

The Red Scare and Ohio Public Education

Undergraduate Research Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for graduation “with Honors
Research Distinction in History” in the undergraduate colleges of The Ohio State
University

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November 2015

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I. Introduction

Following World War II, cold war America faced both diplomatic tensions and rising domestic fear. While it has no definitive time period, the height of the red scare occurred roughly between 1947 and 1957. Scholars have depicted this era as a defining time in American history because the cold war affected the nation as a whole on many levels. From major decisions by national leaders, to the mundane matters of daily life, the fear of communism as a shadow looming in every aspect of American life emerged. Because of the particular anxiety Americans felt for children, red scare tensions were especially evident in education. If communists were able to alter the way young Americans viewed the world, American democracy could potentially fall.

As pervasive as red scare fears seemed, there is good evidence that many everyday Americans had other concerns and interests. In the largest public opinion survey of the day, Samuel Stouffer and his associates discovered just that. As opposed to the threat of communism, most Americans had more personal concerns, such as the health and wellness of their own families.¹ Ohioans exemplified Stouffer's findings. They were not indifferent to the threat of communism, nor were they consumed by it. Ohio chose to combat the red scare in a proactive manner. Particularly in the realm of education, leaders in Ohio constructed a precautionary approach to the red threat. In other states, accusations against educators were the

¹ Samuel A. Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity and Civil Liberties: a Cross-Section of the Nation Speaks its Mind* (New York: Wiley, 1966, c1955), 59.

primary defense mechanism against communist influence in public schools. In Ohio, however, accusations were not the method used. Instead, school leaders implemented an adaptation of religious morality paired with a deep understanding of democracy. School officials in Ohio believed communism could not victimize education, but rather would fail because of education.

II. The National Red Scare

Anticommunist sentiment was visible throughout public life, most notably in the government. Senator Joseph McCarthy famously led the anticommunist crusade. A Republican from Wisconsin, McCarthy was dedicated to exposing extreme left-wing activity. He became a prominent national figure in 1950 when he gave a speech at the Ohio County Women's Republican Club and declared that he had in his hand a list of 205 known communists working in the government. Although there was little evidence for his declaration, the bold statement placed McCarthy on the map and began the era of McCarthyism. In 1954, he perused communists in the armed forces during the famed Army-McCarthy hearings. His committee accused the secretary of the army of letting communists run a radar site in New Jersey. This witch-hunt style of accusation continued and defined the red scare.²

In addition to McCarthy's crusade, the House of Representatives created of the House Un-American Activities Committees (HUAC). This committee accused

² "Joseph R. McCarthy: A Featured Biography," The United States Senate, accessed November 18, 2015, http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/Featured_Bio_McCarthy.htm.

many public workers of being communist or having communist ties. The Senate established a number of anticommunist committees and passed several anticommunist laws. One such law, the Communist Control Act of 1954, prohibited members of the communist party from “serving in certain representative capacities.”³

HUAC’s initial target was Hollywood, and in 1947, an investigation took place from which the Hollywood blacklist and the Hollywood Ten emerged. These ten individuals, who were all current or former communists, invoked the Fifth Amendment when confronted by HUAC. Members of the Hollywood ten included Albert Maltz, Lester Cole, and John Howard Lawson. Ultimately, HUAC found these screenwriters and directors guilty of contempt of Congress, resulting in one-year prison sentences and a one thousand dollar fine against each. Furthermore, and possibly more consequential, they were banned from working in major Hollywood studios. Three years later, these men launched a failed attempt to bring their cases to the Supreme Court. The Court’s refusal to review the cases “upheld the validity of HUAC’s inquiry into the political activities and beliefs of the targets.”⁴

³ United States Congress, “U.S. Statutes at Large, Public Law 637, Chp. 886, p. 775-780.” Accessed November 6, 2015, <http://www.rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/polsciwb/brianl/docs/1954CommunistControlAct.pdf>

⁴ Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, c1996), 102.

The effect of the Hollywood Ten went far beyond these ten individuals. Oscar winner Kim Hunter did not receive any movie offers for three years after attending a meeting for the Hollywood Ten.⁵ John Sanford and his screenwriter wife, Marguerite, were Communists during the time of the investigations. After Marguerite was put on the blacklist, Sanford lost relations with friends, co-workers, and other comrades alike.⁶ These hearings created a rift in Hollywood. While some actors joined the attack on communists, others banded together to protect civil liberties.

Despite Hollywood's leftwing stigma, the industry "was never saturated with Red propaganda."⁷ Still, any hint of communist sympathies during the red scare set off alarms for cold war patriots. One way anticommunists countered communism in the film industry was through the publication of the *Screen Guide for Americans*, which instructed Hollywood moguls how to combat communism. The pamphlet stated that the reds would not try to use overt pro- communist messages to influence the American people. On the contrary, they would instead try to attack and corrupt morals through non-political films. This pamphlet was widely distributed and reprinted in many newspapers, including the *New York Times*.⁸ Additionally, a number of anti-communist films were released, including *The Iron Curtain* (1948),

⁵ Ibid., 142.

⁶ Griffin Fariello, *Red Scare: Memories of the American Inquisition: an Oral History* (New York: Norton, 1995), 293.

⁷ Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, 125.

⁸ Ibid., 130-131.

Conspirator (1950), and *Big Jim Mclain* (1952), a film in which John Wayne “glamorized HUAC.”⁹

The red scare extended into other entertainment realms. TV networks created loyalty oaths for their employees. CBS, specifically, required its workers to be dedicated to “the American way of life.”¹⁰ Nor were television stars barred from the crusade against Hollywood. Lucille Ball, famously, was ousted as a red for registering with the party in 1936 to please her grandfather.¹¹

Caution against communism was prevalent in the public sphere, where distress was especially evident. Public employees often faced loyalty oaths in order to prove their patriotism. One such public sector was education. Anti-communists viewed public education as one of the most vulnerable institutions. If the communists were able to get in the minds of America’s youth, then they could easily affect the political future of the country. In communist countries, much of their doctrine was taught in schools, and that was where they shaped their “comrades.” An attack on public education seemed a likely, and effective, tactic communists would use.

