, but it also demonstrated to the public how communism and capitalism were polar opposites that could never co-exist. This was

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47 Ibid., 1863. Schrecker has noted that the only argument that could be clearly made is that information passed to the Soviets helped them explode their first atomic bomb faster. Still, she is quick to point out that specialists agreed even back then that without the help from spies the Soviets would have ended up exploding their first bomb within five years after the bombing of Hiroshima anyway. Ibid., 1886-1889.
accented by the portrayal of the factory as a place where the main character could rebuild his life and the CP as an organization that sought to destroy such opportunities.\footnote{Ibid., 123.}

Perhaps the best example of the government’s usage of media was not released until 1962. \textit{Red Nightmare} was a Warner Brothers picture produced for the Department of Defense and narrated by \textit{The Twilight Zone}’s Jack Webb. In the story, an American by the name of Jerry Dawson had committed the grave error of taking his freedom for granted. Then one day he wakes up to discover that his country has been taken over by the Soviet Union, and it is only then after seeing the horrors of Communism that he realizes the error of his ways.\footnote{Ibid., 121-122.} \textit{Red Nightmare} and other films served to reinforce the grim rhetoric that was coming out of Washington, though it is worth mentioning that later shows like \textit{Get Smart} (1965-1970) and \textit{The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle} (1959-1961) provided citizens with moments of laughter and played on the absurdity of politics during the Cold War.\footnote{Ibid., 6.}

The Government Attacks

Keeping all this in mind, Communists were not laughing in the 1930s when members of Congress began to call for the investigation and isolation of politically unorthodox individuals. In 1930 Hamilton Fish, a Congressman from New York, proposed the creation of a committee to investigate subversive activities by Communists with the intention of having them all deported.\footnote{When a Representative from Iowa voiced his opinion as to whether they should be doing something about employment instead, Fish remarked that when all the Communists were deported there would be plenty of jobs available for out-of-work Americans. Walter Goodman, \textit{The Committee: The Extraordinary Career of the House Committee on Un-American Activities} (Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, Inc, 1969), 6-7.} After six months of investigation the Fish Committee, as it was known, reported that there were around 12,000 members in the CPUSA and perhaps 500,000 sympathizers. It also concluded that
the Party had little to no influence over political and social affairs. And yet, the committee found it necessary to make thirteen recommendations, including legislation that would have made the Party illegal and would have deported all immigrants who were Communists.\textsuperscript{53}

Four years later the McCormack-Dickstein Committee was formed. Named after chairman John McCormack of Massachusetts and vice chairman Samuel Dickstein of New York, the committee set out to investigate Nazi activities in the U.S. In their final report, issued in 1935, they spoke of pro-Hitler groups as well as anti-Semitic organizations such as the Silver Shirts. Amongst many recommendations two became law. The first, made it mandatory to register with the government if you were a foreigner distributing propaganda. The second (and more important) gave subpoena powers to Congressional investigations outside of the District of Columbia.\textsuperscript{54} This newfound power was particularly useful in 1938 when the Special House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) was formed.

By a vote of 191-41 the House of Representatives authorized the creation of a legislative committee to investigate un-American/subversive propaganda. Led by Conservative Democrat Martin Dies, from Texas, the committee used its position to try to embarrass the Roosevelt Administration. Originally a proponent of the New Deal and the deportation of radicals, Dies turned against Roosevelt after the wave of strikes that swept across the country following the 1936-1937 sit-down strike in Flint, Michigan. Along with his fellow committee members, all of whom were against the New Deal, Dies focused on exposing the alleged Communist control of the CIO and various agencies attached to the New Deal.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 8-9.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 11-12.
Formal hearings began in August of 1938 with Dies boasting that Communists and Nazis were already fleeing the country out of fear of the committee.\textsuperscript{56} Though a farfetched claim, the Dies Committee did set important precedents for later HUAC investigations and government actions. For one thing, the manner in which Dies ran the committee ensured that those accused never had an opportunity to reply to any of the allegations being brought against them.\textsuperscript{57} The committee would call up individuals to testify against organizations and individuals, then accept their testimony as fact. They never cross-examined witnesses, nor did they give the accused an opportunity to refute their charges.\textsuperscript{58} That this tactic was accepted with little public dissent set the stage for later unfounded accusations against individuals or, as in the case of McCarthy, the government.

Another important tactic of the Dies Committee was the usage of newspapers to popularize its cause. Dies, and other committees to follow, operated on the assumption that the best way to combat subversives was to expose them. At the time, there was no better way to expand exposure outside of Washington than by using the newspapers to disseminate information about what the committee was doing and its findings. These newspapers willingly complied and printed word for word what the committee was doing without raising questions as to methods or the validity of their findings. Even if they did have doubts the style of reporting “just the facts” saw printers publish exactly what was said, which meant dubious accusations were printed verbatim and taken by the public to be truth.\textsuperscript{59} In addition, many newspaper editors just assumed that if the committee was making charges there had to be truth to them. Why would

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57 Ogden, 102.
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58 Goodman, 32.
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Congress go to the trouble unless something important was going on about which the public needed to know?\textsuperscript{60}

After concluding its investigations in December 1938, the committee issued a report defining all “class, racial and religious intolerance” to be un-American and that any “scheme or philosophy of government or any teaching which embraces all of an essential part of the principles of Communism was un-American.”\textsuperscript{61} When the time came to pass a resolution to continue the committee’s work, a group of lawyers presented a report lambasting Dies’ misuse of the committee as a platform to propagate unfounded charges and for jettisoning the normal requirements by law that investigations be fair.\textsuperscript{62} This did not prevent the committee from obtaining the needed votes to continue operating, however. Representatives spoke highly of the job Dies and others had done to protect America and ignored the lawyers’ complaints. Thus, the following year when hearings resumed the committee announced it would shift its primary focus to an examination of Nazism in America. This may have played well in the papers, but in actuality only a quarter of their hearings dealt with Nazis or Fascists within the nation; the other three-fourths focused on Communism.

The target was squarely on the backs of American Communists and a look at the legislation being passed at the time illustrates this. In just two years three major pieces of legislation were adopted attacking Communists. The Hatch Act of 1939 prevented Communists and other politically unorthodox individuals from government employment. The Voorhis Act of 1940 made it a requirement for groups affiliated with foreign entities to register with the government. Finally, the Smith Act of 1940 forced immigrants to register with the government and made it illegal to advocate or teach “the overthrow of the government or to join any

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 8.
\textsuperscript{61} Ogden, 104.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 111.
organization that did,” thus giving the government the authorization to ignore First Amendment rights to free speech. Between 1948 and 1957 over 100 Party leaders were tried under the Smith Act, 93 of whom were convicted, thus effectively severing the head from the organization. Using the justice system was a key component in the attack against Communists because it helped to facilitate the image that Communists were not dissenting citizens, but rather were criminals.

This legislation and the committee’s activities were extremely popular with the American public, newspapers, fellow conservatives, the AFL, and businessmen alike. So popular was the crusade against Communist influences in labor and the New Deal that Henry Ford offered automobiles for the entire Dies Committee and its staff! These high levels of popularity made it highly unlikely that those in Congress would oppose their methods and each year until 1945, when it was made a permanent committee, HUAC was re-sanctioned to continue its investigations. By 1947 HUAC had helped to establish the idea that Communism was a dangerously subversive doctrine and that the presence of Communists inside the nation was a threat to the very security of the nation itself. This notion was reinforced by the actions of the Truman Administration post-WWII, which responded to Republican attacks of being weak on Communism in ways that further legitimized the anti-Communist crusade.

As David Caute reminds us, by 1947 the Democrats had occupied the White House for over a decade, and as a result of New Deal and Fair Deal policies, the governmental bureaucracy had grown as never before. Embittered, Republicans and their more conservative allies in the

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65 Schrecker, The Age of McCarthyism, 22.
66 Schrecker, Many Are the Crimes, 91.
67 Ibid.
68 Goodman, 225.
Democratic Party sought ways to combat these influences and restore the power of the legislative branch. As it happened, though the war was over the Soviet Union adopted policies around the world that many saw as a direct challenge to America’s place as the model on which the rest of the world should be based.\(^{69}\) It appeared to many that a new war of ideologies was beginning and Communists once again, as before the war, came under scrutiny around the nation.

Republicans seized on this ideological battle the most effectively, openly and frequently criticizing President Truman for being weak on Communism and claiming he was protecting Communists in the government. In an effort to take the wind out of their sails Truman issued Executive Order 9835. Signed in 1947, the order called for an investigation of the federal civil service and led to a purge of individuals who were thought to be currently, or to have been at one time, Communists and disloyal to the nation.\(^{70}\) In addition, Truman issued the now well-known Truman Doctrine, vowing to fight Communism across the world. Finally, with the 1948 presidential election coming up Truman launched an attack against Progressive Party candidate and Communist-supported Henry A. Wallace. For Congress’s part, aside from HUAC and the aforementioned laws, by 1947 six different bills had been introduced that would have destroyed the Party by making it an illegal organization.\(^{71}\) Though none of them passed, the Federal government’s actions, in conjunction with world events, were creating an atmosphere of hysteria about Communism that fed off of itself leading to more and more repressive actions.\(^{72}\) These actions served to further legitimize the anti-Communist crusade and it was not long before employers began to mimic Federal policy. States had already begun doing so.

\(^{70}\) Ibid., 27.  
Referred to as the “little HUACs” by M.J. Heale, these statewide committees sought to replicate the actions of HUAC by informing legislators while shaping public opinion.\textsuperscript{73} Examples of such committees include the Tenney Committee of California, the Broyles Commission of Illinois, and the Canwell Committee of Washington. Far from staying isolated, they actively sought to assist each other. One of the best examples of how anti-communist committees were interconnected was the September 1948 Legislative Conference on Un-American Activities, where strategies to attack Communists were exchanged and Richard Nixon was the guest speaker.\textsuperscript{74}

Of these committees one of the most notorious was the Tenney Committee. Chaired by Senator Jack B. Tenney from 1941 to 1949, the committee operated under a specific set of guidelines that many, if not all of the other, anti-Communist investigations followed and as such it provides a further glimpse into a committee member’s mindset. To begin with, the committee was convinced that Communism was a worldwide conspiracy run by Moscow. The highest objective of this conspiracy was to conquer America and make it exactly like the Soviet Union, meaning that every U.S. Communist and former Communist was a potential traitor trying to infiltrate all levels of society. Therefore, the Party had to be destroyed if the nation was to be saved, and anyone refusing to answer questions must be protecting the Communist plot.

The second assumption was that it was the committee’s job to shape public opinion against Communism to help defeat it. With this in mind the committee used public outlets like newspapers to isolate Communists from normal life. But in the process it began to focus more and more on ex-Party members, fellow travelers, and associates since the number of actual card carrying members was low. Finally, there was the problem of evidence. In order to find


\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 18.
Communists the committee relied on “documentary evidence” that in the minds of the members linked the accused to the CPUSA or various front organizations. The problem was most of this evidence was based upon the interpersonal relations of the individual being investigated, an example being if the accused had a friend who was or had once been in the Party. Other indicators were if the accused had at one time signed a Party petition or was on record as at one time speaking out against the Dies Committee. Moreover, and worst of all, Tenney refused to allow the accused to come before the committee and defend themselves. As we will see with the attacks against academia, there was no way the accused could win.\textsuperscript{75}

Loyalty oaths were also in use at the state level, with eighty percent of states imposing a loyalty oath by 1953.\textsuperscript{76} The oaths were used for a variety of reasons be it keeping subversives from running for office or preventing them from holding certain jobs. Millions were required to sign these yearly affidavits: teachers, legislators, clerks, social workers, doctors, and other state employees. They were used so extensively that in some cases the requirement to sign one was bizarre, such as in Indiana where boxers and wrestlers had to take a loyalty oath before entering the ring to compete.\textsuperscript{77} Most oaths were modeled on the federal civil defense oath, “swearing support for the American Constitution and disavowing advocacy of the forcible overthrow of the government or membership of a group with that objective.”\textsuperscript{78} In some states, such as Georgia, employees were required to list any family members who may have belonged to a subversive organization. In others, the oath included outright denial of membership in the CPUSA.\textsuperscript{79} When

\textsuperscript{75} Edward L. Barrett Jr., \textit{The Tenney Committee: Legislative Investigation of Subversive Activities in California} (New York: Cornell University Press, 1951), 334-349.  
\textsuperscript{76} Heale, 28.  
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 29.  
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
it was all said and done, it has been estimated that hundreds of people were dismissed from their jobs between 1947 and 1953 because of loyalty oaths.\textsuperscript{80}

Of course, loyalty oaths were more cosmetic than anything else. Though the offender could lose his or her job and face a short jail sentence if charged with perjury, one could just as easily lie. Stronger legislation was needed if the government wanted to tighten the clamp on the Communist conspiracy. Just as before, Washington took the lead, signing the Internal Security, or McCarran, Act in 1950. Passed in September, the law required Communist and front organizations to register with the government. States sought to replicate and expand on the law with other anti-Communist legislation. There were laws requiring Communists and front organizations to register with the state, denying Communists public employment, barring all Communists from the electoral ballot, and even outlawing the CPUSA altogether.

Between 1945 and 1954, 25 states had laws banning the Party from ballots and 29 had laws banning members from public employment.\textsuperscript{81} By 1953, only seven states did not have any sort of anti-Communist legislation in place. Kansas passed a law making it a crime to advocate the overthrow of the government, punishable with at least ten years in prison. Massachusetts adopted a law that made the CPUSA illegal and membership in the Party a punishable offense. Government officials in Texas, Tennessee, and Michigan even looked into attaching the death sentence to all Party members convicted of a crime!\textsuperscript{82} Of course by the time these laws were passed the towering figure of Senator Joseph McCarthy had already entered the fray and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had already become a major force in fighting the Party.

\textsuperscript{81} Heale., 55-56.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 56-76.
Though the focus of this paper is not on McCarthy himself, the political purge bares his name, and it would be useful to briefly mention what I feel to be an interesting interpretation of McCarthy’s role in the purge of political unorthodoxy.\textsuperscript{83} Mark Landis has written in his book, *Joseph McCarthy: The Politics of Chaos*, that McCarthy is an especially unique figure in American politics because of his role as a connecting joint between populism and elite politics.\textsuperscript{84} Throughout the purge the public slowly became more concerned about the possibility of a Communist attack and began to increase its already negative attitude towards the Party as a result. We have already seen how more than half of the population felt the Party was only loyal to Moscow, and as early as December 1947, sixty-two percent of the population also felt that the CPUSA should be made illegal.\textsuperscript{85} We have also seen how political elites in Washington and throughout the country continuously attacked the Party and, with the assistance of newspapers, propagated such fear.\textsuperscript{86} However, Landis maintains that McCarthy, whom he classifies as a demagogue, best exemplifies the connection between groundswell and political anti-communism.

Landis defines a demagogue as follows. First, a demagogue is an individual who plays on his constituents’ emotions, irrationalities, and prejudices in order to get a desired response. Secondly, he blocks the public from seeing any genuine solutions to a problem by proposing overly simplistic solutions that are more attractive. Lastly, he is more concerned with his own status and image in the political arena than the well-being of people with whom he maintains he

\textsuperscript{83} For one of the best biographies of McCarthy, see Thomas C. Reeves, *The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy: A Biography* (New York: Stein and Day, 1982).
\textsuperscript{85} Gallup, 744.
is trying to help. Keeping these three points in mind, the key to demagogues’ success is oversimplification and the impact this can have on the actions of state and national governments. As we saw above, both Republicans and Democrats chose to focus on the “Communist issue,” or the idea that there were Communists all throughout the government, that they were most certainly planning dangerous things, and that something needed to be done to stop them. We can look back now and appreciate the complexities of the issue, but at the time there were no considerations of grey-areas, such as the possibility that all Party members were really brainwashed Americans turned into agents of Moscow. Instead, politicians chose to offer more simplistic answers to these questions while simultaneously using the press to stoke the flames of civilian anxieties. Then when public angst was reaching its height, along came McCarthy, ready to call out Communists in the government and lead the charge in the effort to destroy them. In this way, McCarthy became a hero of sorts and the spokesperson for the anti-Communists in Washington.

