

Primary Source Reading **13-2** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Red Scare Tactics

▣ About the Selection

The term *McCarthyism* has come to mean politics by smear, fear, and personal destruction. The Army-McCarthy hearings excerpted below marked the beginning of the end for McCarthy. The hearings were televised, and the impression of Joseph McCarthy as an irrational thug was left on the world. The Lawyers Guild, referred to below, was an organization of left-wing attorneys who broke with the American Bar Association because they thought the ABA was too conservative. The Lawyers Guild had Communist members. McCarthy took this fact to mean that the organization itself

Reader's Dictionary



bulwark: something providing protection or defense

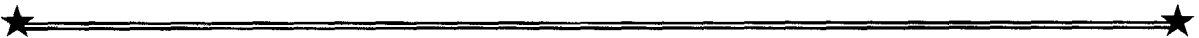
foist: to pass something off as genuine or valuable when it is not

was Communist and, therefore, was an agent of the Soviet Union. Mr. Welch was an attorney for the army. Mr. Cohn was an attorney for Senator McCarthy.

GUIDED READING

As you read, note how McCarthy tries to smear Joseph Welch. Then answer the questions that follow.

CHAPTER 13



- Mr. Welch: Mr. Cohn. . . . Every time you learn of a Communist or a spy anywhere, is it your policy to get them out as fast as possible?
- Mr. Cohn: Surely, we want them out as fast as possible, sir.
- Senator McCarthy: . . . in view of Mr. Welch's request that the information be given once we know of anyone who might be performing any work for the Communist Party, I think we should tell him that he has in his law firm a young man named Fisher . . . who has been for a number of years a member of an organization which was named, oh, years and years ago as the legal bulwark of the Communist Party. . . . Mr. Welch . . . I thought we should just call to your attention the fact that your Mr. Fisher, who is still in your law firm today, whom you asked to have down here looking over the secret and classified material, is a member of an organization, not named by me but named by various committees, named by the Attorney General, as I recall . . . as "the legal bulwark of the Communist Party." He belonged to that for a sizeable number of years, according to his own admission, and he belonged to it long after it had been exposed as the legal arm of the Communist Party.
- Knowing that, Mr. Welch, I just felt that I had a duty to respond to your urgent request that before sundown, when we know of

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anyone serving the Communist cause, we let the agency know. We are now letting you know. . . .

I am not asking you at this time to explain why you tried to foist him on this committee. Whether you knew he was a member of that Communist organization or not, I don't know. I assume you did not. . . .

Mr. Welch: . . . Until this moment, Senator, I think I never really gauged your cruelty and your recklessness. Fred Fisher is a young man who went to the Harvard Law School and came into my firm and is starting what looks to be a brilliant career. When I decided to work for this committee I asked Jim St. Clair [to pick an assistant]. He chose Fred Fisher. . . .

Fred Fisher said, "Mr. Welch, when I was in law school and for a period of months after, I belonged to the Lawyers Guild." He went on to say, "I am secretary of the Young Republicans League in Newton with the son of Massachusetts' Governor and I am sure I have the respect and admiration of my community. . . ."

I said, "Fred, I just don't think I am going to ask you to work on the case. If I do, one of these days that will come out and go over national television and it will just hurt like the dickens."

. . . Little did I dream you could be so reckless and so cruel as to do injury to that lad. . . . I fear he shall always bear a scar needlessly inflicted by you. If it were in my power to forgive you for your reckless cruelty, I would do so. I would like to think I am a gentleman, but your forgiveness will have to come from someone other than me. . . .

Let us not assassinate this lad further, Senator. You have done enough. Have you no sense of decency, sir, at long last? Have you left no sense of decency?

Source: *Eyewitness to America: 500 Years of America in the Words of Those Who Saw It Happen*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1997.

READER RESPONSE

Directions: Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. How does McCarthy characterize the Lawyers Guild?
2. What effect does Welch fear McCarthy's attack will have on Fisher?
3. How does Welch characterize McCarthy's attack on Fisher?
4. **Critical Thinking** How does McCarthy try to smear Welch indirectly?