

# Help! I'm an Accidental Government Information Librarian: Researching the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)

North Carolina Library Association  
Government Resources Section  
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# What We'll Cover

- Forerunner: The House Special Committee on Un-American Activities (1934-5)
- The Committee Reborn: 1938-44
- HUAC Ascendant: 1945-54
- HUAC in Decline: 1955-68

# What We'll Cover

- HUAC becomes the Committee on Internal Security (1969-75)
- The End of HUAC
- Researching HUAC
- Related Resources
- Joyner Library's CWIS Collection

# Forerunner: The House Special Committee on Un-American Activities: (1934-35)



# Rep. Samuel Dickstein (1885-1954): “Father of the Committee”



Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel\\_Dickstein\\_%28congressman%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Dickstein_%28congressman%29)

- Democratic congressman from NY: Served from 1923-45
- Pro-New Deal urban liberal

# Rep. Samuel Dickstein (cont.)

- Worried about American democracy being subverted by supporters of a foreign totalitarian power:



Source: [http://www.adl.org/hate\\_symbols/processed\\_new\\_images/nazi\\_flag.gif](http://www.adl.org/hate_symbols/processed_new_images/nazi_flag.gif)

# McCormack-Dickstein Committee

- At Dickstein's urging, House Resolution 198, 73<sup>rd</sup> Congress (H. Res. 73-2) adopted on March 20, 1934, created a special committee to investigate:
  1. "The extent, character, and objects of Nazi propaganda activities" in the U.S.
  2. "The diffusion within the United States of subversive propaganda that is instigated from foreign countries and attacks the principle of the form of government as guaranteed by our Constitution"
  3. "All other questions in relation thereto"

# McCormack-Dickstein Committee

- Seven members
- Rep. John McCormack (D-MA) served as Chair; Dickstein as Vice-Chair
- Held seven public and 24 executive hearings between April 26, 1934-December 29, 1934
- Hearings held in Washington, DC, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Newark and Asheville, NC



# McCormack-Dickstein Committee

- Investigated both left and right extremists:
  - German-American Bund
  - Communist Party (CPUSA)
  - “Silver Shirts”
  - Smedley Butler allegations
- Eight volumes of published hearings (SuDoc stem: Y 4.Un 1:N 23)

# McCormack-Dickstein Committee

- Published report on February 15, 1935:
  - *Investigation of Nazi and Other Propaganda*, House Report No. 153, 74<sup>th</sup> Congress (74-1), Serial Set 9890

# McCormack-Dickstein Committee

“To the true and real American, communism, naziism (sic.), and fascism are all equally dangerous, equally alien and equally unacceptable to American institutions.” (*Investigation*, p.23)

# The Committee Reborn: The Dies Committee: (1938-44)



Source: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/hec.25582/>

# The Dies Committee

- The Special Committee on Un-American Activities was re-established on May 26, 1938
- House Res. 282 (75-3); 83 CR 7567-7587
- Resolution introduced by Martin Dies (D-TX); supported by Dickstein
- Dies became chair; Dickstein was left off committee

# Rep. Martin Dies, Jr. (1900-1972)



Source: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/hec.28164/>

# Rep. Martin Dies (cont.)

- Democratic congressman from TX: Served from 1931-45 and 1953-59
- Anti-New Deal conservative Southern Democrat
- Chaired the special committee from 1938-44

# The Dies Committee

- House Resolution 282 charged the special committee to investigate:
  1. “The extent, character, and objects of **un-American** propaganda activities” in the U.S.
  2. “The diffusion within the United States of subversive **and un-American** propaganda that is instigated from foreign countries **or of a domestic origin** and attacks the principle of the form of government as guaranteed by our Constitution”
  3. “All other questions in relation thereto”



# The Dies Committee

- Seven members including Dies
- As a special committee, an annual House resolution was required to continue its existence (344-45 in 1939; 354-6 in 1941)
- In February 1943, the House voted to extend the committee for the duration of the war by a vote of 302-94

# The Dies Committee

- Emphasized Communist subversion over Nazi/fascist activity
- Ted Morgan: “the first congressional committee to take full advantage of its power to punish with subpoenas and contempt citations”
- Exploited Communist activity as a means of attacking the New Deal

# The Dies Committee

- Published 17 volumes worth of hearings plus appendices
- *Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States* (SuDoc stem: Y 4.Un 1/2: Un 1)

# HUAC Ascendant (1945-54)



Source: <http://artandhistory.house.gov/images/weekinhistory/new/huac-committee-full.jpg>