Equally important in the anti-Communist repression, if not more so, in the anti-Communist repression was the FBI. As early as the 1930s, the Bureau was using wiretapping as a method to collect information. In 1940, President Roosevelt directed the use of wiretapping to investigate cases of national security in which foreigners may be planning sabotage, assassinations, and other subversive activities against the U.S. In 1946, Truman reaffirmed the directive and expanded it to include the potential subversive activities of domestic radicals. By doing so, and without a Supreme Court ruling on the matter, abusive use of wiretapping was

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87 Landis, 145-146.
88 Latham contrasts the Communist “issue” with the Communist “problem,” the difference being the problem had to do with how to deal with Communists legally, whereas the issue involved the unknown elements of Communism in America and the contrasting views of the Party and its goals. See Latham. 4.
made completely legal.\textsuperscript{89} From 1940 well into the 1960s the FBI ran as many as eight operations with the purpose of secretly opening the mail of suspected spies, domestic radicals, and radical organizations.\textsuperscript{90} The Bureau used the information it collected to assist government officials at all levels in the investigation and repression of domestic radicals, including blacklisting current and former Party members. In total, the FBI collected over one million pages of information on the Party and individuals connected with it.\textsuperscript{91} At one point, there were close to 1,500 informers operating within the Party reporting information back to Bureau field offices and working to foster factionalism and mistrust within the Party.\textsuperscript{92}

All this activity culminated in the less-than-climactic moment on August 24, 1954 when the federal government passed Public Law 637. Listed as “An Act to Outlaw the Communist Party,” or more commonly known as the Communist Control Act, the law stripped the Party of any civil rights and made it a crime to be a member.\textsuperscript{93} In retrospect however, this law was more an added insult to injury than a decisive blow. By the time the act had passed the Party had already been severely weakened from early salvos, and anyone still associated with it had been crippled from being hit with the resulting shrapnel. Further weakening of the Party took place in 1956 with Nikita Khrushchev’s revelations about the tyrannical actions of Stalin and the Soviet invasion of Hungary. Some have estimated that by 1957 membership in the Party had declined as low as 10,000, maybe lower.\textsuperscript{94} That’s 10,000 or fewer out of over 171 million Americans.

Still, it was not enough for J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI. Launched in 1956 and operating until the early 1970s, the Counter-Intelligence Program-Communist Party USA

\textsuperscript{90} Theoharis, 130.
\textsuperscript{91} Belknap, x.
\textsuperscript{93} Caute, 50.
(CONTELLPRO-CPUSA) jammed the stake into the heart of an already dying Party. FBI agents were now sanctioned to use violent methods to instill fear in known, suspected, or possible Party members. Agents broke into and ransacked houses, burned cars, and physically assault people in the name of crushing political unorthodoxy. We know for certain that at least 2,340 operations were carried out against Party members, and these only include the ones that were formally submitted for approval. These included Operation Hoodwink, which saw the FBI try to start a war between the CPUSA and the Mafia. Disruption also took less aggressive forms as, for example, when agents would write fictitious letters to hotels and meeting halls urging that they refuse to allow the Party to hold meetings there.\textsuperscript{95} The resulting weight of all these attacks on its political, legal, and civil rights, compounded to crush the Party. By the early 1960s it was long dead and all that remained were tiny underground cells, struggling to stay out of the crosshairs. In time, the persecution died down, but the fact that many innocent people had their lives destroyed leads one to question to where the government was getting its information and the necessity of the actions carried out later by the FBI.

It needs to be stressed that McCarthy himself never uncovered a single subversive, and few actual Communists were discovered and charged with crimes during the period known as McCarthyism. The bulk of the victims of McCarthyism were ex-Communists, hard-working, and most of all, loyal Americans. According to Yale professor Ralph Brown, at the very minimum 11,500 people lost their jobs because of McCarthyism. This number, we must remember, that does not include those who resigned, were dismissed for other nefarious reasons, kept their dismissal a secret, or were never given the opportunity for employment because their applications were immediately rejected.\textsuperscript{96} The financial loss was crippling to those who were

\textsuperscript{95} Donner, 182-180.
\textsuperscript{96} Brown, Jr., 487-488.
persecuted. For example, the actor Joseph Julian was making just over $18,000 dollars a year in 1948, but after he was identified as a potential Communist in 1950 his yearly earnings dropped to just above $1,500 in 1953. Physiological damage was also prevalent. Many simply blamed themselves for having been involved with the Party at some point in their lives. Others suffered long-lasting damage and loneliness. Journalist Carl Bernstein was a child when his mother was called before HUAC. After the hearing, his friends were told that they could not play with him anymore and his sister was kicked out of nursery school. Many “Commie kids” suffered physical abuse, being beaten up on the way home from school and taunted relentlessly.

Of course, unions also were hit hard. As Schrecker wrote, the political oppression destroyed “an entire generation of activists by driving the Communists and their allies from the mainstream unions and destroying the left-wing ones.” The Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 helped exacerbate this situation when it required all union officers to sign an affidavit stating that they were not members of the Party, or else the union would lose its bargaining rights and certification. As mentioned above, this was one of the factors that led to the purging of many Communist leaders and Communist-led unions from the CIO. In generally, this weakened the labor movement as Communists were recognized as being some of its best organizers.

In the end, it is not an overstatement to say that no one was safe. Scholar, champion of African-American advancement, and founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples (NAACP), W. E. B. DuBois, was fired from his own organization because of his radical ties and beliefs. Even the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) purged its staff

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97 Schrecker, Many are the Crimes, 363.
98 Ibid., 367.
99 Ibid., 380.
100 Levenstein, 217.
101 Ibid., 330.
102 Schrecker, Many are the Crimes, 375.
of Reds.\textsuperscript{103} Perhaps most vulnerable, next to union members, were those who taught for a living. As we shall see in the next section McCarthyism struck the academy as well. A Gallup Poll taken in 1953 asked if former and/or resigned Communist Party members should be allowed to teach in colleges and universities. Out of all those polled, sixty-six percent felt that these individuals had no right to teach.\textsuperscript{104} Senator McCarthy summed up the fears of many parents and offered a solution when he wrote the year before:

Countless times I have heard parents throughout the country complain that their sons and daughters were sent to college as good Americans and returned four years later as wild-eyed radicals. The educational system of this country cannot be cleansed of Communist influence by legislation. It can only be scrubbed and flushed and swept clean if the mothers and fathers, and the sons and daughters, of this nation individually decide to do this job. This can be your greatest contribution to America. This is a job which you can do. This is a job which you must do if America and Western Civilization are to live.\textsuperscript{105}

It was widely believed from the late 1930s into the 1960s that Communists were infiltrating the nation’s educational system and plotting to indoctrinate the nation’s youth, forcing them to become Communists who would worship Stalin and become agents of the Kremlin’s devious plots to destroy America. In fact, though Communist espionage did occur, there is no evidence that indoctrination took place and we know from accounts of former students of Communist teachers and the teachers themselves that indoctrination was never even attempted. In reality, indoctrination was looked down upon in Party circles and teachers were on record (because they were closely scrutinized by their peers) as having been balanced, and in many cases, excellent educators.

Yet, fears of indoctrination were too great and education was one of the first institutions to come under attack as being overrun with Reds. Much like the victims of other purges, those

\textsuperscript{104} Gallup, 1135-1136.
who lost their jobs were mostly, if not exclusively, ex-Party members. We know by now though this did not matter to Red Hunters. In the next chapter we will continue to build on the previous chapters as we examine the methods and rationalization that allowed such persecution to take place in the academy. In order to do so, I have relied heavily on the excellent work of Ellen Schrecker, whose book *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities* remains the best work in the exploration of anti-Communism’s impact on higher education even over twenty years of its publication.\(^{106}\) Her work illustrates above all that efforts to purge the academy of former Communists was a two prong attack carried out by the government and officials at each university, resulting in a violation of academic freedom and banishment of Marxism from the academy for twenty years.

Chapter 3

The Externalist Argument Part II: Anti-Communism and the Academy

The fact that these people have not been convicted of treason or of violating some of our espionage laws is no more a valid argument that they are fit to represent this country in its fight against Communism than the argument that a person who has a reputation of consort ing with criminals, hoodlums, gamblers, and kidnappers is fit to act as your baby sitter, because he has never been convicted of a crime.

Remember, to those Communist-minded teachers academic freedom means their right to force you to hire them to teach your children a philosophy in which you do not believe.

Joseph McCarthy

*McCarthyism: The Fight For America*, 1952

In her book *No Ivory Tower*, historian Ellen Schrecker estimates that close to twenty percent of the witnesses brought before congressional and state committees were college teachers and/or graduate students. Of these professors almost all lost their jobs, with Caute estimating that more than 600 professors and schoolteachers were fired outright during the Truman-Eisenhower presidencies. The reason as to why professors lost their jobs is no secret. In almost every case, the professors in question lost their positions because they were deemed incompetent. Competence, or more specifically in this case the ability to teach, was given a wide definition that included cooperating with government officials, making sure the university avoided bad publicity, and most of all not being a Communist. Therefore, as we will see, professors were placed in an impossible situation. If they were called before HUAC and refused to answer questions, they were incompetent. If they answered some questions but took the Fifth Amendment protecting against self-incrimination for themselves and others, they were incompetent. If they continually brought bad publicity on the university, they were incompetent.

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1 McCarthy, 79 and 101.
3 Caute, 406.
If they admitted to having been in the CPUSA at some point in their lives, they once were once again labeled incompetent. In other words: “damned if you do, damned if you don’t.” And herein lies the seeds of the destruction of the myth that the academy was a protective haven after the Second World War for independent thought and the free exchange of ideas. Quite the opposite, university administrators, Board of Regents and Trustees, and even professors eagerly and willingly participated in the McCarthyistic oppression of their faculty and there is overwhelming evidence to prove it.

Academics Join the Party

As with the previous chapters, we must begin in the 1930s in order to be able to put the issues in question into context. As the Depression wore on, the CPUSA and the Popular Front became increasingly more attractive to those who were becoming rapidly radicalized, including professors. For the Party’s part, it was not trying to actively recruit intellectuals as much as it was African Americans, but members did welcome intellectuals nonetheless and granted them a high level of autonomy. What attracted these academics to the CPUSA were three main factors. First, and most important was the impact of Fascism. The spread of Fascism concerned many intellectuals and the failure of democratic governments to do anything about it concerned them even more. Into this situation stepped the Communist Party, which in the conception of the Popular Front, seemed to be the only force in the world trying to stop Hitler and Mussolini. The Spanish Civil War increased and reinforced this sentiment, as the Soviet Union was the only nation providing supplies and weapons to those fighting against the Nazi-supported Nationalist

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[4] In other words, it would be a mistake to assume academics, or anyone for that matter, were drones of the Party. Specifically, academics had more autonomy because (1) they were not on the Party’s recruitment list and (2) as they were academics they could be counted on to read Party literature and keep up-to-date with what was happening. They did not need a Party leader guiding them. Schrecker, _No Ivory Tower_, 46.
Party and their leader Francisco Franco. Because of their efforts to curb Fascism the Party was seen as extremely dynamic and a positive force in the world. Secondly, intellectuals’ support for the Party in academic areas such as New York City deepened because Communists were on the front lines of efforts to unionize the teaching profession.

Socialist teachers founded the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) during World War I in an effort to protect themselves against harassment resulting from their anti-war position. During the 1930s, Communist teachers began to unite with their non-affiliated friends to continue this process of unionization. This was most evident in New York City with the creation of Local 537, a Communist-led teachers’ union affiliated with the New York branch of the AFT. The union was quite popular and by 1939 it had more than 400 members plus additional chapters at City College, Brooklyn College, Hunter College, and New York University. This form of radical unionization was badly needed in the teaching profession, where professors were overworked, underpaid, and were not protected by any concrete process for gaining tenure. Once again, the Party was seen a positive force fighting for “the people” when other parties seemed to do nothing for the masses.

Thirdly, the final factor that attracted intellectuals to the Party was the message of Marxism. By nature, Schrecker writes, intellectuals “have a stronger need than most people to make sense out of their lives. For them, therefore, the intellectual side of Communism, its attempt to provide a systematic analysis of the very obvious failure of capitalism during the Depression, was one of its main attractions.”

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5 Ibid., 34-36.
6 Ibid., 37.
Marxism gave these intellectuals a perspective that they desperately needed. It provided, in some ways, assurances that the nation could rise out of its current condition and move towards a more perfect society. Thus, it is not surprising that Marxist Study Groups were a major part of the academic Communist experience, serving as a place where students could read and debate the major works in the Marxist canon. In addition, outside of the classroom members would organize fundraisers, work with civil rights and other Progressive organizations, publish leaflets, and sell Party literature.9

It is important to highlight the phrase “outside of the classroom” because in general Party members did not propagate their views inside the classroom. From the available evidence, it seems that they agreed almost entirely that it was wrong to use the classroom as a place to try and sway students to join the Party. It also appears that they also looked down upon recruiting students and tried to keep their political views out of their teaching, just as most professors do today.10 At City College, with its larger Communist faculty, one professor was actually reprimanded for bragging about his ability to incorporate Marxist terminology into his class.

Above all, the most important evidence against charges of indoctrination lie in the fact that of all those former Communists brought forth during the twenty year span of anti-Communism, not a single shred of evidence was used to prove that any of them had attempted to indoctrinate their students. Schrecker is right when she asserts that if administrators and the government “possessed any information that the teachers they were trying to oust had proselytized in class, they certainly would have produced it.”11 No such evidence existed. Moreover, universities never attempted to show that “the past or present Communism of the

9 Ibid., 48-51.
10 It is interesting to note that in many cases students’ recruited professors into the Party, not the other way around.
11 Ibid., 44.
defendants had impaired their scholarship”; it was just assumed that it did.\textsuperscript{12} The fact that these academics continued the Party policy of keeping membership a secret certainly did not help their case either.

Even so, in retrospect it really should not have mattered because time in the Party for most of these academics was short-lived. As was the case with non-academic members, most academics slowly left the Party after the Nonaggression Pact was signed between the Nazis and the Soviets. Moreover, many left because being in the Party was a full-time job. Members were expected to campaign, help organize unions, pass out pamphlets, and fulfill a host of other responsibilities that detracted from teaching, research, and time with the family.\textsuperscript{13} The combined workload was just too high for most. Nevertheless, the signing of the Pact led to increased political rhetoric that Communists were threatening the youth of the nation. After a slight reprieve due to the cooperation between the U.S. and the Soviets during World War II, federal and state governments were mobilizing to act against domestic Communists.