Particularly at the university level, administrators were constantly watching professors, who were often accused of having communist ties. In a number of

⁹ Ibid., 133.

¹⁰ Ibid., 166.

¹¹ Ibid., 168-169.

universities, a pattern of quiet dismissals of left-wing teachers emerged. From this, an academic blacklist was formed. This pattern began with political repression of such “radicals” and escalated to investigations, committees, and ultimately the blacklist itself. Once put on the academic blacklist, finding a new job was nearly impossible. For example, Helen Deane Markham, an assistant professor at Harvard, was fired after refusing to cooperate with the Jenner Committee, Harvard’s internal security committee. Markham searched elsewhere for a position, but the damage had been done; her name was added to the blacklist. Despite writing to fellow colleagues for advice, she continually received the same reply: no open positions.¹² Likewise, Luella Mundel, professor of art at Fairmont State College in West Virginia, was fired as a “security risk.” Mundel took her case to court but lost. Charles McCormick concluded that Mundel represented “academic freedom and due process...and free thinking, “attributes that were still “controversial outside the major university centers.”¹³ In short, the very citizens promoting freedom within academia were perceived to be the antithesis by the public and university leaders. These instances in higher education reveal the extent anticommunists were willing to go to defend patriotic education. Teachers in public education were not exempt from outside pressure.

One way to deal with the risk of communism in education was through state legislation. As parents and state officials increasingly became fearful of the

¹² Ellen Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 265.

¹³ Charles H. McCormick, *This Nest of Vipers: McCarthyism and Higher Education in the Mundel Affair, 1951-1952* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, c1989), 166.

possibility of communist ideas entering schools, many states began to consider specific bills to prevent such actions. In 1949, the *Spokane Daily Chronicle* outlined such bills from 13 individual states. The proposed legislation varied from the general to the specific. Some proposed legislation was extremely broad. Most notably, the states of Maryland and Illinois were investigating ways to simply outlaw communism for all residents of the states- not only public officials as in majority of the other cases. More specific legislation existed elsewhere. For example, in Oklahoma, Nebraska, and New Hampshire, public school teachers and college professors were required to take loyalty oaths. Many states went beyond just educators and required all state personnel to prove their loyalty. In Arkansas, all public officials had to sign an oath, stating they were not communists before receiving their salary. Likewise, New York required all civil service employees, teachers, and professors to take an oath. In Texas, all state officials and employees had to swear not only that they were not communist, but also that they had never been a part of the Communist Party. Georgia passed a law that their state workers and officials had to disavow the Communist Party.¹⁴

With the onset of loyalty oaths, public school teachers began to feel pressure from the states. Their options boiled down to two: obey or rebel. Those who chose to rebel had different reasons why. Some truly were members of the Communist

¹⁴ Associated Press, "Bills to Bar Reds From Public Jobs in 13 States," *The Spokane Daily Chronicle*, February 28, 1949, 2. Accessed November 9, 2015, <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1338&dat=19490228&id=-fFXAAAIBAJ&sjid=xfUDAAAIBAJ&pg=6058,4766346>.

Party and stood by their political beliefs. There were many others, however, who refused to take oaths on the basis of principle. Regardless of the reasoning why, some refused to declare their loyalty to the US. These nonconformists became nationwide news, and as these cases were made public, they added to the overall tension associated with the red scare.

After refusing to say if they were ever members of the Communist Party, for instance, eight public school teachers were fired in New York in 1951. The nine-man board of education was unanimous in its decision. Of the eight teachers, one was also charged with being an active member of the Communist Party. In addition to losing their jobs, the teachers also lost all access to their pensions.¹⁵

Another case occurred in the New York City Public School District in 1952. Seven teachers refused to tell the U.S. Senate if they had ever been part of the Communist Party, and they took the Fifth Amendment protection against self-incrimination. Senator Homer Ferguson, a Michigan Republican, recognized their rights to refuse to answer but did not give up his search for Communism, demonstrating the perseverance of the anticommunist camp. One of the teachers

¹⁵ Associated Press, "Eight Teachers Ousted in Communist Inquiry," *Reading Eagle*, February 9, 1951. ¹⁶ Accessed November 9, 2015, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1955&dat=19510209&id=44stAAAIBAJ&sjid=XJ0FAAAAIBA&pg=5377,2949147&hl=en>.

stated, “the teachers of New York are scared stiff...because of inquisitions such as this, the teachers are scared and not doing their jobs.”¹⁶

In Philadelphia, the Board of Education questioned teachers on alleged Communist connections. Twenty-seven of those teachers refused to answer and consequentially were suspended from their positions. Members of the board insisted that the teachers “do not understand that public office is a public trust,” and that they showed “a shocking disregard for their responsibilities as teachers of our children.”¹⁷

Public education’s relationship with the red scare went beyond the firing of teachers and loyalty oaths. In the public school setting, educational leaders used a number of proactive methods to protect schools from the communist threat. One such method was establishing criteria to analyze school groups. At the 1951 National Education Association (NEA) convention, Virgil Rogers presented a template to evaluate student organizations. Rogers created criteria for “honest groups”, as well as criteria for “dishonest groups.” As an illustration, an honest group would “cooperate with local teachers and officials” and “use the american way of getting the truth,” while dishonest groups “begin holding secret or off-record

¹⁶ Associated Press, “Teachers Refuse To Tell If Ever Were Communists,” *Rome News-Tribune*, “September 11, 1952. 7. Accessed November 9, 2015, <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=348&dat=19520911&id=ABRNAAAIBA J&sjid=GzEDAAAIBA J&pg=6576,5368601>.

