

Background Essay on Truman's Loyalty Program



Truman Presidential
Museum & Library

The Cold War emphasis on containment is often framed in terms of Truman's foreign policy decisions: the Marshall Plan and Truman Doctrine in Europe, the Korean War in Asia. Yet containment took on a life of its own in the United States as many Americans grew more and more concerned about Communism on U.S. soil, and even more alarmingly, in government agencies. The rise of McCarthyism in the wake of this fear is well-known. Less discussed, perhaps, is the emergence of a Loyalty Program within the federal government.

Truman's Loyalty Program has its origins in World War II, particularly in the Hatch Act (1939), which forbade anyone who "advocated the overthrow of our constitutional form of government in the United States" to work in government agencies. After the war, tension with the Soviet Union grew, as did suspicion of workers in every government department. Several advisors, including Attorney General Tom Clark, urged Truman to form a loyalty program to safeguard against communist infiltration in the government. Initially, Truman was reluctant to form such a program, fearing it could threaten civil liberties of government workers. However, several factors shaped his decision to institute such a policy. Fear of communism was growing rapidly at home, and in the 1946 midterm election, Republicans gained control of Congress for the first time since 1931. To examine the issue, in November 1946 Truman created the Temporary Commission on Employee Loyalty, which stated, "there are many conditions called to the Committee's attention that cannot be remedied by mere changes in techniques. . . Adequate protective measures must be adopted to see that persons of questioned loyalty are not permitted to enter into the federal service." In March 1947, Truman signed Executive Order 9835, "prescribing procedures for the administration of an employees loyalty program in the executive branch of the government."

The Loyalty Program has been criticized as a weapon of hysteria attacking law-abiding citizens. The Attorney General's office compiled lists of "subversive" organizations, and prior involvement in protests or labor strikes could be grounds for investigation. As the Cold War intensified, investigations grew more frequent and far-reaching. As noted in *Civil Liberties and the Legacy of Harry S. Truman*, edited by Richard S. Kirkendall, "During the loyalty-security program's peak years from 1947 to 1956, over five million federal workers underwent screening, resulting in an estimated 2,700 dismissals and 12,000 resignations... the program exerted its chilling effect on a far larger number of employees than those who were dismissed" (70).

While Truman feared the Program could become a "witch hunt," he defended it as necessary to preserving American security during a time of great tension. Many Americans agreed with him and applauded his stand against communism and subversion. The historical context of this event is important, for every investigation, every loyalty oath and every questionnaire took place under a backdrop of fear in an uncertain post-war world.

It is common today to look at events like McCarthyism, HUAC and the Loyalty Program as products of hysteria. Yet this hardly was the first time the federal government restricted civil liberties in the name of national security. In 1798, Congress passed the Alien and Sedition Acts as concerns over a looming war with France. During both the Civil War and World War I, individuals suspected of disloyalty faced imprisonment. The liberty vs. security debate is a continuity in American history, and even though we live in a post-Cold War world, some of these issues are still part of the discussion in an age of global terrorism. Truman's Loyalty Program must be viewed and debated with this understanding, and the understanding that historical context drives presidential decision making.

Essential Question: Do Cold War fears during the Truman Administration justify the institution of the government Employee Loyalty Program in a democratic society?

Source 1

Source Information: Report of the President's Temporary Commission on Employee Loyalty, November 26, 1946. Truman Papers, Official File. OF 252-I: Presidents Temporary Commission on Employee Loyalty. (Excerpted, pages 44-46)

- iii. a statement as to his right of hearing, if he so desires, at which he may personally appear with counsel or representative of his own choice, and witnesses, and present evidence, including affidavits, in his own behalf.
- c. When a Loyalty Board recommends removal there shall be, prior to removal, a right of appeal under provisions prescribed by the head of each department or agency.
- d. The rights of hearing, notice and appeal shall be accorded to all employees, irrespective of tenure or manner, method or nature of appointment.

Under Paragraph 3d of Executive Order No. 9806, it is recommended as follows:

The underlying standard for either the refusal of employment or removal from employment in loyalty cases shall be that, on all the evidence, reasonable grounds exist for believing that the person involved is disloyal to the Government of the United States. Individual employee activities and associations which may be considered in this connection include one or more of the following:

- i. Sabotage, espionage, or attempts or preparations therefore, or knowingly associating with spies or saboteurs;
- ii. Treason or sedition or advocacy thereof;
- iii. Advocacy of revolution or force or violence to alter our constitutional form of government;

- iv. Intentional, unauthorized disclosure to any person of documents or information of a confidential or non-public character obtained by the person making the disclosure as a result of his employment by the Government of the United States;
- v. Performing or attempting to perform his duties, or otherwise acting, so as to serve the interests of another government in preference to the interests of the United States;
- vi. Membership in, affiliation with or sympathetic association with any foreign or domestic organization, association, movement, group or combination of persons, designated by the Attorney General as totalitarian, fascist, communist, or subversive, or as having adopted a policy of advocating or approving the commission of acts of force or violence to deny others their constitutional rights, or as one which seeks to alter our form of government by unconstitutional means.