Expelling Communists from the Academy

Based on the material covered in the last chapter it should not be surprising that there were early attempts to root out Communists in education. For one thing, we have already discussed the implementation of loyalty oaths in many states and the fact that teachers were required to take them as well. There were also sporadic attempts to eliminate Communists as evidenced in the case of specific individuals. For instance, in 1932 the radical economist Donald Henderson was denied reappointment at Columbia for “unknown reasons,” though it was known that he was very active on campus, spearheading an attempt to unionize the college’s cafeteria

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 100.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 61-62.
workers and often speaking at student demonstrations. In 1935, wealthy businessmen Charles Walgreen accused teachers at the University of Chicago of exposing his niece to dangerous ideas.\(^{14}\) The following year City College employee, radical, and tenured instructor Morris Schappes was fired for supposedly being a bad teacher, only to be reinstated when the administration was confronted by the Teachers’ Union. Dismissals such as these were taking place around the nation and continued after the war, masking political motivations with excuses of financial concerns and claims of bad scholarship.\(^{15}\)

By far the most notable years predating the post-World War II persecutions took place between 1940 and 1942. It was during this time that the AFT expelled all local chapters that were “Communist dominated,” including Local 537. In addition, it was during this time that the Rapp-Coudert investigations of New York City took place, when 69 instructors were named as Communists and another 434 were implicated as possible fellow travelers.\(^{16}\) For now we must limit our comments on the investigations as they form the core of our case study in the next chapter, but it is important to note that Rapp-Coudert proved to be the first great state action against academics and provided a model for government officials and university administrators who wanted to rid themselves of certain faculty. It did so in that it set two precedents for future actions against academics. First, it shifted the burden of proof away from the prosecution and onto the defendant. This was done in conjunction with denying the accused certain privileges; they could not have a legal counsel, cross-examine any of the committee’s witnesses, or obtain a transcript of the day’s proceedings. This made it terribly difficult to prove innocence, further complicated by the desire of most defendants to refrain from naming others and to take the Fifth.

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\(^{14}\) Of those accused, none were found to have been committing any sort of wrongdoing.  
\(^{15}\) Ibid., 65-68.  
The second precedent was that the investigations set up the system of the purge, where investigative committees would level charges against the accused and then let the defendant’s academic institution fire him or her.\textsuperscript{17} This would be the norm from 1942 on.

Keeping this in mind, U.S. involvement in the war caused persecution to die down considerably, only to then pick back up after 1945. Harvard University President James Bryan Conant best expressed the mood of the time when he said that in most cases a faculty member’s politics were of no concern, but the CPUSA was a special case because, in his opinion, it was a worldwide conspiracy to hurt the American people.\textsuperscript{18} In 1949 the 425,000 strong National Education Association adopted a motion at their national convention stating that to be in the CPUSA meant that one lost one’s intellectual integrity and automatically became unfit to teach.\textsuperscript{19} The motion was adopted 2,995 to 5 and accents the already-established belief that Communists were mindless drones of the Kremlin, unable to think for themselves.\textsuperscript{20}

By this time legislation was already being developed. Two years earlier Massachusetts tried to pass a bill that would have made it illegal for colleges to hire Communists, and New York had the Feinberg Law (1949), which required all Regents to investigate their employees to make sure they were not members of organizations thought to be subversive. If they were members, they were fired.\textsuperscript{21} In Pennsylvania there was the Pechan Act of 1951, which stated that any teacher or employee within the public school system could be investigated at any time for subversive activities.\textsuperscript{22} If found guilty the suspect could be immediately fired and in addition, a school could be denied state funding if it was thought that they were harboring subversives and

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 101.
\textsuperscript{18} Schrecker, \textit{No Ivory Tower}, 111.
\textsuperscript{19} This group of 425,000 educators did not include affiliates of the NEA, of which there were 800,000. Thus, in total there were 1,225,000 individuals connected to their 1949 motion.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 109.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 112 and 115.
\textsuperscript{22} The list included a wide range of activities such as associating with individuals thought to be spies, advocating revolution, and most especially supporting the Communist Party.
not trying to terminate them.\textsuperscript{23} This sort of action was not uncommon and states often mimicked the actions of other states, in a sense reinforcing and approving their actions at the same time.

With legislation such as the above in place by the early 1950s, the problem shifted from rooting out the few card-carrying Communists in academia to finding former Communists. We must remember that in the eyes of most, being a former Party member was just as dangerous because it was believed that once an individual “surrendered their intelligence” to the Party they were under the Kremlin’s sway forever.\textsuperscript{24} Upon being discovered and called before committees, many of these individuals refused to cooperate, give information, or to play the role of informer on Fifth Amendment grounds. Such defendants came to be known as “Fifth Amendment Communists,” and though the academy struggled to find a way to deal with them, there were precedents on which to build on.

The reader should remember that instructors were released after their Rapp-Coudert hearings because of they invoked the Fifth and were, thus, deemed unfit to teach. In 1951 the U.S. Supreme Court determined that witnesses had waived any right to use the Fifth Amendment if the defendant had previously answered other questions about their own involvement in the Party. This solidified the ground for painting uncooperative witnesses as legally in the wrong and incompetent.\textsuperscript{25} Another example of the dangers of pleading the Fifth occurred in 1952 when historian M.I. Finley of Rutgers University was called before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee (SISS), which was in charge of enforcing the McCarran Act. When asked, Finley stated that he currently was not a Communist, but then proceeded to invoke the Fifth Amendment when asked if he had ever been one. He also refused to play the role of informer.

\textsuperscript{24} Schrecker, \textit{No Ivory Tower}, 107; See also House Committee on Un-American Activities, \textit{100 Things You Should Know About Communism}, 53-69.
\textsuperscript{25} Jenkins, 127.
After his hearing, Rutgers created a Special Faculty Committee to investigate the case of Finley and others who had been questioned by the SISS. The committee found that there was no evidence that Finley or the others involved had abused their position to indoctrinate students and that their constitutional rights should be upheld. Unfortunately, the trustees felt differently. Seeing Finley’s potential or previous membership in the Party as damaging to the reputation of the school, they decided that his refusal to answer questions by invoking the Fifth Amendment was improper conduct and demonstrated his inaptitude to teach, thus providing grounds for his dismissal.\(^{26}\) He was released without delay.

The following year, well-known civil libertarian and Harvard Law School professor Zechariah Chafee and former Cornell professor Arthur Sutherland released a statement in the *Harvard Crimson* claiming to have solved the problem of the legal issues surrounding faculty members who invoked the Fifth. In their statement, they wrote that citizens had a duty to cooperate with their government, regardless of their profession, and consequently the same cooperation was most certainly a professor’s duty. This statement also said that it was not a professor’s constitutional right to protect his friends from incrimination. The implications were far-reaching and the two were swamped with requests from schools around the country for copies of the statement. Rutgers President Lewis Webster Jones saw the statement as justification for dismissing subversive faculty and in February of the same year released his own statement entitled “Academic Freedom and Civil Responsibility.” In the statement Jones wrote that it was faculty members’ duty to say where they stood on matters that were important to the public. It was only rational then that if the academy were to maintain its image as an institution of rational theory-based research, it would be damaging to the university and academic freedom as a whole if the faculty were perceived to be irrational or controlled by the imprisoning doctrine of

\(^{26}\) Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower*, 179.
Communism. The statement was extremely popular, with over 5,000 copies requested, and along with the demand for the previous statement by Chaffee and Sutherland illustrates how concerned universities were about what was going on.27

The grounds for dismissing faculty who invoked the Fifth were becoming clear, and it was a month later in March of 1953 when a final salvo was sent out that ensured the course of action being adopted. It was in that month that the Association of American Universities (AAU), which included the presidents of 37 leading universities across the nation, released a document declaring that it was the duty of professors to cooperate. If professors did not, they were violating their responsibilities as ambassadors of the university and put into doubt their ability to teach. Entitled “The Rights and Responsibilities of Universities and Their Faculties,” the document proclaimed that “appointment to a university position and retention after appointment require not only professional competence but involve the affirmative obligation of being diligent and loyal in citizenship.”28 For good measure it also spoke of the dangers of Communism, as it was an “international conspiracy whose goal is the destruction of our cherished institutions” and as a result, “no person [current or former Communist] who accepts or advocated such principles and methods has any place in a university.”29

It is hard to fully evaluate how the academic community responded to the statement. What is known is that 50,000 copies of the document were printed and distributed, so there is no denying that universities were reading it. Schrecker shrewdly notes that in essence it does not matter. True, the combination of early statements and the AAU document served to legitimize certain courses of action. Yet, the fact of the matter was that universities had already established

27 Ibid., 184-186.
29 Ibid., 8-9.
the invocation of the Fifth Amendment as a cause to dismiss undesirable faculty and these statements only served as further justification for what was happening.\textsuperscript{30} Still, there is something to be said for rationalizing an attack on faculty through formal declarations and articles based in scholarly theory and conclusions (even if such categorization is almost ironic at best). The procedure was so far-reaching that even those with tenure were not safe.

Barrows Dunham was the Chair of the Philosophy Department at Temple University. Called before HUAC in 1953, he was in Schrecker’s words, “the most uncooperative witness that HUAC had ever seen to date.”\textsuperscript{31} He even took the Fifth when the committee inquired about his educational background. When he returned to Philadelphia, Dunham was suspended immediately for not cooperating with the committee and thus ignoring his responsibilities as a member of the faculty. His May hearing in front of Temple’s Loyalty Commission did not have a favorable outcome. Furnished with evidence from the FBI proving he traveled in left-wing groups, the commission asked him specific questions about his activities. He answered them all completely, even admitting he had been in the Party from 1938 to 1945. His cooperation did not matter however, and in September the Board of Trustees ratified the recommendation for his dismissal on the ground that he misused the Fifth Amendment to avoid his duty, thus rendering him incompetent.\textsuperscript{32}

The same year Marcus Singer was called to appear before HUAC. An associate professor of Zoology at Cornell University, Singer spoke freely about his own activities and association with Party. However, when pressed to reveal who else took part in these activities, he refused. Called back the next day, the committee presented him with a list of people believed to have been participating in Party activities. Singer refused to confirm its validity and was warned that

\textsuperscript{30} Schrecker, \textit{No Ivory Tower}, 189.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 209.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 209-211.
he would be cited for contempt if he did not answer. Again, he refused. In 1954 the House of Representatives approved his contempt citation and Singer was suspended from teaching when his formal indictment arrived in November. To Cornell’s credit, they continued to pay him and allow him to conduct research until he won his second appeal trial in 1957, after which he was reinstated. Make no mistake though, most universities, or high schools for that matter. But were not that kind.33

At the secondary education level, for instance, we have the example of Wilbur Lee Mahaeny. Having received his doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania, he made a living since 1929 teaching history and social studies at West Philadelphia High School. Brought beforeHUAC in 1954, he willingly discussed his Party membership from 1935 to 1946, as well as his current activities. When asked to name those who had recruited him into the Party he refused to answer, not on Fifth Amendment grounds, but on calls for basic decency. The committee accepted this rationalization, but warned him that if he continued such a course contempt charges could be brought against him. From that moment on Mahaeny continually refused to answer questions on the grounds that he could not in good conscience and moral decency answer them. Later that year the House unanimously cited him for contempt by a vote of 346-0. In June he lost his job and took up a career as an encyclopedia salesman.34

Returning to university level examples, there were the cases at Reed College. Stanley Moore, a professor of Philosophy at Reed, was called before HUAC in June of 1954. Moore had been a member of the Party since the 1930s and remained closely affiliated with it after being hired by the college. After a time though he began to see his efforts as a waste of time and he severed ties choosing instead to focus on his work, a decision which paid off when he was

33 Ibid., 215-217.
34 Jenkins, 134-135.
awarded tenure. When questioned by HUAC he took the Fifth, and when questioned by special Faculty Council at Reed he also refused to answer questions. Despite this the council spoke very highly of his academic record and recommended that no action be taken against him. The Board of Trustees did not agree with their recommendation however, and promptly fired him two months later. Moore’s case is particularly revealing because called along with him was history instructor Leonard Marsak and tenured professor of the fine arts Lloyd Reynolds. All three initially defied HUAC. In the end however, Marsak and Reynolds cooperated with the Faculty Council and were retained.35

Rounding out our small list of examples illustrating a much larger trend was the case of Alex Novikoff.36 Novikoff obtained his Bachelor of Sciences degree from Columbia University in 1931 at the age of eighteen. Unable to get into medical school, he went into the doctoral program in Zoology at Columbia and took a part-time position in the Biology department at Brooklyn College. While working at Brooklyn Novikoff joined the CPUSA, as almost all academics did, through the faculty unit. Taking the pseudonym “Norwood,” Novikoff joined the Party because of its potential solutions for the Depression, its fight against Fascism, and because of its battle against “budget retrenchment, unemployment, and salary inequities” at the college level.37 Novikoff’s political activism outside of the classroom brought him under scrutiny however and it was not long before he was called before the Dies Committee in 1938 and then

35 It should be noted that Marsak was released a year later when his contract expired. Schrecker, No Ivory Tower, 237-239.
36 David R. Holmes, Stalking the Academic Communist: Intellectual Freedom and the Firing of Alex Novikoff (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1989); Holmes’s work on Novikoff is the best book the author could find that told the story of an academic Communist within the larger context of what was happening around the nation. For less successful treatments that, in the author’s humble opinion, add little to the discussion on anti-Communism in the academy, see Lionel S. Lewis, The Cold War and Academic Governance: The Lattimore Case At Johns Hopkins (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993); Charles H. McCormick, This Nest of Vipers: McCarthyism and Higher Education in the Mundel Affair, 1951-1952 (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1989).
37 Ibid., 33.
again during the Rapp-Coudert investigations in the early 1940s. As a result of these investigations Novikoff left for a career at the University of Vermont.

In 1953 he was called before the SISS, now led by Senator William Jenner, and when asked questions about his activities Novikoff (no longer a Communist) took the Fifth Amendment. UV set up an investigative committee to assess the matter, which found that Novikoff was in good standing and should be retained. Sadly, but as should be expected, it was not to be. There were pressures coming from outside the university to have Novikoff fired. One was Senator Fred Crawford, who had previously proposed an amendment to the nations budget bill that would prevent state funding to any agency or institution who employed Fifth Amendment witnesses. The other was Vermont Governor Lee Emerson, who just happened to hold a seat on UV’s Board of Trustees. During the Trustee meeting Emerson put forth a motion to suspend Novikoff indefinitely without pay if he refused to reappear before the Jenner Committee and answer their questions. The motion was adopted, Novikoff refused to answer, and his career at UV was over.38

After he lost his position it was extremely hard for Novikoff to find a job and he remained unemployed for two years until he was hired to work at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine at Yeshiva University in 1955, where he worked until his death in 1987.39 Novikoff’s problems finding employment were not uncommon for members of society who were marked as Communists. It did not matter if they were former Communists, or in the case of academics, if they were excellent scholars. We also know that mainstream academic presses closed their doors to Communists and other publishers that printed book reviews like the New York Times did as

38 Ibid., 141-154.
39 For Novikoff’s struggle with unemployment, see Ibid., 158-160 and 221-228.
well. Though it is unclear as to whether the FBI had anything to do with this, it is well known that the Bureau had a blacklist in circulation in order to prevent the employment of certain individuals.

The FBI had kept files on hundreds of suspected Communists around the country. Using these files we know that they collected and circulated an “academic blacklist” to make sure those purged were unable to get a job. This list was part of the FBI Responsibilities Program, operating officially from 1951 to 1955. The program’s origins are actually known to have dated back as early as 1946, when Hoover approved attempts to undermine Communist efforts by releasing materials into the public through certain channels like newsmen, anti-Communist organizations, and the Republican party. These groups could then in turn use the information to help to create negative public opinion about the Party. The program took new shape and was formally adopted on February 17, 1951 after Hoover met with the National Governors Conference to discuss matters of internal security.