¹⁷ Associated Press, “27 Philadelphia School Teachers are Suspended,” *Ellensburg Daily Record*,” November 21, 1953. 1. Accessed November 9, 2015, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=4oJvMfeQlr8C&dat=19531121&printsec=frontpage&hl=en>.

sessions.” By using his template, school leaders would be able to proactively recognize potential communist fronts within school systems.¹⁸

Another prominent method was the use of publications. The House Committee of Un-American Activities put forth a number of publications for the general public, as well as educators themselves. One particular series was published in 1949. The pamphlet was entitled “100 Things You Should Know About Communism and Education.” This was part of a larger series of anti-communist propaganda including “100 Things You Should Know About Communism in the U.S.A.” and “100 Things You Should Know About Communism and Religion.” Committee members arranged the publication in a question and answer format, featuring questions such as, “What do communists want?” and “If Communism would conquer America, what would happen to the schools?” The purposes of this publication were threefold. First, it explained how communism and education were related and specifically why schools are threatened. Second, it suggested communism had already begun to trickle into U.S. Schools. Last, the pamphlet indicated action had to be taken.

The answers to the proposed questions revealed a close tie between communism and education. For example, the publication stated that the goal of communism was “to rule your mind and your body from cradle to grave.” This statement gave an image of young school-aged children’s vulnerability. Statements

¹⁸ Stuart J. Foster, *Red Alert!: Educators Confront the Red Scare in American Public Schools, 1947-1954* (New York: P. Lang, c2000), 60.

from Lenin, such as “Give us the child for 8 years and it will be a Bolshevik forever,” spoke to this vulnerability. Furthermore, there was a clear belief that a communist America would lead to a lack of education, as “real education would stop” and “only training would be allowed.” The committee members continued by stating that even a monkey could be trained, and therefore training was not equivalent of teaching.¹⁹

HUAC boldly claimed that communism had already begun to enter many schools in the United States. They argued that communist teachers worked by “slipping propaganda into classroom work and textbooks” and by “leading gullible students into Red-sponsored campus activities.” The alarming anxieties established through such suggestions were made greater with quotes by Attorney General Tom C. Clark. Clark stated the Federal Bureau of Investigation had been investigating such possibilities. Specifically, according to this publication, the FBI had learned of Communists recruiting children.²⁰

In addition to active communist teaching in public schools, the pamphlet gave a list of suspicious private and religious schools. Committee members claimed communists ran the Jefferson School of Science in New York City, the People’s Educational Center in Hollywood, and the Abraham Lincoln School in Chicago, to name a few. HUAC pointed out many of these schools were named after famous Americans including Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, and

¹⁹ Committee On Un-American Activities, U.S. House of Representatives, *100 Things You Should Know About Communism and Education*, (Washington D.C., 1949), 53-54.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 60-61.

Samuel Adams. According to the booklet, these patriotic names were part of a front, behind which communist teachers posed these schools as part of a modern-day Revolution of 1776- not communism.²¹

Given the explanation of communism's relationship with education and the accusations that such a relationship was taking root in the U.S., the last purpose of this publication was a four-part call to action. Readers needed to know the facts. Second, it called on individuals to work in their own communities to get rid of communists and communist influences. The text counseled readers that they should prepare to face accusations of "witch-hunting." Last, the readers were told "above all else keep the Constitution in one hand and common sense in the other."²²

In addition to the government itself, national organizations used publications as a preemptive measure. For example, Allen A. Zoll, leader of the National Council for American Education (NCAE), used anticommunist propaganda to combat the potential threat. He released a number of pamphlets attacking public schools, with titles such as, "How Red are The Schools?" "They Want Your Child," and "Awake, America, Awake, and Pray!"²³

There were also some publications produced for teachers themselves. In 1962, the American Legion distributed "Teaching about Communism: Guideline for

²¹ Ibid., 65.

²² Ibid., 69.

²³ Foster, *Red Alert!*, 63.

Junior and Senior High School Teachers.” This publication provided a number of guidelines to teachers on how they should go about teaching communism without promoting it. The first section discussed how to select content and urged teachers to focus on communism’s rule as one part of a much larger history of civilization. The next section covered how to select materials. Specifically, it stated one must have an adequate amount of material and follow professional criteria. The next set of guidelines was for classroom procedure, and the final set of guidelines was on community relations. It is important to note this guidebook was released after the height of the red scare. This demonstrated the longevity of the red scare in public education.²⁴

On the local level, more personable methods could be used. Zoll and NCAE sent letters to city mayors advising them to appoint a commission to keep an eye out for un-American activity in the schools. These letters stated, “As you know, there is a great concern on the part of the public these days in regards to Communist and Socialist activities.” Zoll suggested that once a committee was created, the NCAE could send lists of “subversive textbooks.” This is exemplary of another method-controlling textbook publications.²⁵

²⁴ Joint Committee of the National Education Association and the American Legion, *Teaching About Communism: Guidelines for Junior and Senior High School Teachers* (Indianapolis, Indiana: The American Legion, 1962). Accessed August 19, 2015. <https://archive.org/details/TeachingAboutCommunismGuidelinesForJuniorAndSeniorHighSchoolTeachers>.

²⁵ Foster, *Red Alert!*, 66-67.