# 1945-6: HUAC Becomes a Standing Committee

- January 3, 1945: Rep. John Rankin (D-MS) proposed an amendment to House Res. 5 (79-1), that established HUAC as a standing committee
- Amendment passed on a roll call vote of 208-186 (40 NV) – 91 CR 10-15
- Change codified in the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (PL 79-601; 60 Stat. 812), passed August 2, 1946

# 1945-6: HUAC Becomes a Standing Committee

- Nine members: four Democrats, four Republicans plus chair from majority party
- Continued subpoena power and ability to issue contempt citations
- Charge remained same as that of the Dies Committee

# 1945-54: HUAC Ascendant

- Primarily investigative body; very little legislative output
- Large staff (over 40 members) and budget

# 1947-48: HUAC in the 80<sup>th</sup> Congress

- The 80<sup>th</sup> Congress (1947-49) was arguably the single most important term in the history of the committee
- First Republican-majority Congress since 1931
- J. Parnell Thomas (R-NJ) became chair
- Freshman Congressman named Richard M. Nixon (R-CA) joined the committee



# 1947-48: HUAC in the 80<sup>th</sup> Congress

- HUAC became an ally of J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI and openly antagonistic towards Truman Administration
- HUAC held several of the most well-known hearings in its history:
  - “Hollywood Ten”
  - Hiss vs. Chambers

# Outlawing the Communist Party?

- March 24-28, 1947: HUAC holds hearings on H.R. 1884 and H.R. 2122, which would have banned the CPUSA
- *Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States, 1947* (SuDoc no: Y 4.Un 1/2: Un 1/8)

# Outlawing the Communist Party?

- March 26: J. Edgar Hoover testified before HUAC:

“Communism, in reality, is not a political party. It is a way of life – an evil and malignant way of life. It reveals a condition akin to disease that spreads like an epidemic and like an epidemic a quarantine is necessary to keep it from infecting the Nation.”

- *Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States, [testimony of William C. Bullitt and J. Edgar Hoover], 1947, p.44 (SuDoc no: Y 4.Un 1/2: Un 1/9/pt.2)*

# The “Hollywood Ten”



Source: <http://www.tft.ucla.edu/mediascape/images/HW10office.jpg>

# The “Hollywood Ten”

- In October 1947, HUAC held hearings on CPUSA activity in the film industry
- The first five days contained testimony from “friendly” witnesses
- The last four days featured testimony from “unfriendly” witnesses: 10 screenwriters involved with CPUSA
- Citing the First Amendment, the “Hollywood Ten” openly defied the committee
- All ten were cited for contempt of Congress and ultimately served up to a year in prison

# The “Hollywood Ten”

- *Hearings Regarding the Communist Infiltration of the Motion Picture Industry, 1947, 549 pgs. (SuDoc no: Y 4.Un 1/2: C 73/3)*

# The “Hollywood Ten”

- Friendly witnesses included:
  - Ayn Rand (p. 82-90)
  - Robert Taylor (p. 164-170)
  - Ronald Reagan (p. 213-218)
  - Gary Cooper (219-225)

# The “Hollywood Ten”

- The Hollywood Ten included:
    - John Howard Lawson (p. 290-295)
    - Dalton Trumbo (p. 329-41)
    - Albert Maltz (p. 363-367)
    - Alvah Bessie (p. 383-388)
    - Edward Dmytryk (p. 459-462)
- (testimony of most was followed by HUAC investigator Louis J. Russell)



# The “Hollywood Ten”

- Less than a month after the “Hollywood Ten” hearings, the major film studios jointly implemented the blacklist

# Hiss vs. Chambers



Source: <http://graphics8.nytimes.com/images/2011/03/09/09artsbeat-huac/09artsbeat-huac-blog480.jpg>

# Hiss vs. Chambers

- In August 1948, HUAC held hearings on alleged CPUSA infiltration of the US government
- Former CPUSA members/Soviet agents Elizabeth Bentley and Whittaker Chambers implicated a number of top New Deal officials as Soviet spies
- Among those accused were Harry Dexter White, Lauchlin Currie and Alger Hiss

# Hiss vs. Chambers

- Chambers testified that Hiss had passed State Department documents to him on behalf of the GRU (Soviet military intelligence)
- Hiss was ultimately indicted by a grand jury and convicted of perjury
- White died of a heart attack shortly after testifying before HUAC
- These hearings served as a political flashpoint that lingers to this day
- Current historical consensus is that Hiss, White, et al were guilty

# Hiss vs. Chambers

- *Hearings Regarding Communist Espionage in United States Government, July 31-Sept. 9, 1948 (SuDoc no: Y 4.Un 1/2: C 73/6)*

# 1953-54: HUAC's High Water Mark

- Under Republican control, for the second and last time
- Rep. Harold Velde (R-IL) served as chair
- Competition in “Red-hunting” from Senate Judiciary Internal Security Subcom. and Senate Permanent Subcom. on Investigations