Among other things discussed at the meeting, Kenneth O’Reilly has written that the governors were extremely interested in obtaining information from the FBI that would allow them to make more sound employment decisions. After consulting with the Justice Department and the White House, Hoover instructed his agents to make such information available. For a total of at least four years, which we know about, the FBI passed on files of information to employers. Among the files known to have been passed were more than 400 involving schoolteachers and college professors. This accounts for over half of the files passed on from the

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40 Schrecker, No Ivory Tower, 166.
42 Ibid., vii.
The program also included a list of 14,000 individuals who were ranked according to their level of “dangerousness,” and orders from Hoover for agents to begin collecting reports on subversives at over fifty institutions of higher learning.

When the Bureau had information to pass on it was usually given to someone who could be trusted. These individuals ranged anywhere from local government officials, to school board members, or entire boards of regents and trustees. The program was officially shut down in 1955 because of fear of continued public exposure after The Denver Post broke the story. However, given the Bureau’s reputation for destroying files it is impossible to know how long the program really went on. Either way, it is known for certain that it was effective at keeping academics unemployed.

As Schrecker has written, “almost every academic who lost a job as a result of a congressional investigation had trouble finding a new one.” Sigmund Diamond was offered an administrative position at Harvard in 1954, but before he could take it he was questioned about his previous activities. The university had reason to believe that he once had close ties to the Party and asked him to provide them with information. After refusing to discuss the activities of others, he was denied the position. Sociologist Robert N. Bella, while an undergraduate and graduate student, was threatened. Told that they would prevent him from getting a job if he continued to take part in political activities on campus that were embarrassing Harvard, he was instructed to cooperate with the FBI or lose his fellowship.

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43 Ibid.
44 Ibid., xi.
45 Ibid.
46 Schrecker, No Ivory Tower, 265.
47 Diamond, 17-23.
48 Ibid., 20.
M.I. Finley, who had lost his job in the early 1950s for taking the Fifth, was regarded as one of the outstanding scholars on the ancient world. Unable to find another job, Finley went to England in 1954 to serve as a visiting professor at Oxford and Cambridge. In 1958, there was a chance he could be hired in the U.S. again. A faculty search committee at Cornell for employment recommended him for hiring because of his excellent scholarship. Unfortunately, his past threw up red flags to the Department Chair. When consulting with the President it was made known that the upper administration of the university would not be happy if Finley was employed. Information about Finley was requested from Rutgers and after reviewing it the President blocked his employment. Still unable to get a job Finley eventually stayed on at Cambridge where he was knighted for his celebrated scholarship despite his Communist past, which in Britain was clearly not as damaging as it was in America.\(^{49}\) Other professors went further abroad in search of employment including destinations such as France, Israel, and England.

On the other hand, many like Novikoff chose to stay in the U.S. and find employment anywhere they could. In the late 1940s many of those who lost their jobs because of the Rapp-Coudert investigations, like Marxist historian Philip Foner, were teaching at the Party’s Jefferson School of Social Sciences in New York City because they could not find employment elsewhere. Foner would not find a teaching job at a university for over twenty-five years until finally in 1967 he was hired at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. U.S. Marxist Historian Herbert Aptheker was unable to get a job for over twenty-five years as well, having known to be rejected for employment by almost fifty universities.\(^{50}\)

\(^{49}\) Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower*, 272-273 and 293; The reader will remember the British Marxist Historians mentioned in the first chapter, all of whom were allowed to work in academia despite a level of concern in British society about Communism.

\(^{50}\) Tyrell, *The Absent Marx*, 80.
Still others were punished just for their name. Felix Browder, son of the former head of the Party Earl Browder, was a brilliant mathematician. Entering MIT at the age of sixteen he graduated in two years with one professor going as far as to say that he was the best student MIT had ever seen. The young genius had no interest in politics whatsoever and was even on record as having despised the CPUSA. Yet, he still had an impossibly hard time getting a job because universities were afraid to employ him because of his last name. On the whole however, Browder and others were not punished for their supposed “crimes,” but for refusing to testify before committees. No evidence was brought against them as having done any wrongdoing. Their only crime was having once belonged to a politically unorthodox organization and using their constitutional right to avoid talking about it. The consequences for academic freedom and Marxism were all too apparent.

Summations and Consequences

Can there be any doubt that the anti-Communism of the 1940s and 50s stunted the growth of Marxism within the historical profession in the United States? Ian Tyrrell certainly thinks so, but the evidence of this chapter alone shows the weakness of his assumption. Anti-Communism sent a chill across higher education for twenty-years. The student Left was debilitated, former Communist professors were rooted out, and Marxism became taboo. A survey of 2,451 social scientists done in 1955 showed how scared many were for their jobs. Twenty-five percent said that they were trying or had in the past tried to politically self-censor themselves in order to save their jobs. This would include censoring their scholarship of anything that could be perceived as Marxism.

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51 Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower*, 273-274.
52 Ibid., 309.
Those who were interested in Marxism as an academic endeavor were only safe if they consistently denounced the Communist Party. Philosopher Sidney Hook provides the best illustration of this phenomenon. Active in the Party early in his career, by the mid-1930s he had turned against it and switched over to the Socialist Party, only to turn his back on Socialism and Marxism (the main focus of his research) because of Stalinism. Despite his work on Marxism and his past political affiliations, Hook was not purged at New York University because he joined the fight against Communism. The peak of his work against Communism was his 1953 publication *Heresy, Yes, Conspiracy, No* in which he argued, as would time and time again, that radical views were permissible in the academy as long as they were not attached to the CPUSA (because Communism was an international conspiracy).\(^{53}\) Hook was not the only one to attack Communists and many other Socialists, Trotskyites, and other former and current radicals were helpful in purging Communisms.\(^{54}\) Another quick example was the Socialist David Saposs.

Former investigator for the U.S Commission on Industrial Relations and the New York Department of Labor, Saposs went on to work for the National Labor Relations Board until 1940 when he resigned in order to avoid accusations of being sympathetic to Communism. That being said, he went on to work for the U.S. Department of Labor and later returned to life in the academy after 1952. He not only survived there amid the Red Scare, but he wrote several books including the anti-Stalinist books *Communism in American Unions* and *Communism in American*

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\(^{54}\) It is important to note that while many former Communists (such as the literary critic Granville Hicks) took action against the Party, it was not because they no longer believed in communist or Marxist ideals. It was because they were opposed to Stalin and Stalinism, which by this time had taken over the Comintern and was leading the worldwide Communist movement. Though to the general public and U.S. government Stalinism was synonymous with Communism and the Communist Party, for radical intellectuals the distinction was important. Thus, we must be careful not to view the actions of former academic Communists too narrowly, as the issue was broader and more ideologically based than what may be perceived at face value.
Politics. In other words, his radical past may have hindered his employment at one point, but his outward position against Stalinism and Communism prevented further persecution.  

With the government, employers, and fellow radicals moving against them these individuals had good reason to be afraid, and one should not underestimate the power that such a fear could have upon the fate of academic Marxism. A thorough survey published in 1954 by Professor Samuel A. Stouffer of Harvard showed that more than half of the population was in favor of imprisoning Communists and eighty percent favored stripping citizenship from them and presumably the rights that came with it. And yet, only three percent had ever met a Communist. Still, thirteen percent claimed to be suspicious of an individual they knew. What caused this suspicion?

He was always talking about world peace. (Housewife, Oregon)
I saw a map of Russia on the wall in his home. (Locomotive engineer, Michigan)
Just his slant on community life and church work. He was not like us. (Bank vice-president, Texas)
He brought a lot of foreign-looking people into his home.  

Do any of the above reasons seem to indicate that the suspected were to planning to carry out acts of sabotage with directives from the Kremlin? Of course not. On the other hand, we must remember that people back then were living in a much different time than our own.

As I have tried to illustrate in the previous chapter the fear of Communism in the United States often defied reason. This fear crossed over into the academic world, where people feared Communists were dominating the institutions educating their children with malicious intent. We know now that the percentage of current and former Communists on staff back then was miniscule compared to other staff. But during the twenty year period from 1940 to 1960 there

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56 Caute, 215.
was no way of knowing, and inflated speculation often got the best of people.\textsuperscript{57} This fear caused politicians and the public to call for a purging of the academy even though, as it turned out, if indoctrination had taken place it would not have been as easy to influence students as they thought. Robert Iversen has written that it would have been horribly hard to indoctrinate a student successfully because it would have required constant access to the student, not to mention that the student would have had to been willing to move that far to the Left to begin with. In fact, out of 30 million college students in the U.S. in 1939, only 12,000 were Communists. This small number could hardly be considered a conspiracy and the number dropped even lower as the years wore on, as most abandoned their affiliations soon after they moved further into adulthood.\textsuperscript{58}

We have also yet to address how the non-radical faculty of universities at large reacted. In most cases few professors spoke out against what was happening individually, but they refused to unite to take a firm stand against the actions of the majority. They stood by and watched it happen. Frankly, one can hardly blame them, as they had to protect their jobs and the source of their livelihood. Of course matters are not always that black and white; there were many differentiating opinions. Schrecker has pointed out that many in the academy were in favor of the dismissals because they shared the same hostility to Communism that the majority of the public did. Still others were unwilling to put themselves in a tough position against the administration.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{57} For instance, a Party unit organized at Harvard in 1931. Out of over 2,000 faculty members at the Ivy League institution, the Party unit never had more than 15 members. That is less than one percent of the staff. Caute, 406-407.
\textsuperscript{59} Schrecker, \textit{No Ivory Tower}, 312.
In retrospect, though, it probably would not have helped if faculties united for the common cause of stopping the purges. The atmosphere at the time, along with the actions by the government and college administrations, would have negated the faculties’ actions just as they effectively removed professors from the payroll. This two-step process began at the government level when large committees like HUAC and the SISS, or smaller ones like Rapp-Coudert would call professors to testify before them. Appearing before their accusers professors took a variety of approaches to maintain their innocence. Some flat-out denied having ever been a member of the Party, several admitted membership but refused to talk about others on the ground of the Fifth Amendment, while still others took the Fifth and refused to talk all together. Needless to say, each course proved to be a literal employment death trap.

After their appearance in court the defendant’s institution leapt to create its own investigative body. In many cases, the defendant would speak candidly before their peers and the investigative bodies would recommend that the individual in question be retained. In most cases the Board of Regents and Trustees ignored these requests; for them there were more important factors involved. In their minds, it was a professor’s duty to be a responsible citizen, a competent educator, and a good representative of the university. In order to be such, professors were expected to cooperate with the government and not do anything to hurt their institution’s reputation. In this way there was no way for the accused to win. If they admitted to having once been a Communist they damaged the reputation of the university, were seen as incompetent, and subsequently let go. If they refused to cooperate with the government, they were let go. If they cooperated with the government partially, but then took the Fifth, they were let go. It was an impossibly difficult situation and the actions of their administrators completed the second step in
the process. Unable to fire these individuals themselves, the government relied on universities to do it for them and to make sure via blacklists that they stayed out.

Some went on to claim that by taking such a course of action administrators were actually protecting academic freedom. After all, people had little freedom of thought in the Soviet Union; why should anyone expect a university rampant with former Communists to promote such freedoms? Once the dust cleared however, they realized this was not the case. Academic freedom had in fact been severely limited because of the purges. Marxism in any form and those who applied it to their studies were marginalized and on the whole eradicated from the academy, unless they cooperated and denounced Marxist thought and/or Communism. Criticism of status quo politics disappeared along with them and many who could have become interested in using Marxism as a historical lens with which to view the past never got a chance to explore it. These purges coincided with the birth of Consensus History, the celebration of unity in the past, and the supposed end of ideology. It would not be until the late 1950s and early 1960s that interest in Marxism returned in the historical profession, but this was not before two decades of potential scholarship was lost.

To help better illustrate this we turn now to our case study, the capstone of this endeavor and what the author hopes will be the first of many studies that build on the foundation constructed in the previous chapters. Over the course of the case study we will examine the Rapp-Coudert investigations of the early 1940s in New York City. In particular we will look at Rapp-Coudert in relation to the effect it had on the career of U.S. historian Herbert M. Morais. We will see that not only was Morais identified as a Communist in the investigations and that he

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60 This idea was put forth several times during hearings before HUAC in 1953. See, House Committee on Un-American Activities, Communist Methods of Infiltration (Education) Hearings Before the Committee on Un-American Activities House of Representatives, 83rd Cong. 1st sess., 1953.
61 Ibid., 339.
lost his job as a result, but that Morais was a Marxist historian. From there we will explore what he did after persecution and examine his publications. The purpose of the study is not just to help further put what we have learned about anti-Communism and the academy into context. Through the career of Morais we are able to better assess the importance of McCarthyism’s affect on the development of Marxism in the historical profession of the United States, and in the process, to complete our critique of Tyrrell and lay a foundation from which to continue the second stage of the two-fold process that was described in the introduction.
Chapter 4

Rapp-Coudert and Herbert M. Morais

Now if your dog had rabies you wouldn't clap him into jail after he had bitten a number of persons- you'd put a bullet into his head, if you had that kind of iron in your soul... It is going to require brutal treatment to handle these teachers who have been for so long doing precisely what they are told, imbuing students with their communistic and Nazi policies, and sitting for years on the payroll of New York State while they were about it. Two things are sure. They simply cannot live under the American flag and the Constitution. Either they or the flag and the Constitution must go...We cannot live with them nor they with us.

State Senator Frank R. Coudert, Jr.
Speech given to the Republican Business Women’s group in 1941

In 1929, then lawyer, Frank R. Coudert, Jr. wrote in the *Virginia Law Review* that Congress did not have the right to take up the role of the judiciary branch in convicting citizens and administering justice. He wrote that the judicial system was already set up, through due process, to undertake the task of investigating individuals and that neither Congress, nor any committee set up by it, had the same rights as the judiciary. “True,” he wrote, “such [a] committee may not punish him for any crimes or misdemeanors...but it is obvious that any individual may be ruined.” This form of destruction would be two-fold according to Coudert, as both the individual’s reputation and his economic well-being would be placed in jeopardy. Thus, he concluded, the actions of Congress and its committees in this manner was “a grave infraction of human liberty” that could only be protected through the judiciary and strong public opinion.

In light of these statements against non-judicial investigations, it is both ironic and in many ways a poignant turn of events that a little over ten years later Coudert was to oversee one of the

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3 Ibid., 542 and 552.
largest attacks on academics in United States history, the irony of which resonates even greater when one considers that he was to do so through a joint legislative investigative committee.

By the beginning of the Rapp-Coudert investigations in 1940 it was evident that Coudert, now a state senator, was yet another politician who viewed Communists as a grave threat to America. These men and women who dared to take refuge in political unorthodoxy did not deserve rights; they did not deserve the luxury of the motto “innocent until proven guilty.” No, they had to be shot in the head like a rabid dog, and if he could not do that, then Coudert was going to play a major role in the destruction of their reputation and well-being.

In this, the last major chapter of our study, we will use the Rapp-Coudert Committee as a case study to illustrate the broader synthesis of McCarthyistic attack against the academy presented in the previous chapter. In conjunction with the analysis of this committee, we will examine the career and writings of historian Herbert M. Morais to show not only the consequence of being condemned as a Communist, but the impact this had on the usage of Marxist historical analysis within the historical profession in the United States. We will see over the course of the chapter not only that Rapp-Coudert set the stage for further attacks on academia, but also that it helped to stifle the development of Marxist analysis that was already struggling to come to the forefront.