Public piety was the final method of defense against the proposed threat of communist ideology. An obvious focus was placed on religion- specifically on Judea-Christian morality. One example of this was the introduction of “Under God” in the pledge of allegiance. The phrase was added in June 1954. Michigan Senator Homer Ferguson introduced the resolution to add the phrase. He believed the modification of the pledge was important as it demonstrated one of the major differences between communists and anticommunists- the belief in God. The anticipated effects of this phrase on education were made evident as President Eisenhower signed the legislation. He stated, “From this day forward, the millions of our schoolchildren will daily proclaim...the dedication of our nation and our people to the Almighty.” The addition of “Under God” enjoyed overwhelming public support, with letters sent to lawmakers and backing from newspaper editors as well as radio commentators.²⁶ Additionally, on November 10th that same year, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes was established in Norman, Oklahoma. The foundation was established as a way for Christian athletes to advocate Jesus Christ. FCA had yearly camps for young people, brought athletes into schools, and eventually became a fundamental extra curricular activity in many high schools across the country.²⁷

²⁶ David Rosenbaum, “With Little Ado, Congress Put God in Pledge in 1954.” *The New York Times*, June 28, 2002. Accessed August 19,2015.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/06/28/us/with-little-ado-congress-put-god-in-pledge-in-1954.html>.

²⁷ “Fellowship of Christian Athletes Timeline.” Accessed August 19,2015.
<http://timeline.fca.org>.

There is clear evidence the red scare defined an era. Especially in education the red scare seemed to permeate American life. Nonetheless, despite the immense literature on this era, which created the image of an ever-looming presence, surveys from this time showed the threat of communism was not at the forefront of the public's mind.

Samuel Stouffer provided the most comprehensive study on the subject of American public opinion on communism. Published in 1967, his findings were based on surveys conducted in 1954 of the American people.²⁸ What Stouffer concluded, in short, was that people were more concerned with the mundane than the threat of communism.²⁹ After World War II, Americans wanted a return to normalcy. Evidence of the red scare is obvious, but it is important to notice while the shadow of communism was ever present, it was looming behind the public.

Stouffer's subjects demonstrated everyday anticommunism in a number of quotations. For example, when asked, "What kind of things do you worry about most," an Arkansas widow replied, "I pray the Lord that the Communists won't get a hold of our government and schools. I pray the Lord will strengthen our President." Similarly, the wife of a physician in California stated, "I am worried most about Communism and all activities sponsored by subversives in all branches of our government and in education."³⁰ These statements support the findings in academic

²⁸ Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity, & Civil Liberties*, 13.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 87.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 68.

writing that depict communism as a constant threat to public education. Stouffer's study on the public's opinion of communism provides striking evidence disputing this claim, however.

In Stouffer's findings, when asked, "What kind of things do you worry about most?" less than 1% responded with either the threat of communism or civil liberties.³¹ People were much more concerned with things pertaining to their personal lives, such as family finances and health. Stouffer also asked individuals what issues they talked about with their peers. Again, the results showed communism was not the focus of conversation. 50% of responders stated they discussed family and personal problems, while only 6% recalled talking about the problem of communism. In his summary of the question of a national anxiety on communism and civil liberties, Stouffer concluded, "Very few Americans are worried or even deeply concerned about either issue."³²

He provided further evidence that the subject was not one of great concern, as he found "only 3% of the cross section says they ever knew an admitted communist."³³ In other words, the "great fear" was in response to a very small number of actual known communists. The hysteria that scholars often portray was one fabricated through the high profile cases of HUAC and Senator McCarthy, rather than individuals' personal experiences with communists.

³¹ Ibid., 59.

³² Ibid., 87.

³³ Ibid., 175.

Stouffer then dug deeper into this “small” concern by asking the question, “What aspects of communism do Americans distrust most?” He found people were most bothered by the idea of communists converting other Americans to communism. Those he interviewed put this threat above the ideas of espionage and sabotage.³⁴ This point is important as it shows although the threat of communism did not dominate every aspect of American’s lives, when the public did consider the threat, the spreading of ideas is what they feared most. This is why there was a discontentment in public schools, as children were seen as especially vulnerable to the spreading of such ideas.

Stouffer himself turned to the subject of public education as he analyzed local leaders. He found that school leaders, including school board members and Parent-Teacher Association presidents, actually had a higher tolerance for nonconformity than the general public, yet still “drew the line against exposing children to Communist teachers.³⁵” They were reluctant to fire those who weren’t card-carrying Party members. These findings show that school leaders were not witch hunters, but instead embraced the differences among people and ideas, all without exposing students to direct communism.

II. Ohio’s Red Scare

³⁴ Ibid., 158.

³⁵ Ibid., 232.

Ohio presents a test case for Stouffer's thesis because it was—and remains—a relatively moderate state. Linda Killian calls Ohio “The Ultimate Swing State,” and an analysis of Ohio's voting history shows why.³⁶ In the past twenty-five elections, the Republican candidate won the state of Ohio fourteen times, while the Democratic nominee won eleven times. In addition, each given election shows close results. Specifically, the winning party of every election since 1920 has won with a majority between 48% and 64%. Looking specifically at presidential elections during the height of the red scare, we see similar results. In the election of 1948 Democratic nominee Harry S. Truman won the state with a 49.48% majority. Then, in 1952 Republican Dwight Eisenhower took the state with 56.76% of the total vote. Ohioans have tended to place themselves in the middle. They tended to lean towards liberal republicans or conservative democrats, staying clear of extremes.³⁷

Such moderation was also found in Ohio's social qualities. For example, according to the 1950 Census, 20.2% of the US population attended at least four years of high school. Ohio's percentage of individuals attending at least four years of high school was only slightly higher at 23.1%. This census also showed a similarity between the national marital status statistics and Ohio's statistics. The percentage of

³⁶ Linda Killian, “The Ultimate Swing State---Home of the America First Democrats: Ohio” in *The Swing Vote: the Untapped power of Independents* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2012), 159-80.

³⁷ Vote counts results. Washington: CQ Press. Dynamically generated November 6, 2015, from CQ Press Electronic Library, CQ Voting and Elections Collection: <http://library.cqpress.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/elections/advsearch/vote-counts-results.php?year1=1776&year2=2015&office=1&state=349&sort=Year>. Accessed November 6, 2015.

individuals over the age of 14 in Ohio who were married in 1950 was 67.9%, while the national percentage was 66.6%. That political and social indicators showed Ohio as a representation of the nation as a whole suggests the state was moderate.³⁸

If measured against Stouffer's evidence, we can see Ohio's moderation was not exactly unique. The moderate tendencies of the state were representative of the nation as a whole. To say the red scare did not really happen would be absurd. However, looking at the survey results, it is evident the red scare did not dominate every aspect of life, as it is often depicted.

