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Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective

Richard M. Fried

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According to newspaper headlines and television pundits, the cold war ended many months ago; the age of Big Two confrontation is over. But forty years ago, Americans were experiencing the beginnings of another era--of the fevered anti-communism that came to be known as McCarthyism. During this period, the Cincinnati Reds felt compelled to rename themselves briefly the "Redlegs" to avoid confusion with the other reds, and one citizen in Indiana campaigned to have *The Adventures of Robin Hood* removed from library shelves because the story's subversive message encouraged robbing from the rich and giving to the poor. These developments grew out of a far-reaching anxiety over communism that characterized the McCarthy Era.

Richard Fried's *Nightmare in Red* offers a riveting and comprehensive account of this crucial time. He traces the second Red Scare's antecedents back to the 1930s, and presents an engaging narrative about the many different people who became involved in the drama of the anti-communist fervor, from the New Deal era and World War II, through the early years of the cold war, to the peak of McCarthyism, and beyond McCarthy's censure to the decline of the House Committee on Un-American Activities in the 1960s. Along the way, we meet the familiar figures of the period--Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, and Eisenhower, the young Richard Nixon, and, of course, the Wisconsin Senator Joseph R. McCarthy. But more importantly, Fried reveals the wholesale effect of McCarthyism on the lives of thousands of ordinary people, from teachers and lawyers to college students, factory workers, and janitors. Together with coverage of such famous incidents as the ordeal of the Hollywood Ten (which led to the entertainment world's notorious blacklist) and the Alger Hiss case, Fried also portrays a wealth of little-known but telling episodes involving victims and victimizers of anti-communist politics at the state and local levels.

Providing the most complete history of the rise and fall of the phenomenon known as McCarthyism, *Nightmare in Red* shows that it involved far more than just Joe McCarthy.

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