The Rapp-Coudert Investigation, 1940-1941

As illustrated in previous chapters, by 1939 it was already widely believed by many that a Communist conspiracy was afoot in the country. Congressmen like Martin Dies and State Senators such as Jack Tenney used legislative committees to investigate the foundations of this belief and to propagate it. Though initially focusing on Communist infiltration into organized
labor and New Deal agencies, these investigative committees slowly began to focus on academics and the accusation that Communists were using the classroom to indoctrinate their students. New York City was no different from the rest of the nation and by the late 1930s several state legislators were convinced that schools in the Big Apple were swarming with Reds.⁴

At least to some degree they were right that Communists were present in the public school system. As Lawrence H. Chamberlain pointed out in the first complete study of Rapp-Coudert, the city schools were suffering from financial strain and as a result teachers were unable to obtain increases in salary as colleges were creating new positions such as “reader” and “tutor” in order to hire professors for less than half of what was the usual salary.⁵ This led many faculty to join the Party to begin with, though members of the city schools also found the politically unorthodox organization appealing for the same reasons it was popular to the rest of America in the 1930s: it was leading the fight against Fascism, fighting to stop segregation and anti-Semitism, and was unwavering in its support for labor. For academics these qualities, among others, were extremely appealing. As already noted this was particularly true at the College of the City of New York (CCNY) and Brooklyn College, where there were particularly active Communist Party units.⁶ That being noted, what started the investigation of subversive activity in the schools of New York City? The origins were financial, but the catalyst was political.

As it stood at the time, New York City public schools were financed through money obtained from the city and the state. The money accrued by the city via taxes accounted for approximately seventy percent of the annual budget, while the state provided an additional thirty

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percent of funding based on a number of factors including student enrollment. As Chamberlain notes, the Great Depression had caused a squeeze on the school’s budgets due to the ever-falling valuation attributed to property and increased educational costs that were further hampered by diminishing state funding due to reduced enrollment. In order to assess the situation and hopefully rectify it, the state legislature called for an investigative committee to review the finances of the school and determine potential solutions to the crisis. Approved by both the State Senate and the State Assembly on March 26, 1940, State Senator Herbert A. Rapp was given the title of chairman for the joint legislative committee.

At the same time, however, the state was also in an uproar over a recent appointment made by CCNY. The college had just appointed the philosopher Bertrand Russell to teach at the school. A controversial figure in his own right because of his views on morality and marriage, Russell had been severely attacked before by the Roman Catholic Church and his attempted appointment provoked swift opposition by politicians and newspapers alike who saw him a dangerous academic who promoted godlessness in his students and supported “free love.”

Unsurprisingly, certain members of state legislature jumped at this opportunity and on March 22, State Senator John H. Dunnigan introduced a resolution that called for a comprehensive investigation of New York City schools to root out subversive activity. On March 29 the Rapp resolution was recalled and a new section was added that called for an investigation of subversive activities in the public schools of the City of New York. The revised resolution was passed unanimously and State Senator Frederick R. Coudert, Jr., the only Republican in the

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7 Chamberlain, 69-70.
8 Leberstein, 92.
Senates, was named vice-chairman of the committee to lead the investigation of subversive activities.\(^9\)

Immediately the Teachers Union attacked the committee, saying it was working for real-estate interests who wanted to reduce educational budgets to save money for themselves. This argument was laid out more completely the following year when the Communist-led Committee for Defense of Public Education published *The Conspiracy Against the Schools* in January 1941.\(^10\) In the pamphlet the organization stated that a group led by the president of the New York State Economic Council, Merwin K. Hart, was attempting to reduce state funding for education by thirty-three million dollars.\(^11\) It was reported that this coalition contained some of the largest reality and financial groups in the states, including the Merchants Association of New York City, the Real Estate Taxpayers Association of New York State, the Associated Industries of New York, and the Tax Foundation League, i.e. groups who would benefit from a reduction in state and city funding. The Teachers Union, the pamphlet explained, arose to meet this challenge in February of 1940 and through its activist efforts got the state legislature to fully fund education. In response, Hart labeled the activists as subversives and soon afterwards the Rapp-Coudert Committee was created. This was done, according to the pamphlet, to destroy the Teachers Union and thus any resistance to a reduction in funding for education.\(^12\)

It is hard to say for sure if the committee was created specifically to destroy public education, and we should not jump to conclusions. However, it is interesting to note that in July of 1940 Senator Rapp recommended that education funds be cut by twelve million dollars even before he began to conduct his investigation. This after the Regents Inquiry into Costs and

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\(^9\) Chamberlain, 72-73.
\(^11\) Ibid., 4-5.
\(^12\) Ibid., 6.
Character of Public Education had just finished its four year study of the New York educational system and recommend that state funding increase by thirty-eight million dollars.\textsuperscript{13} Needless to say, this does raise questions as to the financial motivations of the committee, but it does not allow us to conclude strongly one way or the other what the true intentions of Rapp’s investigation were. What is clearer is that the Rapp-Coudert Committee did make its main priority subversive behavior and the Teachers Union fell under this category of inquiry.\textsuperscript{14}

Coudert’s chosen head counsel Paul Windels stated at the first public hearing in December of 1940 that the committee would have preferred to deal with finance, but they were under intense pressure from the public and from college presidents, teachers, educational association leaders, supervisors, and parent groups to focus on subversive activities first. This was well and good at face value, but in actuality his claim was problematic because Windels never came out and said who had been pressuring them. In fact, there is no record of the committee ever having received any sort of pressure to focus on subversives, but Windels did receive three letters from the Citizens Union, the United Parents Association, and the Commissioner of Education Ellsworth Buck asking the committee to focus on finance first. Not one letter mentioned the investigation of subversives.\textsuperscript{15} It is also important to note that Windels later commented that if it was not for Dunnigan promoting the bill and promising that they would immediately look into Communists in education after its passing, the bill may not have passed like it did. These two pieces of evidence have led one author to conclude that the committee had been solely focused on rooting out subversives from the start.\textsuperscript{16}

\begin{flushright}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 7-9.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Celia Lewis Zitron, who wrote a history of the NYC Teachers Union, has stated explicitly that the “destruction of the Teachers Union and dismissal of their active members appeared to be the main objective of the professional patriots and budget-cutters.” Zitron, 192.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Andy Weiss, “The Rapp-Coudert Investigation, 1940-1942” (Unpublished Paper from the File of Marvin Gettleman, 1992), 6-7.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Weiss, 7-8.
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Regardless, Coudert and his large staff began investigating in September of 1940. Their primary means of collecting information came through private interview sessions. The investigators felt that this would be the best way to serve the interests of both the committee and the accused because it allowed individuals to come in and testify without an oath. If the individuals being interviewed by the staff of the committee were providing important information, then the staff would administer an oath and a stenotypist would record the information. It was only then that the witness would be brought before a later public hearing and even then, they would only be allowed to name someone as a Communist if there were another witness to corroborate their accusation.\(^{17}\)

As it has been written elsewhere, the private hearings were used extensively and yielded a great deal of information. Compared to the public hearings, which only had less than ninety witness giving testimony amounting to around 2,287 transcribed pages, the private hearings saw 503 witnesses give over 13,000 pages of testimony. This number jumps to over 700 if one includes the 200 who were not sworn in.\(^{18}\) These private hearings were not without their faults though. Witnesses were denied the right to counsel and they were unable to obtain a copy of their statements or a transcript of the proceedings. In addition, they almost always were testifying to only one staff member working for the committee. An actual committee member would appear in the hearing only long enough to administer an oath if the witness was thought to be valuable, then they would leave and the witness was left with the staff member and the stenotypist.\(^{19}\)

The committee also relied on a variety of witnesses in order to obtain the information it craved. As Ellen Schrecker has noted, New York’s anti-Communist Left-wing of Socialists, Social Democrats, and Trotskyites provided valuable testimony against the CPUSA. In addition,\(^{17}\) Chamberlain, 83. \(^{18}\) Ibid., 83. \(^{19}\) Ibid., 85.
the committee also used the testimony of Teachers Union members who were against the Communists and from the professional anti-Communist Benjamin Mandel, who quit the Party in 1929 only to make a living testifying against Communists and doing research for practically every major committee investigating Communism in America.  

Late in October 1940 the committee subpoenaed faculty from Brooklyn College to come to private hearings. On the advice of their legal counsel, 25 of them refused to cooperate because they felt the conduct of the committee, such as the fact that counsel was not allowed during hearings, was illegal. At the first public hearings conducted in December, Coudert told Windel to threaten the uncooperative teachers with contempt charges if they continued to refuse to testify. In fact, the committee described the defiant actions of the 25 as a “Communist-inspired tactic to thwart progress by raising all manner of technical issues to block inquiry at every turn.” This despite the fact that at least half, maybe more, of the teachers threatened with contempt had no affiliation whatsoever with the Party. The committee was so convinced that the CPUSA was behind every objection to their actions that they turned its wrath on the Teachers Union and attempted to subpoena its membership list in order to prove their assumption that it was a Communist dominated organization.

Inside the education bureaucracy there was confusion as to what actions to take towards the teachers. Still, by November the Board of Higher Education began urging all staff members and employees to cooperate with the investigation. This injunction followed by a major break in the investigation when the first informer came forward. Bernard Grebanier was an assistant

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20 Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower*, 77-78.
21 The New York Supreme Court later found the committee’s actions to be entirely legal.
23 Chamberlain, 88.
24 Chamberlain, 91; This despite the fact that out of 1,000 members in the College Teachers Union, only 100 were members of the CPUSA.
professor of English at Brooklyn College. A member of the Teachers Union, Grebanier had joined the party in 1935 only to leave four years later in 1939. At his private hearing, to his credit, he initially resisted talking about anyone other than himself. Yet, before it was over he ended up naming over 30 individuals as Communists. That being said, he did so only after the committee presented him with a list of individuals that were thought to be Communists. So in reality he was not giving them any information they did not already have, he only played the important role of helping the committee confirm their assumptions so they could take further actions.25

After Grebanier’s testimony the Corporation Counsel of New York City told the Board of Higher Education that it would be within its legal rights to force employees to testify. As a result, the Board issued a resolution on January 21, 1941 saying that it would take action against any faculty member or employee who refused to come the hearings when subpoenaed to answer questions.26 This change in direction by the Board, who had previously been more suspect of the committee and saw what it was doing as at attack on education, led to later decisions that would seal the fate of professors implicated in the public hearings. For the time being however, far more damaging was the testimony of William Canning from CCNY. Having worked in the History Department at the college, Canning named over 50 Communists during his public hearing in March of 1941 and would become the committee’s star witness around which they would build the rest of their case.

To supplement their accusations the committee also employed a variety of tactics that had already been used by earlier investigative committees and would be used after the Second World War. The first technique was to collect the various writings of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin that were

25 Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower*, 78.
26 Ibid., 78.
available and to distort them in a way in which they seemed to support the assumptions the committee held about the motives of Communists. This was particularly effective in the committee’s efforts to show that it was an academic Communist’s duty to try to indoctrinate students. The committee presented some of the writings of Party leader William Z. Foster, who had written in 1938 that the educational system needed to shift away from teaching ideas that helped to support capitalism. Even more damning was a pamphlet entitled “The Schools and the People’s Front,” in which it was advised that Communist teachers should not only try to shift the educational system, but should do so as secretly as possible. This of course helped to nurture the already-discussed belief that Communists were maneuvering secretly and had the worst sort of intentions. Of course, as Andy Weiss has acutely pointed out, the committee “missed the deep irony that it had constructed [a portion of] its case of a secretive conspiracy almost entirely out of the Party’s published [public] documents and public addresses.”

The other technique the committee used was to paint the Communist Party units within the Teachers Union in a negative light as attempting to control these organizations with the intention to use them for sinister deeds. In actuality however, these units had a fairly good reputation. They were instrumental in anti-Fascist organizations on campus and were active in other organizations such as the Instructional Staff Association at CCNY and the Association of Tutors, Fellows and Instructors at Brooklyn College. As Gettleman has pointed out they stood side-by-side with non-Communist members in the fight for institutions now taken for granted in higher education, such as “democratic election[s] of department chairpersons, regular procedures

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27 Weiss, 47-48.
28 Ibid., 48.
for promotion from the lower ranks…a tenure system…due process in dismissals, and a lightened workload.”

They were also active in the publication of unit papers that were, of course, found to be subversive by the committee. At CCNY the Communist faculty produced the *Teacher-Worker* and at Brooklyn College they printed the *Staff* from 1935 to 1938. Within these publications the Party members wrote about their political positions, made calls for support, and commented on the various happenings on campus. An example of the range of issues covered could be seen in late 1935 when the *Staff* reported that the chemistry faculty-run ‘Kemkit Corporation’ was gouging students with high prices. Because of pressure from the *Staff* the Board of Higher Education investigated the accusations and eventually forced the guilty faculty to resign. That being said, the papers had a downside however because they were published anonymously, a fact which once again only supported the belief that a conspiracy was afoot. Keeping this in mind, though the papers were clearly anti-capitalist, could be extremely critical of the administration, and sometimes exaggerated issues, they always printed corrections or retractions. In addition, the mastheads of both papers said that Communists wrote them. Therefore, it was not as if they were secretly trying to subvert people. No one was forced to read these papers or tricked into thinking it was not a Communist periodical. Still, it was deemed subversive and included in the charges brought against faculty as proof of their being unfit to teach.

Now that cases were being built and individuals named, on March 7, 1941 Coudert announced that if those individuals named by Canning as Communists wanted to clear their

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30 Ibid., 16-17.
31 Ibid., 15.
32 Chamberlain, 120-121.
names they would have to first formally apply in writing. Those named did so right away, but never heard from the committee or any member of the staff. Instead, several weeks later these individuals were cited subpoenas forcing them to come to hearings and making them look guilty at the same time. At these public hearings Windels informed the accused that they would only be heard upon request from the committee, that they were not allowed counsel, that no questions could be asked to a witness except by committee counsel, and that no written questions could be asked to witnesses through the committee. The counsel for the teachers William J. Mulligan protested the fact that the accused were not allowed counsel and that cross-examination was not permitted either. He fought so loudly against these “rules” that he was ejected twice from the proceedings and was at one point prevented from even attending. Of course, the committee was within its legal rights to deny the accused the aforementioned luxuries. However, it certainly made their activities look suspect and makes one wonder how strong their case really was if they refused to allow counsel or cross-examination of their witnesses against the accused.

Even apart from these restrictions, the accused without a doubt had reason to be skeptical of the proceedings. Some individuals were accused of being in the Party without any evidence brought forth that they attended Party meetings, paid dues, or took part in Party events. The committee’s only defense for this was that any accused had the opportunity to defend themselves at private hearings. If they refused to, it was their problem and it did not matter that their reputation was unfairly smeared. Moreover, whenever witnesses were brought forth at public hearings to expose Communists the entire committee was in attendance, but when the accused attempted to defend themselves, usually only one or two committee members felt it necessary to be there. Many respondents were cut off in the middle of trying to refute the charges against

33 Ibid., 101.
34 Ibid., 102-103.
35 Ibid., 98-100.
them. Others were only asked specific questions and were not even given a chance to refute their accusers. Further still, many were not allowed to make a formal statement and those that were usually were given only about five minutes to read it. As in later anti-Communist legislative committees the Rapp-Coudert Committee stepped beyond its fact-finding mission to assume the position of the judiciary while adopting the motto “guilty until proven innocent.” There was little need to use the public hearings to find out more information. They were only there to reaffirm what the committee had already decided about the accused. Case in point: indoctrination.

