

the **SECOND RED SCARE**

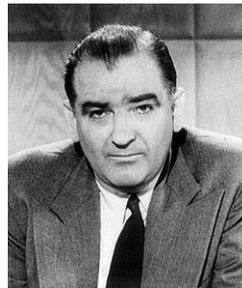
The hunt for Communists in the United States clearly reached the point of hysteria by the early 1950s, but what is often overlooked is that it had its origins in a very real phenomenon. The opening of the Soviet archives in the 1990s, and the declassification of certain intercepted Soviet messages from the late 1940s, indicates that Soviet agents had penetrated the U.S. government before and during World War II, in some cases at very high levels. One particularly noteworthy instance of this involved **Ethel and Julius Rosenberg**, who were convicted in 1951 of passing information about the atomic bomb to the **Kremlin**. The resulting trial, conviction, and execution of this young, middle-class couple divided the nation, and kept the issue of Soviet espionage before the American public for years to come. Julius was a spy and communist recruiter for the USSR. Secrets sold to the Soviets included technology about the atomic bomb and other weapons (including that which shot down the American **U2** spy plane piloted by **Gary Powers** in 1960)

In 1946 the **House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)**, which had been created as a temporary committee in the 1930's to investigate subversives during World War II, became a permanent standing congressional committee. It quickly took upon itself the responsibility for determining how deeply communists had penetrated into American society. **J. Edgar Hoover**, director of the **FBI** from 1935-1972, collected information on thousands of Americans in the search for communists, often illegally and unethically. He provided evidence for HUAC. One of the most famous episodes in HUAC's history was its investigation of Hollywood. In this case the committee looked into the production of certain films during World War II that had created an overly-positive image of life in the Soviet Union. A number of prominent Hollywood figures, including studio executives, movie stars, and screenwriters, were called to testify in 1947. **Ronald Reagan**, then an actor, testified. When some of the Hollywood accused refused to answer questions about their communist affiliations, or refused to identify others who were suspected of being communists, they were blacklisted (more than 300 people). Ten of them—soon dubbed the "**Hollywood Ten**"—were charged and convicted of contempt of Congress. A few left the country; some screenwriters continued to work under false names. Charlie Chaplin had his re-entry revoked by Hoover (he had gone home to Britain). Chaplin moved to Switzerland, not returning to America until 1972 to accept an honorary Oscar award.

An ex-communist party member and ex-Soviet spy, **Whittaker Chambers**, became a key witness in the "red witch hunt." He testified against **Alger Hiss**, a lawyer who worked for the government and helped set up the United Nations. Hiss was found guilty of perjury but not espionage, although the **FBI** did acquire evidence that Hiss was a colleague of Chambers in his "red" days. **Richard Nixon** (HUAC committee member) used this evidence to incriminate Hiss. This is when Nixon rose to fame, later becoming **Dwight Eisenhower's** Vice President in 1952. Hiss served 44 months of a 10 year sentence. Evidence has since been uncovered that suggests that he was in fact a spy, but it will likely be until 2026 (when files are de-classified) that America knows for sure.



Julius & Ethel
Rosenberg



Senator
Joseph McCarthy



Congressman
Richard Nixon



The Hollywood Ten in 1948 with their attorneys, after contesting their contempt of congress citations. From left, —front row: Herbert Biberman, attorneys Martin Popper and Robert W. Kenny, Albert Maltz, Lester Cole,—second row: Dalton Trumbo, John Howard Lawson, Alvah Bessie, Samuel Ornitz—back row: Ring Lardner Jr., Edward Dmytryk, Adrian Scott. The ten men were convicted of contempt. Their appeals of course were denied, all served prison terms of up to one year.



Alger Hiss



Whittaker
Chambers



President
Dwight Eisenhower