# 1953-54: HUAC's High Water Mark

- Budget of \$575,000 (a then record for investigating committees)
- The committee took 178 days of testimony from over 650 witnesses
- Hearings were held in LA, NY, Columbus, OH, Albany, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Baltimore, Chicago, DC, Detroit
- HUAC published 70 hearings volumes and 7 reports in the 83<sup>rd</sup> Congress

# 1953-54: HUAC's High Water Mark

- Investigations included alleged communist activity in education, entertainment, labor unions and religious institutions
- Mindset that communism had to be removed root and branch from American society
- “Taking the Fifth” had become standard practice among witnesses
- Setting up “unfriendly” witnesses for popular sanction



# HUAC in Decline (1955-68)



Source: [http://foundsf.org/images/d/d1/Huac\\_may\\_13\\_1960\\_cops\\_w\\_protestors\\_on\\_rotunda\\_steps\\_AAF-0736.jpg](http://foundsf.org/images/d/d1/Huac_may_13_1960_cops_w_protestors_on_rotunda_steps_AAF-0736.jpg)

# HUAC in Decline

- HUAC in the 84<sup>th</sup> Congress (1955-56) held 121 days of public hearings, a decline of nearly 1/3 from the 83<sup>rd</sup> Congress
- Still more hearing days than the subsequent four congresses combined

# HUAC in Decline

- Decline reflected in number of published hearings volumes per Congress
  - 83<sup>rd</sup>: 70 volumes
  - 84<sup>th</sup>: 38 volumes
  - 85<sup>th</sup>: 31 volumes
  - 86<sup>th</sup>: 31 volumes
  - 87<sup>th</sup> (1961-63): 22 volumes
  - 88<sup>th</sup>: 14 volumes
  - 89<sup>th</sup>: 13 volumes
  - 90<sup>th</sup> (1967-69): 17 volumes

# HUAC in Decline

- Opposition to HUAC grew as early Cold War passions declined and concerns over civil liberties mounted
- CPUSA had ceased to be a relevant force by 1956
- The committee faced increasing criticism from civil libertarians and others, which it actively attempted to counter
- Several hearings served to embody the growing conflict between HUAC and its critics

# The Fund for the Republic

- Established in 1951 by the Ford Foundation, led by Robert M. Hutchins
- Sought to support “the elimination of restrictions on freedom of thought, inquiry and expression in the United States”
- Among other activities, the group published a negative report on blacklisting and gave \$5,000 to a Quaker group for hiring a blacklisted librarian

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# The Fund for the Republic

- In July, 1956, HUAC held hearings investigating the Fund's blacklisting report and the award
- The Fund had no CPUSA ties whatsoever; HUAC questioned its tax-exempt status

# The Fund for the Republic

- *Investigation of So-Called “Blacklisting” in Entertainment industry – Report of the Fund for the Republic, INC. July 1956, 3 pts. (SuDoc no: Y 4.Un 1/2: F 96/)*
- *Investigation of the Award by the Fund for the Republic, INC. (Plymouth Meeting, PA) July 1956, 3 pts. (SuDoc no: Y 4.Un 1/2: F 96/2)*



# The 1960 San Francisco Hearings

- On May 12-14, 1960, HUAC went to San Francisco to hold hearings on alleged subversion in the Bay Area.
- After two days of angry protestors, police used water hoses to clear SF City Hall
- Major milestone in popular opposition to HUAC

# The 1960 San Francisco Hearings

- *Northern California District of the Communist Party (Structure – Objectives – Leadership)*. May 1960, 4 pts. (SuDoc no: Y 4.Un 1/2: C 73/113/)

# 1965: Stamler v. HUAC

- In 1965, HUAC subpoenaed Dr. Jeremiah Stamler, a Chicago heart surgeon, to testify before it in that city
- Stamler sued the committee (*Stamler v. Willis*) and refused to answer questions
- This case became a cause celebre (written up in *Science*)

# 1965: Stamler v. HUAC

- *Communist Activities in the Chicago, Illinois Area* May-June 1965, 2 pts.  
(SuDoc no: Y 4.Un 1/2: C 73/46/965)
  - Stamler testimony (pt.1, p.550-52)
  - *Stamler v. Willis* complaint (pt.2, p.762-781; plus exhibits)

# 1965: HUAC Investigates the Klan



Source: <http://www.corbisimages.com/stock-photo/rights-managed/U1103989/a-cross-burning-at-the-meeting-of>