It has already been discussed at some length in previous chapters that one of the major accusations against Communist teachers was that they were indoctrinating their students. The reader will also remember that there has never been one shred of credible evidence to prove that any such indoctrination took place. In fact, there is actually solid evidence to show that this practice was looked down upon as not only wrong, but also as a sure-fire way to get a pink slip, something no one could afford in the middle of the greatest depression in the history of the country. Still, this did not matter to investigative committees. They had already made up their minds that indoctrination was taking place and there was nothing anyone could do to sway this mindset. The same was true of the Rapp-Coudert investigation.

For instance, during the investigation one of the defendants was accused by Canning of using his classroom as a platform from which to infect students with Communist propaganda. When the accused came forth and said he had several unsolicited letters from former and current students saying quite the contrary that he wanted to read during his public hearing, Coudert refused to allow it, opting instead only to include them in the record. When the witness pushed the issue Coudert told him that the committee did not have to let him speak at all that day and

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36 Ibid., 104-105.
that they were doing him a favor by letting him put the information in the record.\textsuperscript{38} In another instance, it was reported to the committee that one faculty member was rebuked by his fellow Communists for using the terms “proletariat” and “dialectical materialism” during his class because he had done so clumsily and should have taken better care to make sure the students had not realized he was doing it. In reality, nothing of the sort happened. The Communists had actually rebuked their colleague for using the terms to begin with.\textsuperscript{39} It had nothing to do with a trying to carry out some conspiracy and everything to do with maintaining professionalism.

As one can already guess, this did not matter and the information was seen through the prism which the committee deemed fit. In March of 1941 the Board of Higher Education released a statement saying that being a member of the Communist Party or any other group like the Nazis was grounds for dismissal.\textsuperscript{40} The statement was attacked instantly and in April it was amended to say that they could only fire someone if it was proven that they advocated the overthrow of the government or participated in activities that were seen to disrupt the educational system.\textsuperscript{41}

Aside from Morris Schappes, mentioned previously, every other individual called before the committee denied being a Communist. For some this was truly the case and they had been mistakenly identified, but for most the chargers were true and they were just lying to protect themselves. They lied because their lawyers told them that they could not take the Fifth Amendment because there was a provision in the New York City Charter that mandated public employees cooperate with legislative investigations. One teacher took the Fifth and was immediately fired without a hearing before the Board. On the other hand, admitting that one was

\textsuperscript{38} Chamberlain., 107-108.  
\textsuperscript{40} “Reds, Nazis Barred - in Teaching Posts At City College,” \textit{New York Times}, March 18, 1941.  
\textsuperscript{41} Chamberlain, 164.
in the Party was just as damning and, after the statements of March and April, sure to get one fired. The only other choice remaining was to lie, but the accused could not have known that the committee already had witnesses to corroborate Canning’s testimony and that they would be caught in their lie. The trap was set.

Having already suspended all the teachers named by Canning after they appeared at public hearings, by the summer of 1941 the Board of Higher Education began to prepare formal chargers against those with tenure. Anyone without tenure was immediately dismissed or not reappointed for conduct unbecoming of a teacher and/or being unfit to teach. Those who did get the benefit of a formal hearing were allowed to have lawyers, use cross-examination, and introduce new evidence. As one can imagine, because of the bad press the Board had no desire to keep these tenured individuals on staff. But the only charges they could bring against them were charges like incompetence. As a last resort the Board tried to show that membership in the Party and/or lying to the committee was “conduct unbecoming a member of the staff” and grounds for termination. Having worked for or contributed to the publication of the Teacher-Worker or Staff was also seen as unbecoming. The Board never tried to show that the accused had misused the classroom because it had no hard evidence of such misconduct. Instead, they used Communist writings to suggest that indoctrination was taking place. Finally, to make sure that the accused could not challenge the Board’s ruling, only those who had at least two witnesses against them were prosecuted. A glimpse at some of the trial records gives us better insight into this process.

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42 Schrecker, No Ivory Tower, 80.
44 Schrecker, No Ivory Tower, 81.
45 Ibid., 82.
Seymour A. Copstein of the English Department of CCNY was brought before the Board for trial on July 11, 1941. He was hit with five separate charges, including being “an active member of a Communist organization which advocated the overthrow of our government,” covertly attempting to “implant communist doctrines and principles in the minds of students,” “giving false testimony” to the Rapp-Coudert Committee, violating the January 1941 resolution by refusing to cooperate with the committee, and helping to prepare and circulate the Teacher-Worker.\footnote{Board of Higher Education of the City of New York, In the Matter of the Charges Preferred Against Seymour A. Copstein: Report of the Trial Committee, August 18, 1941, Morais Documents, Tamiment Library, New York University, 2-3.} After hearing testimony from Canning and four other witnesses about Copstein, and examining Party literature, the Board concluded that:

Such a study lends irresistibly to the conclusion that it is a basic principle of the Party, repeatedly expounded in authoritative statements of Party doctrines, that force and violence shall be employed in order to overthrow all governments which are not communistic in nature. As a part of Party discipline, members are obliged to practice blind obedience to secret orders or “directives.”\footnote{Ibid., 5.}

And then later during the report of the trial they made one of the clearest statements regarding the belief that Communists did not deserve the same treatment as other more political orthodox individuals:

> Membership in a political party is the right of every citizen of the Republic. Secret membership in an organization pledged to the overthrow of established government by force and violence is not such a right.\footnote{Ibid., 8.}

In other words, Copstein’s membership in the Party put him in line with the assumed understanding of Communists at the time and directly in conflict with his duties as a teacher. As a makeshift defense Copstein tried to argue that his interest in Communism was purely academic, but the Board said his own actions discredited his testimony. In addition, they showed that he had lied about Party membership when he appeared before the Rapp-Coudert Committee.
earlier that year. At the conclusion the Board decided that Copstein was guilty of the charges brought against him and that he should be fired as he had “betrayed his trust [to the Board] and is unfit to continue as a teacher under our supervision.”

There was also the case of Walter Scott Neff. An Instructor of Psychology at CCNY, he was charged with being a member of the CPUSA, “giving false and evasive testimony” before the Rapp-Coudert Committee, violating the January 1941 resolution, and participating in the production and distribution of *Teacher-Worker*. Again Canning served as the star witness and two additional witnesses, both of whom said that Neff was a member of the Party, corroborated his testimony. In the report it was stated that Neff had taken an active role in “this gigantic conspiracy, ceaseless plottings, the dissemination of propaganda and secret activities” carried out by the Party unit at C.C.N.Y. The Board investigative committee found Neff was guilty on all charges and was consequently seen as unfit to teach. They recommended that he be fired on August 19, 1941.

These are just two brief examples, but they illustrate the mindset of the Board at the time of the trials and convey the fact that there was literally no possible way the accused could save their jobs. By the time the Board had held its trials from June 1941 through 1942, of those accused 20 faculty members were dismissed, including labor historian Philip S. Foner, and another eleven resigned. The Rapp-Coudert investigation into subversive activities had run from 1940 until 1941 and in the process had managed to set precedents for future anti-Communist investigation of the academy. Going against what he believed a little more than ten years earlier, Elia Kazan testified against several of his former colleagues.

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49 Ibid., 8.
51 Ibid., 6.
52 Ibid., 9.
53 Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower*, 82.
years earlier, Frank Coudert used the power of a legislative committee to publicly embarrass, accuse, and destroy the reputations of law-abiding citizens with the only evidence against them being that they belonged to a politically unorthodox political party. Exposure was the key priority, and any other evidence needed could be quickly gathered based on contemporary perceptions of the time about the CPUSA and by using the Party’s writings against its members. It was the respondents’ job to prove their innocence, and this was a task much easier said than done for those named by Canning and others.

The second precedent was the role of executor, as played by the Board of Higher Education. Unable to take action against the professors themselves, the committee first exposed professors as Communists and then pressured the Board to take action against them. Eager to avoid bad publicity, among other things, the Board complied and fired the professors. As we have already seen in the previous chapter, this practice set an important precedent to be followed by others later. As one historian put it, this two-fold procedure of exposure and punishment was “akin to the medieval practice of ecclesiastical authorities turning over identified heretics to the ‘secular arm’ for punishment.”\(^54\) At the same time, as Stephen Leberstein has written, the actions of the Board set a standard so that in the future colleges were now seen as “responsible for prohibiting certain kinds of political dissidence,” a fact as we have seen that was not lost on politicians, administrators, and newspapers during the height of McCarthyism.\(^55\) Finally, going one step further Schrecker has written that the committee also established the usage of informers as the primary way anti-Communist investigations gathered information about supposed

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\(^54\) Gettleman, “Rehearsal for McCarthyism,” 6.
\(^55\) Leberstein, 118.
Indeed, it is not an overstatement to say that Rapp-Coudert was a dress rehearsal for post-World War II McCarthyism.

In regards to the victims, it is impossible to know what happened to all of them after the purge. As previously mentioned, some went to teach at the Communist Jefferson School of Social Sciences in New York City because they could not find employment anywhere else. Still others more than likely dropped out of teaching altogether and sought employment in other areas. The economic, physical, and emotional toll was without a doubt great and it would be sometime before they would be able to recover. In October of 1981, forty years after the investigation, the CCNY Board of Trustees officially adopted a resolution in which they apologized to the victims “for the injustice inflicted on them.” While it was a nice gesture, the Trustees made no promise of compensation and it would not be too curt to say the resolution was too little, too late. The damage had already been done.

At this point the first half of our case study has helped to better convey what McCarthyism was all about: using legislative committees and other arms of the government to expose Communists and then punish them. As we have already seen in the previous two chapters it did not matter that most of those accused were loyal citizens who merely belonged to a politically unorthodox organization. To those who sought to crush the Party and its members, there was only one type of Communist and that was the type that was plotting with Moscow to destroy America. Still, we have yet to more fully explore the impact this persecution had on the development of Marxist historical analysis in the United States. In order to begin to do this, and thus in the process to complete our study, we now turn to the career and publications of historian Herbert M. Morais.

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56 Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower*, 83.
57 Leberstein, 119.
Herbert Montfort Morais was born in New York City in 1905. Upon completion of his secondary education in 1923 Morais was one of only five students to receive the prestigious Bossom Diploma, an award given to students who displayed “outstanding character, scholarship and citizenship.”  

Attending the College of the City of New York (CCNY), he finished his Bachelor of Arts degree in just under four years. He then enrolled in Columbia University where he received his Master of Arts in 1928 and his Doctorate of Philosophy in the field of History in 1934. After finishing his M.A. Morais was yet again given a prestigious award recognizing the quality of his work, and while studying under Early Americanist Dr. Evarts B. Greene began serving as a tutor at CCNY in 1929 to make extra money. In 1930 he began teaching at the newly opened Brooklyn College, where he would finish his dissertation and remain until resigning in 1942.

While working towards his doctorate in 1932 Morais published the article “Deism in Revolutionary America (1763-89) in the International Journal of Ethics. Outlining the nature of deistic beliefs in Revolutionary America, the article contained by and large the same information that he would publish two years later in his dissertations. Published in 1934 by Columbia University Press, Morais’s dissertation and first book Deism in Eighteenth Century America was well-received by critics as an important and welcome addition in an area of U.S. history that was not often discussed. One reviewer praised the book for its careful documentation and its crisp

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58 Herbert M. Morais, “In appearing before your committee,” [ca. 1941], Morais Documents, Tamiment Library, New York University, 1.
59 Ibid.; It is interesting to note that Dr. Greene later became the president of the American Historical Association.
execution, while another called it a “substantial, precise, well documented, modest, cautious, and objective” piece of scholarship that would serve as a starting point and model for those “who continue studying the significance of deism.”\textsuperscript{61} In the book Morais set out to define what the deistic movement was in America and to determine, among other things, “its tenor in terms of its class support.”\textsuperscript{62} Writing about this class-based element he said:

During most of the eighteenth century, deistic speculation circulated almost exclusively among 'rich and well-born' liberals who used it for the purpose of overthrowing such vestiges of the old regime as the union of church and state. The upper class, however, did not desire to destroy 'religion' and therefore they minimized the anti-Christian implications of the deistic philosophy.\textsuperscript{63}

He went on to illustrate examples as to how the upper classes feared that the masses may have used deism against them:

So long as deistic principles were spread among 'the sober and respectable' elements of the community, all was well. 'Enlightened' members of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie might play with them but not the masses, for in the hands of the latter they might be used for revolutionary purposes. Consequently, any intellectual who popularized deism stamped himself, so far as the upper classes were concerned, as an enemy of society.\textsuperscript{64}

Though the bulk of the book was focused on the influences of American deism, its rise, decline, and eventual destruction at the hands of the Second Great Awakening Morais showed a clear Beardian interest in the role of classes in history and wrote that he planned on producing another book that would “show how deism was moulded during the early nineteenth century to suit the revolutionary aspirations of the advance guard of workingclass discontent.”\textsuperscript{65} One could debate as to whether at this point in his career Morais was a Marxist or merely following the


\textsuperscript{62} Morais, Deism in Eighteenth Century America, 8.

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 8-9.

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 72.

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 9.
Beardian trend of viewing U.S. history as a clash between special interests groups in democracy. However, by 1937 there is no doubt that Morais had fallen fully under the sway of the Marxist Interpretation of History.

For all the reasons we have discussed previously in others places within this thesis, Morais joined the Communist Party unit at Brooklyn College in 1935 and took the Party name “Richard Enmale.”66 Two years later in 1937 Morais’s work appeared in what was only the second issue of the now famous Marxist scholarly journal Science & Society. Appearing under his pseudonym “Enmale,” the journal published his article “Interpretations of the American Civil War,” which analyzed U.S. historiography of the Civil War.67 Beginning with an overview of earlier publications about the war, Morais’s introduction to the article demonstrated his knowledge and understanding of Civil War historiography, and was also critical of this body of literature for sacrificing “historical actualities for preconceived notions based on fantastic premises.”68 Having chastised all except Beard and Arthur C. Cole he then moved on to illustrate how Marx and Engels provided important insights into the conflict and how they served as the ideal starting point from which “American Marxist historians could complete the unfinished task of the liberal bourgeois historical school.”69 He concluded by writing:

They [Marx and Engels] reveal the shallowness of the traditional explanations of the Civil War by showing that the struggle was occasioned not by differences over abstract principles, like states’ rights or the moral issue of slavery, but by the irreconcilable antagonisms of diametrically opposed social systems. They likewise suggest the limitations inherent in the liberal bourgeois approach to the conflict. They emphasize the military aspects of the struggle and the role of the working classes, instead of placing these subjects in subordinate positions. Today patient research is needed to develop fully the part played by the proletariat, especially of America, in bringing the great conflict to a

66 Holmes, 34.
68 Ibid., 127.
69 Ibid., 131.
successful conclusion. Yet even this is only a part of a greater task: the rewriting of American history in accordance with marxist principles.

It is in this article that Morais made his first (and last) explicit plea for a Marxist interpretation of American history. From 1937 on all of his publications in some way told the story of the working class, made an effort to reinterpret history through a Marxist lens, or told an aspect of the history about the disenfranchised African American, whom the reader will remember was always an important part of the CPUSA platform. This was especially true in the years spanning 1937 to 1948 when he wrote or edited no less than eight publications related to such efforts. It was also during this span that Morais continued to teach at Brooklyn College and was eventually persecuted by the Rapp-Coudert committee for being a Communist. However, before we can examine this we must first address a few of his other publications. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, in the year 1937 Morais, also under the name “Enmale,” edited three volumes for publication by the Communist printer International Publishers, two of which volumes were under the series title of “A History of the American People.” These have already been discussed at greater length, but for sake of fluidity and to refresh the reader we will again go over each briefly.

