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Ellen Schrecker. *The Age of McCarthyism: A Brief History with Documents.* Boston, Mass.: St. Martin's Press, 1994. xiv + 274 pp. $14.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-312-08349-6; $39.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-312-10277-7.

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Although it is not generally recognized, HUAC hearings continue to be held every spring in an obscure lecture hall on the campus of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. All of the characters involved – members of Congress, lawyers, cooperative and uncooperative witnesses in the persons of screenwriters, starlets, union officials, and left-wing professors – are students in my survey course on Twentieth Century America. In the past we have culled the scripts from a variety of sources and the personalities and situations often from our own imaginations. Thanks to Ellen Schrecker's excellent new book, the terrorized students in History 262 and in other U.S. History classes dealing with the issue of political repression will have a better background in the problem and better materials with which to work.

In addition to her award-winning *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities* (1986), Schrecker has produced a number of important articles on anticommunism and is currently writing a general history of McCarthyism.

The book is divided into two sections. The first provides probably the best short overview of post-World War II anticommunism I have found. Certainly there are more detailed and nuanced discussions, but none more suitable for teaching purposes. Schrecker begins with a very short introduction to the Communist Party, USA – its history and changes in the party line and leadership between its foundation in 1919 and the beginning of the Cold War. (Some membership figures over time might have helped a great deal here to gauge the nature of the threat such as it was.) Subsequent chapters deal with the international and domestic roots of American anticommunism; the succession of espionage cases in the late forties and early fifties; anticommunist investigations and legislation at the federal, state, and local levels of government; the destruction of Communist front organizations and the left-wing unions; the problem of blacklisting in a wide range of institutions and organizations; liberals' struggles against McCarthyism; and the period's political legacy. Joe McCarthy himself plays a suitably small role in this narrative; one chapter describes the rise and decline of the political career he built on the issue of communist subversion. In a rather short space, Schrecker manages to convey why it is such a mistake to equate the widespread influence and implications of anticommunism with the career of one politician. Schrecker, who is generally identified with a revisionist interpretation of communism and anticommunism, i.e., with the notion that both were products to some degree of America's own political history, provides an account that is both readable and balanced.

As with her narrative, Schrecker begins her collection of nearly fifty documents with materials reflecting the experience of the communists themselves, including excerpts from several of the interviews used for the 1984 documentary film "Seeing Red." A portion of William Z. Foster's 1947 book The New Europe conveys the thinking behind the party's reversion to a more orthodox Marxism-Leninism in the wake of Earl Browder's 1945 fall from power. Other documents include FBI reports from Freedom of Information Act files; letters between the Ethel and Julius Rosenberg; the Attorney General's official list of subversive organizations; excerpts from the 1949 Smith Act trials; Supreme Court Opinions; testimony from Alger Hiss, Whittaker Chambers, and others before Congressional investigating committees; the CIO resolution to expel the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America; and opposing contemporary interpretations of the whole situation from Sidney Hook and Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas.

I happen to be writing this review as I read *The Secret World of American Communism* (1995) by Harvey Klehr', John Earl Haynes, and Fridrikh Igorevich Firsov, which employs documents from the former Soviet archives, text, and notes to detail the connections between individuals and groups of American communists and the Soviet espionage network. With this new book, we know much more about this particular aspect of the American com-

munist experience which clearly served as a rationale for the political repression illustrated in Schrecker's *The Age of McCarthyism.* But as Klehr', Haynes, and Firsov point out, most American communists had nothing to do with this espionage; they ususally joined the party to fight against home-grown injustices or the very real international threat of fascism. Yet they were linked with the Soviet monolith in the public mind, and many of them paid a high price for their ideals. While *The Secret World of American Communism* is carefully written and edited and makes no claim to represent the "true" experience of American communists, the danger, of course, is that it will be (indeed is already being) used to justify the political repression so well conveyed in Schrecker's book.

The Age of McCarthyism's usefulness as a teaching tool is enhanced by a glossary of terms which are keyed to bold-face words and phrases in the text; a chronology of events; a substantial bibliographical essay; and more than a dozen photographs and editorial cartoons. The book will be quite useful even in a large lecture class like mine, but it will serve as a particularly invaluable discussion and research tool in smaller contemporary U.S. classes or in seminars on radicalism and political intolerance.

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