# 1965: HUAC Investigates the Klan

- *Activities of Ku Klux Klan organizations in the United States, 1965-66, 6 v. (SuDoc no: Y 4.Un 1/2: K 95/)*
  - Pts. 1 and 3 contain information on the Klan in NC
  - Greenville, NC, resident and former Klansman George Leonard Williams testified about the “Pitt County Christian Fellowship Association” (pt. 3, pgs. 2867-2900)

# HUAC Becomes HCIS (1969-75)

- February 18, 1969: The House passed H. Res. 89 (91-1), changing the name of HUAC to the House Committee on Internal Security (HCIS)
- Amendment passed on a roll call vote of 306-80 (45 NV) – 115 CR 3723-46

# HUAC Becomes HCIS (1969-75)

- HCIS published approximately 60 hearings (SuDoc stem: Y 4. In 8/15)
- Topics included:
  - Black Panthers
  - SDS
  - Theory and Practice of Communism
  - Terrorism



# The End of HUAC (1975)

- On January 14, 1975, Rep. Thomas P. “Tip” O’Neill (D-MA) proposed H. Res. 5 (94-1), which transferred HCIS and its functions into the Judiciary Committee
- Amendment passed on a roll call vote of 259-150 (22 NV) – 121 CR 20-33

# HUAC in Context

“The fact that it is a Communist who denounces injustice in the courts, police brutality, and lynching when it happens doesn’t change the truth of his charges. Just because Communists kick up a big fuss over racial discrimination when it suits their purposes, a lot of people try to pretend that the whole issue is a creation of Communist imagination.

But they are not fooling anyone with this kind of pretense, and talk about “Communists stirring up Negroes to protest” only makes present misunderstanding worse than ever. Negroes were stirred up long before there was a Communist Party, and they’ll stay stirred up long after the party has disappeared-unless Jim Crow has disappeared by then as well.”

# HUAC in Context

- Jack Roosevelt Robinson, *Hearings Regarding Communist Infiltration of Minority Groups – Part 1*, 1949, p. 481 (SuDoc no.: Y 4. Un 1/2: C73/11/pt. 1)

# Researching HUAC

- Indexes and bibliographies
- Electronic Resources

# Indexes and Bibliographies

- *Cumulative Index to Publications of the Committee on Un-American Activities, 1938-1954*, GPO, 1962
- *Supplement to Cumulative Index to Publications of the Committee on Un-American Activities, 1955 Through 1968*, GPO, 1970
  - Indexes of individuals, publications and organizations
- Goodman, Walter. *The Committee: The Extraordinary Career of the House Committee on Un-American Activities*, New York, 1968
  - Includes bibliography of committee hearings and reports

# Electronic Resources

- Commercial:
  - ProQuest Congressional (hearings)
  - Readex U.S Congressional Serial Set (reports & documents)
- Open Access:
  - Boston Public Library website:  
<http://www.bpl.org/online/govdocs/>

# Related Resources

- Senate Government Operations Committee – Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations
- Senate Judiciary Committee – Subcommittee on Internal Security
- VENONA

# Senate Government Operations Committee – Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

- Chaired by Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-WI) from 1953-54
- SuDoc Stem Y 4. G 74/6:
  - Army-McCarthy Hearings
  - State Department Information Program  
Information Centers



# Senate Judiciary Committee – Subcommittee on Internal Security

- Senate Judiciary Committee –  
Subcommittee on Internal Security
- SuDoc stem: Y 4. J 89/2:
- *Testimony of Dr. Linus Pauling, 1960, 2  
pts. (Y 4 J 89/2:P 28)*

# VENONA

- 2,900 NKVD cables intercepted and decoded by Army SIS during the 1940s, declassified in 1995
- Helped answer lingering questions about Soviet/CPUSA espionage

**National Security Agency: VENONA**

[http://www.nsa.gov/public\\_info/declass/venona/](http://www.nsa.gov/public_info/declass/venona/)

**Federal Bureau of Investigation: VENONA**

<http://vault.fbi.gov/Venona>

# Joyner Library's Cold War and Internal Security Collection

- App. 600 documents from HUAC/HCIS, Senate Permanent Investigations Subcommittee, and Senate Judiciary Internal Security Subcommittee
- Currently have 65% of HUAC publications and 88% of HCIS
- Part of the ASERL Center of Excellence program (since 1/11)
- Permanent archival collection intended for use of the entire southeast region

Questions?



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<http://tinyurl.com/grs-eval19>

# Upcoming Accidental Librarian Webinars

- November 14: UN Data with Melanie Maskin
  - December: British legal research with Howard Carrier
  - January: International development research with Jim Church
- Brought to you by the North Carolina Library Association's Government Resources Section. Join us!
- <http://www.nclaonline.org/government-resources>