Ohio shared most of the apprehensions of other states. According to James Truett Selcraig, "the interaction of national and local factors" shaped the red scare in Ohio.³⁹ While there were a handful of cases in which teachers were dismissed, they were few and far between. For example, in Cambridge, Ohio, educators were fired for participating in local teacher associations.⁴⁰ More broadly, Ohio made the "refusal to answer official inquires ground for dismissal."⁴¹ There were a number of "Red Squads" throughout the state in places like Cincinnati and Toledo,⁴² but there

³⁸ Social Explorer Tables(SE), Census 1950 Census Tract, County, State and US, Digitally transcribed by Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. Edited, verified by Michael Haines. Compiled, edited and verified by Social Explore. Accessed November 6, 2015,

<http://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/C1950CompDS/R10996764>.

³⁹ James Truett Selcraig, *The Red Scare in the Midwest, 1945-1955: A State and Local Study* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, c1982), 30.

⁴⁰ Foster, *Red Alert!*, 42.

⁴¹ David Cauter, *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge Under Truman and Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, c1978), 74.

⁴² Foster, *Red Alert!*, 39.

were not many large-scale events that gained national attention. Still, evidence of the red scare in Ohio appeared in the state's formation of the Un-American Activities Commission.

Selcraig divided the era into two phases for Ohio, the first of which involved a slow increase in expressed concern of communism and lasted until 1950. A sharp intensification in this expressed concern characterized the second phase. By 1947, no loyalty measures had been taken, but this changed in 1949 with the establishment of a loyalty oath for unemployment compensation. The sudden escalation erupted in part because Republicans took over the State House and in doing so established the Joint Anti-Subversive Investigation to determine the need for further investigation of communism. From there, the House established the Ohio Un-American Activity Committee, which charged 42 individuals in the two years of its existence. Additionally, the state legislator passed several restrictive laws in 1953.⁴³

Although Ohio's most prominent experience with the second red scare did not involve education, anticommunism did play a role in Ohio's education systems. During the early 1950s, at an executive meeting in Columbus, the Un-American Activities Commission discussed a number of situations in higher education. The first situation mentioned was in regards to an Antioch College professor. Dr. Robert W. Rempfer was fired for his "leftist activity" after having previous interactions with

⁴³ Selcraig, *The Red Scare in the Midwest*, 32-38.

the American Labor Party. These interactions took place in New York before Rempfer moved to Ohio. The committee also discussed Ralph Templin, professor at Central State College at Wilberforce, who went on a hunger strike to protest the Rosenberg executions. Templin also ran afoul of the committee for being mentioned in a brochure for the Committee for American Rights. Similarly, during this particular meeting, Dr. Abraham Cronbach was brought up. Cronbach was a professor emeritus at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. He urged other clergy in the state to appeal to President Eisenhower to spare the lives of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. The committee accused Cronbach of having been a member of many communist front associations. Clearly there was a concern for communist influence in higher education.⁴⁴

This concern was echoed in secondary schools across the state among parents and educators alike. The conventions of the Ohio Congress of Parents and Teachers became annual settings for anti-communist rants and flag-waving oratory.

In 1950, the Ohio Congress of Parents and Teachers' committee on citizenship officially changed its name to the committee on citizenship and international relations. This simple change suggests a shift was taking place during the red scare. The former name focused on citizenship, while the new name hinted that other countries could potentially affect citizenship. Educational leaders and

⁴⁴ "Joint Committee and Investigations, Un-American Activities Commission transcripts and reports, 1951-1954." Series 115. Box 50,052, Folder 4, "Testimony held in Executive Session," (Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, O.), 25 and 33-36.

parents noticed the possibility of new foreign influences on education. At the same time, fear and patriotism were becoming increasingly intertwined as McCarthyism became more prominent.⁴⁵

On October 3, 1951, during the first session of the 46th Annual Convention, Harold H. Eibling gave the invocation. As he opened the convention with prayer, the Second Vice-President of the organization called on God to preserve the greatness of American education. Eibling stated, “May we.... resolve to defend these American ideals so that the youth in our schools will have the opportunity to enjoy the same advantages of liberty and freedom.” This expression, while not directly pointing to communism, showed concern for where the future of the youth in America was headed. His prayer echoed both the fearful element of McCarthyism and also the patriotic element as he stated freedom and liberty were “our most priceless possessions.”⁴⁶

At the following year’s convention, the appeal against communism became more direct. During the keynote address, second vice-president of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, Knox Walker, declared that the enemy of democracy “must be fought, must be exposed,” he “must be resisted in foreign

⁴⁵ Ohio Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc., *History of the Ohio Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc.*, (Greenfield, Ohio: The Greenfield Printing and Publishing Co., August 1960), 30.

⁴⁶ Harold Eibling, “First Session Invocation” in Ohio Congress of Parents and Teachers Incorporated, *Proceedings 46th Annual Convention: October 3,4,5, 1951, The Golden Jubilee*, ed. by . Mrs. George H. Tulk and Mrs. Russell C. Bickel (Columbus, OH, 1951), 16.

countries and our own.” By stating this, Walker asserted that communism was not only a threat abroad, but was also a threat on home soil. Again, throughout his speech there were features of panic, as this statement shows, but there were also qualities of patriotism. This patriotism came through the speaker’s pledge that if they “work with all their hearts” American educators would “walk into the future with assurance.”⁴⁷

In addition to the Ohio Congress of Parents and Teachers, supplemental evidence from studies of public education showed evidence of a concern as well. In the early 1950s, the Ohio State University completed a number of studies analyzing various school districts throughout the state. The College of Education’s Bureau of Educational Research conducted these reports. The reports were comprehensive and analyzed a variety of elements of the schools. These elements ranged from population and tax rates to building plans and history, but the bulk of the studies looked at the philosophy and teaching procedures of each school. The research bureau completed studies on a variety of towns including Steubenville, Springfield, and Portsmouth.