Jack Hardy’s publication *The First American Revolution* retold the story of the American Revolution from the Marxist perspective that it was a necessary step in the development of human history towards democracy, and then in turn socialism and communism. It also stressed, as is to be expected from a work of Marxist history, the economic conditions of the time and how these factored into the events leading up to the war. Hardy also discussed the important role of the working masses in making the Revolution a success and said that even though the armies
were led by great men like George Washington, it “was fought and won by the humble and underprivileged masses who took arms to secure freedom.”

The second publication in the series, historian James S. Allen’s *Reconstruction: The Battle of Democracy*, continued in the same vein as Hardy in that it began with the economic conditions of society and moved on to illustrate how the period of history was yet another step towards more egalitarian forms of government. In particular he wrote that Reconstruction was the second phase in a two-fold revolution in human history. The first phase, as embodied in the Civil War, destroyed chattel slavery and paved the way for the second, which was the beginning of the domination of industry and the rise of the proletariat as the primary means of labor in the country.

Finally the third volume, *The Civil War in the United States*, was a collection of letters between Engels and Marx that was edited with commentary by Morais. In his introduction Morais repeated many of the same themes found in his *Science & Society* article published in the same year. In relation to the other two, the volume also made reference to the important role of the masses in the war and portrayed their struggles as just one moment in the struggle for democracy that faced humankind. In particular, as mentioned in a previous chapter, this narrative on the one hand illustrated the Popular Front *modus operandi* of the Party in which its advocates attempted to show that the struggle against Fascism constituted a larger trend in history in which men and women had to fight for a more egalitarian society. That being said, these works should not be dismissed as biased because they were still written with the objective of writing what has been defined as scientific socialist history, in other words, history from a Marxist perspective.

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70 Hardy, 127.
71 Allen, 207.
While writing under the name of “Enmale,” Morais continued to teach at Brooklyn College. He even served as the advisor for the school’s History Club and in 1936 the club’s project for the semester was the study of American Imperialism since 1914. The same year the school’s student paper, the *Vanguard*, reported that Morais was hosting a Party event in which he would speak about the Spanish Civil War, “which he witnessed.”\(^72\) The author was unable to verify if Morais had actually gone overseas to fight against Franco and his Fascist army, but if we are to take Morais at his word his involvement is perhaps one of the best indicators of his devotion to the Popular Front, the fight against global Fascism, and the Party.

Three years later, Morais published a book review in *Science & Society* under his real name and contributed a chapter to a volume on early American history dedicated to his mentor Dr. Greene. In his review of the book *The Early Writings of Frederick Jackson Turner*, Morais criticized the frontier interpretation of American history and the Turner school as being “detrimental to the progress of American historical writing” because it, among other reasons, “disregards fundamental class struggles.”\(^73\) He concluded his assessment of the volume by stating that the frontier thesis was only valid insofar as it could be integrated into “a historical materialistic explanation of our past development.”\(^74\) His chapter in the book *The Era of the American Revolution: Studies Inscribed to Evarts Boutell Greene* used the New York branch of the Sons of Liberty as a case study to illustrate the important role the masses played in the years leading up to the revolution.\(^75\) Titled “The Sons of Liberty in New York,” the short study stressed that the American Revolution was:

\(^72\) Holmes, 39.
\(^74\) Ibid., 409.
Due in no small measure to the effective revolutionary agitation carried on by the Sons of Liberty. Directed with consummate skill by a resolute and capable group of radical leaders and supported mainly by mechanics, artisans, and day laborers, this organization mobilized the popular discontent of the time. Abhorring all kinds of privilege, it stood and struggled for the transfer of power from the aristocratic minority to the democratic majority.76

Using primary source documents such as newspapers and individual writings, he then went on to describe the rise of the Sons of Liberty in New York and the role that it played in the political happenings of the state. Having towards the end illustrated the important role the organizations played in the years leading up the Revolution, and having proven the organization to be mostly a “lower-class organization,” Morais then discussed the internal struggle waged between two opposing forces within the organization.77 The first, the right wing of the Revolutionary movement that consisted of conservative merchants, “gradually came to support the idea of independence but only with the proviso that state power be confined to them” while the left wing consisted mostly of artisans who wanted to part with England and establish “a government which would be responsive to the people at large.”78 Once again Morais attempted not only to establish the important role the working classes played in the movement towards democracy, but also tried to further the Marxist interpretation of history by portraying the struggle between the slowly emerging capitalist class and the masses.

Already being recognized as an authority in his field, things looked promising for the still relatively young historian. By 1939 he had served as the Chairman of the Brooklyn chapter of the College Teachers Union, been promoted to Assistant Professor, supervised graduate students completing their Master’s work, was on the Committee on Graduate Studies, and then went on to present a paper at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association, which took place

76 Ibid., 269.
77 Ibid., 270-278.
78 Ibid., 278.
in New York City in late 1940. Unfortunately, by then the Rapp-Coudert investigations had
gotten under way and Morais’s life and career would be forever shaped by his involvement in the
proceedings.

Morais was first subpoenaed on October 29, 1940 to meet with the committee at a private
hearing to be held on October 31. Meeting with Senator Coudert and four staff members at
3:30 PM on that day, Morais asked if he would be given a transcript of the proceedings and what
members of the committee were present. Having been refused the answers to these questions
Morais asked to make a statement:

My counsel, Mr. [William] Mulligan counsel of the New York College Teachers Union,
has told me that the Legislature has not authorized your Committee to conduct hearings if
a majority of the members is not present. I have also been informed that the College
Teachers Union is litigating the right of your Committee to hold private hearings. Since I
am a member of the College Teachers Union and a former member of its Local Executive
Board, I do not wish to interfere with such litigation. Therefore, I respectfully request
permission to withdraw.

Despite repeated demands that he answer their questions, including if his party name was
“Richard Enmale,” Morais repeated variations of the same statement until he was dismissed. His
meeting lasted only ten minutes. Things died down for about a month until the first set of open
hearings conducted by the committee in December of the same year. It was at this time that
Morais, in conjunction with over twenty other teachers, was threatened for refusing to testify in
private hearings because they questioned the legality of some of the committee’s actions. It was
decided at that time that contempt proceedings would be brought against those who continually

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79 Morais, “In appearing before your committee,” 2-3.
80 The People of the State of New York to Herbert M. Morais, October 29, 1940, Morais Documents,
Tamiment Library, New York University.
81 Hearing of Herbert M. Morais before the Rapp-Coudert Committee to investigate the educational system
of the State of New York, October 31, 1940, Morais Documents, Tamiment Library, New York University.
82 Ibid.
refused to testify and that they had only a few weeks to decide what to do until the end of the holiday season when the committee would resume its activities.\textsuperscript{84}

On January 21 of the following year Morais received a letter from Board of Higher Education administrator Peal Bernstein.\textsuperscript{85} Inside was a copy of the resolution passed by the Board in regards to faculty members cooperating with the Rapp-Coudert Committee. It insisted that the “staffs and all other employees under its [the Board’s] jurisdiction…promptly obey all subpoenas issued…and to give such testimony and such other information as may be requested by the Committee.”\textsuperscript{86} In conclusion it stated that the Board would take disciplinary action against anyone who failed to comply with the resolution.\textsuperscript{87} The resolution must have had an impact on Morais because he met with members of the Board on February 11 for what were clearly the early stages of what would later become more thorough investigations.

At the meeting, Morais was asked if he knew some of the other professors being accused of subversive activities. He was also asked if he had ever contributed to the Communist paper on campus, the \textit{Staff}. Though he admitted he knew the other accused professors through the union, he denied that he had ever written for the \textit{Staff}.\textsuperscript{88} It would appear that already the Board was trying to establish probable guilt by association, but they also asked more direct questions about the CPUSA as well. An example can be seen in the following exchange:

Questioner: Are you a member of the Communist Party or the Third International?

\textit{[Morais:] No, Sir.}

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{85} Pearl Bernstein to Herbert M. Morais, January 21, 1941, Morais Documents, Tamiment Library, New York University.
\textsuperscript{86} Board of Higher Education of the City of New York, “A True Copy of a Resolution Adopted by the Board of Higher Education on January 20, 1941,” January 20, 1941, Morais Documents, Tamiment Library, New York University.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{88} Hearing before the Special Committee with Reference to the Joint Legislative Investigation of the Board of Higher Education, February 11, 1941, Morais Documents, Tamiment Library, New York University.
Questioner: Did you ever advocate the overthrow of the government by force and violence?

[Morais:] No.

Questioner: Do you know if any one at the college has?

[Morais:] I know of no one.\(^ {89}\)

The meeting only lasted for about ten minutes until the Board had heard everything it had wanted to know from Morais at the moment. However, just two weeks later the Rapp-Coudert Committee came calling and Morais received a subpoena on February 27, 1941 warning him that if he refused to attend he would be cited for contempt.\(^ {90}\)

 Appearing at a private hearing before the committee on March 1, Morais answered questions for thirty minutes and even went as far as to sign a waiver of immunity. To start the session Morais was asked questions about his educational background, however these were only the first five questions, as the remainder addressed the Communist Party.\(^ {91}\) As before when questioned by the Board, Morais was asked if he had ever been a member of the Party. He was also asked if he ever attended a Party meeting, had ever been approached to join the Party, and if he ever attended a meeting at the Party's headquarters. It is also clear by this time that the committee knew not only that he was a member of the Party, but also that he had published under the name of Richard Enmale:

Q: Did you ever write under an assumed name? Did you ever have anything published by International Publishers?


Q: Did you ever hear of the name of R.E. [Richard Enmale]?

\(^{89}\) Ibid.

\(^{90}\) The People of the State of New York of New York to Herbert M. Morais, February 27, 1941, Morais Documents, Tamiment Library, New York University.

\(^{91}\) Hearing before the Joint Legislative Committee in Investigate the Educational System of the State of New York, March 1, 1941, Morais Documents, Tamiment Library, New York University.

Q: Did you ever use that name?

A: No.

Q: Do you know James S. Allen?...I am referring to the Allen who wrote something on Reconstruction.

A: I recall the book but I do not know the author.

Q: Have you ever heard about the Civil War in the United States by Marx and Engels?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you write the foreword or supply any of the comments?

A: No.92

As the hearing went on the committee began to ask Morais more specific questions about International Publishers and it is obvious from the sample above that they already knew, or at least greatly suspected, that he was “Enmale.” At this point Morais may have felt that he could keep this identity a secret, but the lid was completely blown off on March 8, 1941 when Canning testified in public. Not only did Canning name Morais as a Communist, but he also accused him of hatching a plot to rewrite American history with International Publishers.93

Over the course of the testimony Canning said that he had met Morais and others at the office of Alex Trachtenberg, the president of International Publishers, during which they discussed the matter.94 Though he could not remember a specific date during which the meeting took place, he stated that “it was a conference of the historians in the party, from various

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92 Ibid.
colleges, to discuss a plan” to issue publications about American history.\textsuperscript{95} Among the historians he named were Henry Klein, Philip Foner, and Morais. In regards to Morais, Canning told the committee that he wrote for the publishing company under the pseudonym “Richard Enmale.”

When asked about the nature of the word “Enmale,” Canning replied:

“I was a little surprised at that name, and I asked Philip Foner who knows Morais. I never saw him after that meeting until Christmas [at] the American Historical Association, but the name, Foner, told me was an anagram based on—not exactly an anagram, based on the three—the triumvirate of Marxist leaders, Engel[s], for the first two L[etter]s, Marx [for the] Ma and Lenin [for the] Le.”\textsuperscript{96}

When asked what they hoped to accomplish through these histories, Canning said:

To prove the validity of the thesis the Communists then were using, that Communism is Americanism in the Twentieth Century…that Americanism in earlier centuries was sort of a prototype or a foreshadowing of the Socialist America that is yet to come.\textsuperscript{97}

The cat was out of the bag. Not only had Morais been publicly identified as a Communist, not only had he been accused of writing Marxist history with the aim of helping it to conform with Party objectives, but he had done so after telling the Committee and the Board that he had not. In other words, he was caught lying. He was now trapped and there was quite literally nothing he could do, but he tried. Soon after Canning’s testimony, Morais and others were yet again subpoenaed in May to appear before Coudert at a public hearing the following month. Instead of appearing, however, in early June he and six others sought to have their subpoenas voided by the State Supreme Court because they felt the committee was overstepping its boundaries.\textsuperscript{98} They argued that, among other things, it was no longer acting as a fact-finding committee and instead was attempting to assign guilt and administer its own form of social justice.

\textsuperscript{95} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid.; In other words: Engels, Marx, Lenin combine to create “Enmale.”
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid.
Supreme Court Justice Samuel U. Rosenman ruled against the motion to void the subpoenas soon after, but Morais and the other six still refused to testify because they were going to appeal Justice Rosenman’s decision and asked that any questions be held until a final decision was made.99 Their request was denied and on June 7 the Board of Higher Education announced that they were suspending or bringing charges against the seven uncooperative professors and would begin conducting a formal investigation. Their primary offense was violating the January 21, 1941 resolution saying that all employees would cooperate with the investigative committee.100 Morais specifically was suspended without pay from his position at Brooklyn College and told to wait until his trial before the Board. On September 20 of the same year Morais sent a letter to Coudert explaining why he had refused to testify. Citing that he “sincerely believed that the investigation was an invasion of academic freedom” and that the power of the investigating committee should be tested in the courts,” he told Coudert that he would now testify before the committee when called.101

It is unclear from the evidence available to the author as to whether Morais ever ended up meeting with Coudert. What is clear is that on December 3, 1941 he met with Lausen Stone, the chairman of the Board’s committee to investigate the accused teachers.102 At the meeting Morais stated why he refused to testify in court during the summer and reaffirmed that he was not in the Communist Party. Stone reminded him that they had evidence that he was and if he did not admit it, charges would be brought against him. But Morais stood fast saying that he was not lying and that he had nothing to hide; he was not a Communist.103 We must remember that even if Morais

101 Herbert M. Morais to Frederick R. Coudert, Jr., September 20, 1941, Morais Documents, Tamiment Library, New York University.
102 A Summary: Conference at the Office of Mr. Lausen Stone, December 3, 1941, Morais Documents, Tamiment Library, New York University.
103 Ibid.
did admit to being in the Party he still would have been fired regardless because of the perceptions about what being a member of the Party entailed and the resolution passed by the Board. Morais must have realized this, as many others did after him, and he chose to lie in order to try to save his job rather than admit membership and lose it without a fight.

On December 15 the investigative committee of the Board of Higher Education brought charges against Morais, and upon receiving them on December 22 he was told that he had ten days to respond to them. Morais was charged on five counts, which were: (1) Being a member of the revolutionary Communist Party and taking part in Party activities, including publishing books for the Party under the name of “Richard Enmale” and publishing in *Science & Society,* (2) Trying to obstruct the efforts of the Rapp-Coudert Committee and, when testifying, having lied to the committee, (3) Obstructing the committee in June by refusing to testify, (4) Violating the January 21, 1941 resolution, and (5) Assisting in the publication of the Communist paper the *Staff.* The resulting conclusion from these charges was that Morais had partaken in actions unbecoming of a teacher and was thus in the eyes of the Board unfit to teach.

On December 24 the Chairman of the Board, Ordway Tead wrote to Morais telling him that he now had until January 12, 1942 to respond to the charges brought against him and that his official trial was scheduled for January 26. Then Morais was made to sign a waiver officially revoking any right to claim pay from the period during which he had been suspended. In the meantime, Morais sent his responses to the charges brought against him on December 31, 1941.

