

When that time is going to be I don't happen to know, but I believe they would and will be made.

The true Party member is ready to denounce his own past at the drop of a hat; but Mr. Taylor set some kind of record in his brief appearance before the Committee, and the Committee succeeded in reducing America to a party and Americanism to its "line." The Committee had already perfected its technique of preemptive ideologizing—the attempt to thwart an enemy by strenuously imitating him.

Of course, the Committee still criticized Communists when they exacted ideological conformity and swift conversions. It heard several times how screenwriter Albert Maltz had been disciplined for saying, in a 1946 *New Masses* article, that "writers must be judged by their work and not by the committees they join." Mocking political standards of criticism, he recalled how Lillian Hellman's anti-Nazi play, *Watch on the Rhine*, was denounced by *New Masses* during the time of the Hitler-Stalin pact, and then praised after Hitler's invasion of Russia.

Maltz was called to account for his deviations—typically, at a cell meeting in a Hollywood nightclub. He did his Robert Taylor recanting act in the *Daily Worker*. John Howard Lawson, convener of Marxist salons in Hollywood, was as devout a front-watcher as the Committee's own J. B. Matthews (whose whole first fame rested on the number of fronts he had joined).

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From Garry Wills' Introduction to SCOUNDREL TIME, by Lillian Hellman  
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By 1947 the House Committee on Un-American Activities had been in existence for almost a decade. But it had been a shabby and backstreet operation, specializing in anti-Semitic and racial insinuations under two Southern Democrats as chairmen (Martin Dies and John S. Wood). Respectable Congressmen avoided it. When the nation's best-known anti-Semite, Gerald L. K. Smith, was asked before the Committee in 1946, Representative John Rankin wanted to get his opinion on the evils of the New Deal, not to question him on his anti-Semitic activities. Smith was treated like a friendly expert witness.

But things began to change in 1947. The off-year election of the preceding year had created the first Republican Congress in sixteen years and it seemed to presage the defeat of Harry Truman in 1948. A Republican chairman (J. Parnell Thomas) and chief counsel (Robert Stripling) led the Committee now, and a bright new Congressman like Richard Nixon could see that anxiety over Communism made the Committee a place of opportunity instead of ignominy. A newly aggressive Truman had launched the Cold War in the spring of 1947 with his plan to "rescue" Greece and Turkey. Simultaneously he introduced a new loyalty program, extending investigation to all federal employees (a standard not even imposed in wartime). Truman's Justice Department convened the New York grand jury that would lead to Smith Act prosecutions for mere membership in the Communist Party. The At-

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torney General arrested Gerhart Eisler under the kind of presidential warrant used in war, and detained him on Ellis Island. J. Edgar Hoover made two personal appearances before the House Committee to call the Communists a "fifth column" justifying the expanded spywork his force had engaged in during the war. Another House committee (Appropriations) launched an attack on ten State Department employees as loyalty risks—and Secretary George Marshall dismissed them all without a hearing. The Senate showed its muscle by getting John Carter Vincent transferred from the Far East desk at State.

But perhaps the most ominous thing that happened in that busy spring of 1947 was the compilation of the Attorney General's List. This was originally proposed as an internal document, to assist in implementing Truman's loyalty tests. A checklist of organizations with four kinds of ties—to Communist, Fascist, totalitarian, or subversive views—would be used to screen federal employees. Membership in one of them, or enough of them, would indicate an area for investigation before an applicant could be approved for a job. Yet later in the year, when Truman was using Attorney General Tom Clark to promote the Marshall Plan as a shield against Communism, the List was published.

This was a profound violation of civil rights in itself, and the basis for all kinds of later violations—by Congress, by individual employers, by entrepreneurial blacklists. Without charging any illegal

acts, without supplying the grounds for its proscription, without offering a machinery for individual reply, the government branded as putatively disloyal any citizen who belonged to one of a large number of organizations. This was soon extended in the public mind to include those who might have given money to one such organization, or attended its meetings. The List, intended to supply *prima facie* reason for investigating federal employees, was used to deny people employment in *any* responsible position, private or public. The government had made a massive vague charge which it need not sustain in court. And now any private citizen, armed with the List, could impugn another citizen's loyalty with what looked like the authorization of the United States Government. From this single act arose the whole blacklisting campaign, the doctrine of guilt by association, the decade-long search of old letterheads and donations and attendance lists, the cobwebby stringing of "ties" from shadow to shadow.

The McCarthy era does not date from 1950, when Joseph McCarthy made his first charges. It dates from 1947, from the joint efforts of Truman, Attorney General Tom Clark, and J. Edgar Hoover. They gave the House Un-American Activities Committee its weapons—the lists it could use on witnesses, the loyalty program for which it could demand ever stricter enforcement, the presumption that a citizen is disloyal until proved loyal, the denial of work to any man or woman who would not