In the case of Steubenville, the research team showed the effect the red scare was having on education. In their recommendation, the research team suggested, “boards of education, school administrators, and teachers should be ever conscious

⁴⁷ Knox Walker, “Living in Days of Decision,” in Ohio Congress of Parents and Teachers Incorporated, *Proceedings 47th Annual Convention: October 8, 9, 10, 1952*, ed. by Mrs. George Tulk and Mrs. Lorin C. Staats (Cleveland, OH, 1952), 27.

of the role of the public schools in the community.” This suggestion implied the community was in some sort of jeopardy. Additionally, the study showed that many people in the community were worried about rumors of low morale among both teachers and students. The research team recommended improving morale by promoting “Our American heritage to develop pride and faith in American democracy.”⁴⁸

The Statement of Philosophy for the Mt. Healthy City Schools district in Hamilton County showed further indications that the red scare was on authorities’ minds. In its introduction, the statement noted the importance of education as a tool for personal development. The Philosophy Committee gave a number of historical examples of how societies used education to promote development. The examples ranged from Plato’s treatise on education for the ideal state to Machiavelli’s teachings on how to govern. The writers then turned to their own generation and referred to Germany and the Hitler Youth Movement and Russia’s teaching of communism. The reference to Russia’s teachings on communism introduced the potential threat for American schools, while the statement itself read as a plan to combat the threat by using democracy.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ The Bureau of Educational Research, College of Education, The Ohio State University, *A Study of Public Education in Steubenville, Ohio* (Columbus, OH, 1953), 4-5, 54.

⁴⁹ The Philosophy Committee, “Statement of Philosophy,” Evaluation Reports of Secondary Schools, Box 52614, Folder 52, “Wyoming” (Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, O.).

Ohio's moderation explains why the state had a lack of red scare trials in regards to education. It is evident, however, the red scare was effecting education in Ohio, so therefore Ohio must have had a response. This response had three major components. The first component of Ohio's campaign against communism was to promote American patriotism. Secondly, they promoted democracy. Finally, Ohio schools pushed religion- specifically the implementation of a Judeo-Christian value system within the schools.

Ohio Responds with Patriotism

Educators deployed patriotism to promote American ideas in defense of the communist threat. Akron Public Schools released a historical account of their school system in 1955. Throughout the book, patriotism is proudly displayed, beginning with an image of children around the flag on the opening page.⁵⁰ The book also gave an example of an English class's composition, which included a unit entitled "Unit II: The American Spirit." One aim of this unit was "to develop further realization of the privileges and responsibilities of American Citizenship." If students were to recognize these privileges they would realize the American way of life was better than what communism had to offer. Furthermore, by understanding responsibilities, they would know it was their duty to defend these ideas.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Otis C. Hatton, *Lengthened Shadows: The story of Akron Public Schools* (Akron, OH, July 1955), unmarked page. (Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, O.).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 273-274.

In 1953, Euclid Public Schools released a revised statement of beliefs. In this statement, the faculty declared their belief in a number of points that “should guide and direct the educational program.” Point number 22 read:

The curriculum should assure the development of the moral values necessary for domestic citizenship. In developing these values pupils will become aware of the conflicts and contradictions in their society and will be guided and assisted in resolving them, thus developing personal standards of values for themselves.⁵²

This statement supports Stouffer’s findings in regards to school leaders being tolerant of nonconformity. The faculty outlined how the values needed for American citizenship would be presented through the curriculum, but ultimately students were to develop personal values for themselves. If American ideas were presented strongly, students would embrace them. The statement continued on the importance of Americanism in point 24:

Pupils should more and more value their American heritage, learn the meaning of democracy by living it, and appraise their experiences in terms of their contributions to democratic living. Pupils should appreciate the contributions of the rest of the world to our American way of life and our role in world citizenship.⁵³

This point emphasized valuing student’s American heritage by learning about one of the principal American ideas: democracy. Furthermore, this point mentioned America’s role in world citizenship. At the time the US was waging the cold war against its former ally Russia. By mentioning this phrase, the faculty was alluding to the present cold war tensions.

⁵² Evaluation Reports of Secondary Schools. Box 52619. Folder 58 (t). “Revised Statement of Beliefs,” May 20, 1953. (Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, O.).

⁵³ Ibid.

Ohio Responds with Democracy

In addition to patriotism, Ohio's public educators pushed an admiration for democracy. In Lakewood Public School's 1951 publication of the "Imperative Needs of Youth," it was declared: "All youth need to understand their rights and duties in our democracy."⁵⁴ In Cleveland, Public Education Director of the Urban League, Lois Roddinberry, argued if democratic ideals were presented abroad, they would certainly trump communism. Roddinberry saw the great distinction between the two governments as simple. While democracy said, "The government serves the people," communism said, "The people serve the government."⁵⁵ To her, this distinction made democracy the obvious choice. This was the over-arching approach taken by educators in Ohio-- present democracy and students would realize it was the superior choice over communism.

The Ohio State University's study of public education in Springfield depicted this tactic. The study noted that Springfield secondary schools had the theme of "preparation for democratic living." Staff members said they strived to "aid the students to understand, appreciate, and have faith" in democracy. Throughout the entire study, strong pro-democratic and patriotic tones resounded regarding this school district's outlook on education. The Springfield schools believed American

⁵⁴ Lakewood Public Schools. *Imperative Needs of Youth*, Box 118-9 (Columbus, OH: Ohio State Archeological and Historical Society Library, 1951), 6-7.