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105 Ibid., 2-16; The Board identified *Science & Society* as a journal that attempted only to spread Marxist doctrines, doctrines, which of course, were considered harmful.
with the assistance of his new lawyer Herbert A. Kaiden. As is to be expected, Morais denied every charge. He denied that he had ever been in the Communist Party and that he had ever written for the Party under the name “Enmale.” He also denied that he had obstructed the Rapp-Coudert Committee, or that he had violated the January 21, 1941 resolution because there was a pending question concerning the legality of some of the actions of the committee. In regards to the final charge, Morais also denied having any involvement with the Staff.

Transcending the chargers brought against him, Morais and Kaiden charged that the Board was infringing on his academic freedom and that they had no right to administer any sort of political test against teachers in a public educational system as this was a violation of his Constitutional rights. They went on to also argue that the Board had no legal right to suspend him or bring the charges against him in the first place. In addition, the Rapp-Coudert Committee had asked questions beyond its scope, shifting from a fact-finding legislative committee to a body that was overstepping its powers. Thus, all the charges were null and void and should be dropped.

As can be expected, this ploy did not work, and Morais readied himself for his trial before the Board. Yet, in an interesting turn of events, his trial never took place. The trial was initially delayed on January 7, 1942 when Morais fell and fractured the coronoid process in his left ulna, meaning in layman’s terms that he broke a major bone in his left elbow. The break was so severe that the amount of time required to properly heal would be at least three months. In response the Board asked Kaiden for a medical certificate from Morais’s physician before

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108 Ibid., 1-6.
109 Ibid., 6-11.
110 Herbert A. Kaiden to Trial Committee of the Board of Higher Education, January 8, 1942, Morais Documents, Tamiment Library, New York University.
they could decide on the matter. On January 19 Morais’s doctor Harold Lusskin provided a medical certificate vouching for his status and the extent of his recovery time. On January 27 Kaiden was informed that the Board had decided to postpone the trial until February 9, but then on February 3 Kaiden asked for another postponement because Lusskin had found that an excessive amount of fluid had collected around Morais’s injury. The Board granted a postponement until the 16th, but then on the 11th Kaiden once again asked for postponement because of Morais’s slow recovery time.

Morais’s trial ended up being postponed at least two more times. It was postponed from sometime in March until April 20 and then on April 5 it was postponed until May 14. The trial would never come, however. Deciding that it would be better to quit than to face the problems associated with being fired and exposed more to bad publicity through the trial, Morais sent in his letter of resignation on May 12, 1942. Though he would most certainly have been fired otherwise, it is hard to say what would have happened to his career had he opted to face trial. We do know however what Morais did after his resignation. He went to teach at the Communist Party School for Democracy.

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111 Pearl Bernstein to Hebert A. Kaiden, January 15, 1942, Morais Documents, Tamiment Library, New York University.
112 Dr. Harold Lusskin to Whom it May Concern, January 19, 1942, Morais Documents, Tamiment Library, New York University.
115 Pearl Bernstein to Herbert A. Kaiden, March 25, 1942, Morais Documents, Tamiment Library, New York University; Pearl Bernstein to Trial Committee for Herbert M. Morais, April 5, 1942, Morais Documents, Tamiment Library, New York University.
116 Herbert M. Morais to Honorable Ordway Tead, Chairman, May 12, 1942, Morais Documents, Tamiment Library, New York University.
Having lost his job because of his political beliefs and being in dire financial straits, Morais joined Foner and other Rapp-Coudert victims who could not find employment at the Communist School for Democracy in 1942. While working at the School for Democracy for two years Morais taught “The Growth of American Democracy I” from the colonial period to 1876 and “The Growth of American Democracy II” from 1876 to 1942. Later in the winter of 1945 Morais also taught with Foner and Aptheker at the Communist Jefferson School of Social Sciences in New York City, where he taught Research & Writing in American History. While working at the Communist schools Morais also tried to resume publishing, but the only two outlets that he could get published in were Science & Society and International Publishers Company.

In 1942 he published “Artisan Democracy and The American Revolution” in Science & Society. A version of the paper he gave at the American Historical Association in 1940, the article blasted historians for ignoring the history of colonial mechanics, artisans, and day laborers who valiantly helped to make the American Revolution a reality. Instead of telling their story, Morais said, historians had instead decided to hide it “like the short and simple annals of the

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117 We know Morais was short on funds because of a letter sent to him by Kaiden in June, which reveals that Kaiden was in need of payment for his services to Morais during the previous months. If Morais had the money, he obviously would have paid him. Herbert A. Kaiden to Herbert M. Morais, June 24, 1942, Morais Documents, Tamiment Library, New York University.


120 The reader will remember from the previous chapter that suspected and publishers often blacklisted known academic Communists.

poor…it has been buried in the scrap-heaps of history.”\textsuperscript{122} Combined with his earlier work on the artisans’ role in the Sons of Liberty, we see Morais making an early plea for and writing his own version of what became popularized later by the British Marxist Historians as “history from below.”

He continued this vein of writing but expanded upon it in his 1944 International Publishers book, \textit{The Struggle for American History: The First Two Hundred Years}.\textsuperscript{123} Beginning with the economic conditions of the time, as any Marxist historian would, Morais traced the first two hundred years of American history from 1607 to 1801. Primarily, Morais wanted the book to relate the “salient political, social, and cultural facts of American history to [the] material forces at play.”\textsuperscript{124} He also tried to use the book as a way to show readers the role everyday people played in the forging of democracy, as well as the various struggles between classes that took place during this process. The book received mixed reviews. One reviewer noted that Morais had paid close attention to “the strains and stresses (basically economic) of class interests” and had helped to “clarify some obscurities of the crucial periods preceding and following our Revolutionary War.”\textsuperscript{125} Another, less friendly, review stated “Mr. Morais leans so heavily toward the Left from time to time that the historical approach is surrendered.”\textsuperscript{126}

It was around the same time as the publication of the book that Morais got a job in the research division of the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America (UE). Founded in 1936 as a part of the rapidly emerging CIO, the UE was one of the more radical rank-and-file unions in the country. It also had a large Communist contingent, supposedly containing...
around 200 current or former Communists on the payroll in 1950.\textsuperscript{127} The UE had the distinction of not only being one of the largest and most powerful unions in the CIO, but also that of being expelled from the umbrella organization in 1949 under the charge that it was Communist dominated.\textsuperscript{128}

While working for UE, Morais was published twice in 1948. The first work was an article in *Science & Society* entitled “Marx and Engels on America” and the second was a full-length book *Gene Debs: The Story of a Fighting American*.\textsuperscript{129} In “Marx and Engels on America” Morais repeated some of the observations made in his earlier publications and as a result there is not much new to say with regards to it. *Gene Debs: The Story of a Fighting American* was meant to be a short biography of Debs and was co-written with William Cahn. The book painted Debs in an extremely positive light and attempted to show Debs as a model radical. The book would have received fairly positive reviews, but it was widely criticized for attempting to portray Debs as a major supporter of Communism. John Newtown Thurber of the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University wrote of the book that it was a “dishonest literary endeavor” because of its attempt to link Debs to “the left-wing” of radical politics in America.\textsuperscript{130} The *New York Times* gave it the same assessment, stating that the book was acceptable until it began to discuss Debs in relation to Communism.\textsuperscript{131} At face value it seems that for the first and only time Morais bent history in order to fulfill the Party line of enrolling “every rebel against

\textsuperscript{127} Filippelli, 6.
the social order into the ancestry” of the Communist Party. Yet one could just as easily argue that Morais actually believed what he wrote and as such, it is not the goal of the author to decide either way.

Working for the UE, Morais fell off the map for about seven years before he reemerged on the academic scene with the publication of Labor’s Untold Story in 1955. Co-written with freelance journalist and supposed Communist Richard O. Boyer, Labor’s Untold Story was billed as a story of adventure chronicling the battles, struggles, betrayals, and victories of America’s laborers. Truly a “history from below,” Labor covered the history of American labor from the mid-nineteenth century to the merging of the AFL and CIO in 1955. The book was clearly written from a Marxist perspective in the way Morais and Boyer blended the economic factors of society with the plight of workers and the struggle that ensues between classes.

Examples of the Marxist slant abound within the text. For instance, the authors discussed the economic crisis of 1873 as a result of the advancements in industrial production and “capital[ists] taking too much and the people who produced the wealth getting too little.” Later in the book they describe John D. Rockefeller as “a savage tiger” when it came to making money and making his business profitable. They wrote that the Great Depression, like all those that came before it, was caused primarily by capitalists and their economic system, “the result of the inherent contraction between an industry socially operated and privately owned; between an economy operated by the many who received little and owned by the few who received almost

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132 Thurber, 301.
135 Ibid., 40.
136 Ibid., 73.
They concluded the book by stating that only through the unity and perseverance of labor could America reach peace without a war or Red Scare, and move towards a better democracy (presumably Socialism).

The book received mixed reviews. In a more unfavorable review the duo was criticized for painting all Leftists as heroes of labor and any labor leaders who were anti-Communist as villains and collaborators with capitalists who were harming the working class. Another review said that the book possessed great value as a history of American labor, but that it was hampered by the authors’ biases against big business. In *The Journal of Negro History* the book was praised for its absorbing account of labor’s struggles and the fact that the book was well authenticated due to its thorough bibliography. Still, on the whole the reviews of the book were largely negative because of the book’s tone towards capitalism and the business class. And yet for all the bad press the book was and has continued to be extremely popular. As of 2010 the book has been published in three editions through twenty-seven printings. Though over fifty years old it has continued to remained a widely read account of American labor history and as late as 2008 was reviewed in the *Registered Nurse: Journal of Patient Advocacy* as a book

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137 Ibid., 249.
138 Ibid., 379.
that “should amaze, shock, and motivate nurses and union members to do just that, [unionize and fight for a better life].”  

Having published what could be considered to be his *magnum opus* of “history from below,” Morais quit working for the UE and took up a job as research director for Pharmaceutical Advertising Associates, Inc., disappearing from publishing in the process.  

Having ceased his work for Pharmaceutical Advertising Associates and living in Laguna Hills, California, Morais resurfaced in the mid-to-late 1960’s in a number of publications related to medical history. His first, an article published in the *Journal of Occupational Medicine* in 1965, examined how the medical profession dealt with the health needs of workers in early industrial America. His next two publications *The History of the Negro in Medicine*, a full-length book, and *Medicine in Health*, a chapter in a larger volume, were published as part of the International Library of Negro Life and History. In both Morais drew, presumably, on his previous job to produce works that told the struggle of African Americans to receive equal access to medicine and proper health care. In this vein, Morais continued with the Communist tradition of fighting for African American rights in all levels of society and, on some level in conjunction with the previous article, continued his work of telling “history from below.”

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This was without a doubt a hallmark of his career and for all intents and purposes Morais can and should be considered an American Marxist Historian and a pioneer of the now famous “history from below” approach. Having lived a long life that saw a promising career as an academic be stripped away from him because of his political affiliations, Herbert M. Morais died in California in 1970.148 Though much could probably still be said about his contribution to specific fields of history and his commitment to scientific socialist history, it is telling of his commitment to labor that in the fifth printing of Labor’s Untold Story two years after his death Morais received a tribute which read:

A scholar, he was also a fighter for the rights of all men. Each word he spoke or wrote was an action in behalf of a world without war, racism or the exploitation of man by man. He was a dedicated teacher who did not allow his historical research and other scholarly pursuits to keep him from close contact with students who loved and respected him. An uncompromising fighter for academic freedom, he also contributed his abilities as an historian to the trade union movement and to the rising struggle of the Black people. An able and accurate historian, he had confidence in the future because he knew the past.149

Summation

Over the course of this lengthy chapter we have used the Rapp-Coudert Committee to better illustrate the types of problems and issues that surrounded anti-Communistic oppression. In the second part of the case study we traced the story of Morais, who represented just one of many historians and academics whose careers were cut short because of their political affiliation. As mentioned before, the great majority of these men and women were law-abiding citizens who had committed no crime except for believing in ideas that were considered politically unorthodox and incredibly “dangerous” because they were also held by an international

organization that was under the guidance of the Soviet Union. Through the example of Morais, we saw a man who had attempted throughout his career to produce scientific socialist history to the best of his ability. It is unfortunate that he was not able to stay within the academy, as it is impossible to know what impact he and others like Philip S. Foner would have had on the historical profession had they not been pushed out.
Conclusion

Writing years after the worst period of McCarthyism had past in 1962, William F. Buckley, Jr. declared that it was “nothing short of preposterous” to “tolerate an active conspiracy in our midst.”\(^1\) Though acknowledging that the Communist Party was all but dead, Buckley insisted that Communism was still the greatest threat to America both at home and abroad. “As the power of the enemy abroad increases,” he wrote, “so necessarily does his arm here, unless we chop it off.”\(^2\)

For Buckley and others, the consequences of HUAC, loyalty oaths, the actions of the FBI, and the clear invasion of civil liberties was a necessary means to an end if the specter of Communism was to be crushed in favor of a world led by American democracy. Still, as seen in this thesis, there is more than enough evidence to challenge these assertions. Tracing the development of anti-Communist fervor in America from 1935 to the late 1950s, it has been shown that McCarthyism was by all definitions a witch-hunt. As Telford Taylor, who served as council during the Nuremberg Trials, has commented on the main method of finding these supposedly dangerous Communists:

Committee proceedings that have no purpose or effect other than to expose individuals to public contumely, and to the loss of their jobs and perhaps of their livelihoods, are a new and dangerous political device, never authorized by law or contemplated during the evolution of legislative investigation.\(^3\)

And yet what of the role of McCarthyism in the suppression of Marxist historical analysis in the United States? It was the primary purpose of this endeavor to show that Ian Tyrrell’s

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\(^{2}\) Ibid., 32.

central thesis, that scientific socialist history never took hold in America until the 1960s because of the discipline’s internal development, was flawed. Moreover, it was the intention of the author to provide a framework, a house, from which to continue the examination of scientific socialist history in the U.S. through further case studies. It began by examining Tyrrell’s argument and tracing early Marxist historiography up until the 1940s. From there it shifted attention to the foundations of McCarthyistic oppression, investigated examples of it, and explored the important misconceptions about the Party that fueled the government’s obsession with finding and destroying Communists. Then followed an examination of the role of Communists in the academy and the many ways that they were “discovered,” cases were brought against them, and their subsequent firing. Finally, using the Rapp-Coudert Committee and the career of historian Herbert M. Morais it was shown that in some capacity American Marxist Historians did exist in the academy and that they were finally forced out of the profession not because of its internal development, but because of McCarthyism.

As written in the introduction, when discussing Marxist historians from 1940 to 1960 the school of British Marxist Historians led by E. P. Thompson, Eric Hobsbawm, Christopher Hill, and others is usually thought of as the primary example of professionals practicing history informed by the philosophy of Karl Marx. It is the contention of Tyrrell that these historians were allowed to assume this mantel because the discipline of history developed differently in Britain, and to reinforce this Tyrrell weakly notes that anti-Communism also existed in Britain. While this is true without a doubt, what Tyrrell fails to mention is that in Britain the academy was not attacked as much as it was in the U.S. and therefore his thesis that external factors had little affect is fundamentally flawed. Seeing this, this study proposed a two-step procedure by
which historians can attempt to develop a complete understanding as to why scientific socialist history never took hold in the U.S. as strongly as it had elsewhere.

While it is true that over the course of this endeavor it was shown that external factors played quite possibly the most important role in the development of Marxism within the historical profession of the U.S., this thesis claims to be only a small sliver of the work still yet to be done. It is the hope of the author that this work will spur further discussion and investigations into what Schrecker has rightly called “the missing generation,” and how their suppression has continued to affect the discipline of history even to this day.
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