⁵⁵ "Your Urban League at Work," *Cleveland Call and Post* (1934-1962) , January 17, 1953, accessed November 18, 2015, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/184238196?accountid=9783>.

democracy “is a distinctive way of life” and reiterated their philosophy of educating children “for effective citizenship in a democracy.” In the case of Springfield, they seemed to be combatting communism in schools by promoting democracy with great zeal.⁵⁶

Likewise, the Statement of Philosophy for Mt. Healthy City Schools was focused solely on democracy. The statement referred to George Washington’s observation in his Farewell Address that “it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.” Their philosophy was to enlighten their students on the subject of democracy. Furthermore, “The basic purpose of education” was to “foster good citizenship.” The statement included that democracy was a way of life where the worth and dignity of each individual was valued. This statement was in direct contrast to communism, where individualism was diminished. The statement discussed “Personal and Civic Responsibilities Within a Democracy,” which included: “to develop an understanding of local, state, or regional, national, and international social and political structures and processes.” The “Realization of Self Within a Democracy” was another section in the statement. This section included the obligation to “stimulate a desire for self development of high standards of character and morals.” The statement concludes with four more sections: “Economic Efficiency Within a Democracy,” “Guidance Within a Democracy,” “Critical Thinking Within a Democracy,” and finally, “Evaluation Within a

⁵⁶ The Bureau of Educational Research, The College of Education, The Ohio State University, *A Study of Public Education in Springfield, Ohio* (Columbus, OH, 1951), 77-78 and 115-116.

Democracy.” Creating a philosophy based around democracy is one example of the proactive approach taken by many educational leaders throughout Ohio.⁵⁷

This emphasis on democracy was not only present at the district level. The State Department of Education was also involved. In the Department’s evaluation of Cleveland’s James Ford Rhodes High School, they recommended a reorganization of the social studies curriculum. Their recommendation was to add an entire year of American democracy followed by a year of problems with American democracy. Again, the idea was that even when presented with the problems of democracy, students would still see it as the best choice.

The state standards in social studies emphasized democracy as well. The 1957 minimum standards called for the following:

Basic instruction in geography, United States history, the government of the United States, the government of the state of Ohio, local government in Ohio, the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution and the constitution of the state of Ohio shall be required before pupils may participate in courses involving the study of social problems, economics, foreign affairs, United Nations, world government, socialism, and communism.⁵⁸

The state wanted to ensure that before any foreign ideas, including socialism and communism, were presented, students had a strong foundation in American values.

Communist ideas were not being banned from the schools, but instead they were only

⁵⁷ The Philosophy Committee, “Statement of Philosophy.”

⁵⁸ "Minimum Standards for Ohio High Schools, 1957," Evaluation Reports of Secondary Schools, Box 52614, Folder 5, "Robert A. Taft" (Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, O.).

given after democratic ideas were instilled. This was done in the hopes that students would view democracy as the superior form of government on their own.⁵⁹

Ohio Responds with Religion

According to Stouffer, when asked what communists believe in, the answer that occurred most often was “anti-religion.”⁶⁰ The connection between communists and anti-religion led to the presence of religious views in Ohio’s public education. Ohio educational leaders responded to the red scare in ways that were not entirely unique from that of the rest of the United States, yet still were distinctive and significant. Specifically in public education, promoting religion along with American ideals such as democracy became one of Ohio’s strategies of countering the communist threat. In order to promote democracy, leaders in both public education and in communities sought to emphasize Judeo-Christian morals and values. This strategy was not exclusive to Ohio, or education, but was one that was seen throughout the country and across cultural bounds. In his study of the culture of the cold war, Stephen Whitfield recalled a number of revivals that took part cross the country in response to the communist threat. Moreover, America had an “upsurge of postwar piety,” and churches became the most trusted institutions. As the cold war created a culture of worry, Americans sought protection by the Almighty. Ohio’s

⁵⁹ "Check Sheet, Abbreviated Statements from the Ohio High School Standards," Evaluation Reports of Secondary Schools, Box 52619, Folder 62, Lakewood (Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, O.).

⁶⁰ Stouffer, *Communism, conformity and civil liberties*, 186.

educational leaders emulated this pattern against the threat of red influence in schools.⁶¹

The public piety was mostly seen in an emphasis on morals and values. In 1954, around 500 teachers, administrators, and principals from the Akron Public Schools systems attended a workshop on “Moral and Spiritual Values.” The workshop had Christian and Jewish components, as ministers and Rabbis taught those in attendance. Additionally, the faculty within Akron public schools took pride in the fact their pupils grew in “faith” among a number of other attributes including “knowledge, “ “service,” and “personal integrity.”⁶²

During the vesper service of the 1951, Ohio Congress of Teachers and Parents conference, Reverend Boynton Merrill, a minister of First Congressional Church in Columbus, gave a sermon entitled “What on Earth can I do- For Heaven’s Sake.” The sermon focused on what faith’s role in schools should be and, as the title suggests, what educators can do for the advancement of heaven. In his discourse, he alluded to and directly mentioned the cold war. First, he stated: “We are living in a time when certain powerful and influential men are saying that the ideal (of heaven) is just something that fools dream of.” He again referred to the cold war, as he stated, “You can’t do very much about Berlin, or Moscow.” However, he reminded his audience there was still much to be done in their own state of Ohio.⁶³

⁶¹ Whitfield, *Culture of the Cold War*, 77-100.

⁶² Hatton, *Lengthened Shadows*, 207.

⁶³ Knox, “Living in Days of Decision,” 22-28.

This sermon plainly shows religious leaders were conscious of communism and the cold war. The reverend made this evident by his remarks towards “certain powerful and influential men” and again when he mentioned Moscow and Berlin. His references to the cold war influence showed he believed it was an important topic to discuss with educators. He went beyond bringing up the threat; he gave steps to overcome it. In his explanation of how to bring heaven and earth together, he also provided tips to keep communism away; after all, communism and Christianity were incompatible. He implied that to prevent communism’s spread in education, teachers and parents needed to believe in God. Next, they needed to complete God’s will and do so intently. Finally, they needed to realize that while they could not stop the entire cold war, they could do their part by securing their own children and students.

At the same convention, during the Banquet Session, another minister presented a discourse on communism and education entitled “Education Free and Not So Free.” The executive secretary of the Congressional Christian Churches of America, Reverend Douglas Horton, discussed the differences between what he called “free education” and the education behind the iron curtain. In the closing thoughts of his speech, he stated that there was a clear cause-and-effect relationship between Hebrew-Christian traditions and democracy, where religion caused democracy. Because Christians and Jews viewed God as a loving creator who only sought love and communion with man, God was “on the side of a responsibly free

society.” He further demonstrated the strength of religion and democracy’s relationship by stating, “If you want our education for democracy to fail, let your religious practices lapse.”⁶⁴

By expressing and then explaining the relationship between democracy and education, Horton was tactfully insisting that communism and Christianity were inimical-- one could not exist in the presence of another. Furthermore, he was presuming that a focus on religious values would combat communism’s influence. When religion was passionately pursued, democracy would be at its best and supersede communism. However, the reverse was also true- if religion was forgotten democracy would fail and fall to communism.

A year later, speakers at the 1952 convention continued to demonstrate religion’s role in diminishing communism’s impact. Dr. Robert Whyte was a minister at Old Stone Church in Cleveland and was chosen to deliver the address during the Vesper service at the yearly convention. In his address, he dismissed those who blamed religion and the church for wars. Then he reminded the audience that “religion was the supreme factor in the creation of American democracy.” He furthered this argument using quotes from George Washington and historical documents, such as the Declaration of Independence. From there, the minister confronted communism head-on, stating: “The Marxian effort to reduce the whole cosmos to a materialistic basis...would have been repudiated with scorn with the

⁶⁴ Douglas Horton, “Education Free and Not So Free,” (The Banquet Session) in Ohio Congress of Parents and Teachers, *Proceedings 46th Annual Convention*, 34-37.

founding fathers.” Moreover, he explained, education alone did not have the ability to fix the present situation, but when backed by religion, it would. Whyte admitted that both education and the family were in need of repair, and considered religion the answer. He concluded his address by explaining how despite what some people thought, religion and the things of this world were related. He continued, “The present situation is the church’s opportunity and obligation.”⁶⁵

In addition to the annual conventions, religion was seen in other facets of Ohio education. The study of Springfield’s educational system stated that the goal of the school system was to “exemplify the highest moral and spiritual integrity in teaching and in associating with students.” The study also showed the staff’s religious attitudes towards creating character in the pupils. “Integrity of character,” the staff believed, was formed partially by the teacher’s example and own practice. The other part to development of character, according to Springfield’s staff, was formed by “a sound concept of the unfaltering faith in God.” In short, the study suggested students are developed through their education and religion.⁶⁶

IV. Conclusion

There were not significant cases of communist interference in secondary public schools in Ohio. Instead, an analysis of school reports showed administrators

⁶⁵ Robert Whyte, “The Vesper Service Address” in Ohio Congress of Parents and Teachers, *47th Annual Convention*, 15-18.

⁶⁶ The Bureau of Educational Research, *A Study of Public Education in Springfield, OH* 77-78 and 115-116.

were more concerned with the day-to-day functionality of the schools. Evaluations from the Ohio's Department of education revealed building maintenance, certification of staff, and overall productivity of the schools were more likely to be the focal point of discussion.⁶⁷ Still, there was evidence of red scare tension throughout public education. The educational systems throughout Ohio chose to combat this tension through pushing American ideals, most notably democracy and religion.

The approach taken reveals a symbiotic relationship between education and the fight against communism. Elsewhere the struggle between these elements was mostly one sided, with educators being attacked. But in Ohio things were different. The anticommunist fight defended education, but education also advanced the anticommunist fight by promoting democracy. In this relationship, instead of diminishing the reputations of educators, the fight came in the form of defending democracy through religious morality. Ohio educators promoted democracy, but the only way true education could persist was through democracy, making the two interdependent.

In Reverend Horton's discourse of free and not free education, he admitted that communists put great value on education. He continued by stating that putting an emphasis on any form of education was not enough. Instead, he argued that "free" education would win the cold war. He claimed that when educators bettered

⁶⁷ Evaluation Reports of Secondary Schools, Box 52614 (Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, O.).

education, communism would not be able to stand: “We need have no fear for the outcome of the cold war if this can be done.” In fighting communist influence through improving the morality of free education, democracy would triumph over communism, and communism would therefore no longer be a threat.⁶⁸

Columbus Public Schools superintendent N.G. Fawcett echoed this idea. He believed education should not act as a victim of communist influence but instead should act as an ambassador for democracy. During his greetings of the 1951 convention, Superintendent Fawcett explained that it was an eventful time in America, as the country was emerging out of a “state of confusion” and toward “a clearer task ahead.” He then continued with a course of action: “To retain our freedom and to strengthen our position among the nations of the world requires a system of free public education.” Again, it is evident, according to Fawcett, education was not the victim, but instead was a weapon in the civil arsenal aimed at communism.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Horton, “Education Free and Not So Free,” (The Banquet Session) in Ohio Congress of Parents and Teachers, Incorporated, *Proceedings 46th Annual Convention*, 35.

⁶⁹ N.G. Fawcett, “Second Session: Greetings,” in Ohio Congress of Parents and Teachers Incorporated, *Proceedings 46th Annual Convention: October 3,4,5, 1951, The Golden Jubilee*, edit. Mrs. George H. Tulk and Mrs. Russell C. Bickel (Columbus, OH, 1951) 19.

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