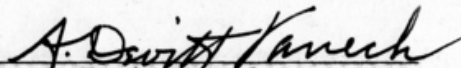
Under Paragraph 3e of Executive Order No. 9806, it is

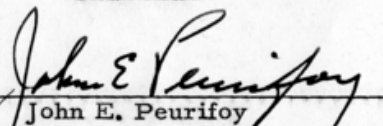
recommended as follows:

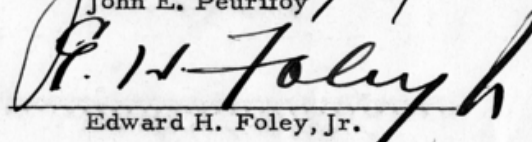
- a. That the temporary legislation by which the Secretaries of the War, Navy and State Departments can presently remove any employee summarily for security reasons, be made permanent because of the sensitive nature of the operations of these three departments, and that permanent legislation of the same character be enacted to grant similar power to the Atomic Energy Commission.

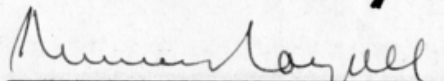
- b. That all of the recommendations contained in this report be effectuated by the promulgation of an Executive Order which will simultaneously provide for the abrogation of Executive Order No. 9300, dated February 5, 1943.

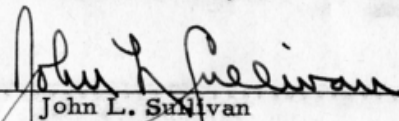
In conclusion, the Commission recommends that this report, together with any Executive Order which the President may issue, be submitted to Congress for consideration.

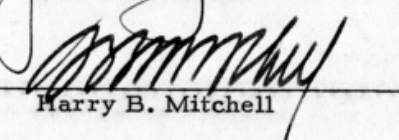

A. Devitt Vanech
Chairman


John E. Peurifoy


Edward H. Foley, Jr.


Kenneth C. Royall


John L. Sullivan


Harry B. Mitchell

Using Source 1

Sourcing Questions	<p>This document was produced by Truman's temporary commission on government loyalty. What do you notice about the signatures at the end of the document? What do they tell you about who served on this commission? Why might that matter?</p> <p><i>(NOTE for teachers: All of the commission members were white males. This would be typical for a government commission in 1946, but it is worth discussing with students. Many of those accused were women or African-American. No women or African Americans served on the temporary commission or on the Loyalty boards. This was a complaint of many who opposed the program.)</i></p>
Contextualization Questions	<p>*Why is the date of the document important? What was going on prior to this commission's report? How quickly did America go from WWII to the Cold War -- and how does that add meaning to the document?</p> <p>*Communism was an attractive ideology to some during the Great Depression. How close was this document released to that era? Why is that important?</p>
Corroboration Tasks	
Close Reading Questions	<p>Examine specific "grounds for suspicion of disloyalty." Why might some of these criteria raise concerns?</p>

Source 2

Source Information: Executive Order 9835, March 22, 1947 National Archives.

EXECUTIVE ORDER

PRESCRIBING PROCEDURES FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF AN EMPLOYEES LOYALTY PROGRAM IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF THE GOVERNMENT

WHEREAS each employee of the Government of the United States is endowed with a measure of trusteeship over the democratic processes which are the heart and sinew of the United States; and

WHEREAS it is of vital importance that persons employed in the Federal service be of complete and unswerving loyalty to the United States; and

WHEREAS, although the loyalty of by far the overwhelming majority of all Government employees is beyond question, the presence within the Government service of any disloyal or subversive person constitutes a threat to our democratic processes; and

WHEREAS maximum protection must be afforded the United States against infiltration of disloyal persons into the ranks of its employees, and equal protection from unfounded accusations of disloyalty must be afforded the loyal employees of the Government:

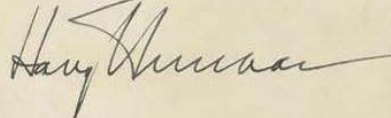
NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and statutes of the United States, including the Civil Service Act of 1883 (22 Stat. 403), as amended, and section 9A of the act approved August 2, 1939 (18 U.S.C. 61i), and as President and Chief Executive of the

July 5, 1946, 60 Stat. 453, or of any other statute conferring the power of summary removal.

4. The Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy, and the Secretary of the Treasury with respect to the Coast Guard, are hereby directed to continue to enforce and maintain the highest standards of loyalty within the armed services, pursuant to the applicable statutes, the Articles of War, and the Articles for the Government of the Navy.

5. This order shall be effective immediately, but compliance with such of its provisions as require the expenditure of funds shall be deferred pending the appropriation of such funds.

6. Executive Order No. 9300 of February 5, 1943, is hereby revoked.



THE WHITE HOUSE,

March 21, 1947.

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES
FILED AND MADE AVAILABLE
FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION

MAR 24 9 45 AM '47

IN THE DIVISION OF THE
FEDERAL REGISTER

9835

Using Source 2

Sourcing Questions	What is an executive order? How is that different from a law? Why is it important to understand what an executive order is when examining this program?
Contextualization Questions	Why do you believe Truman issued an executive order, rather than going through Congress? What else was occurring in 1947 in U.S. foreign policy? How might this document, which addresses the Cold War at home, be more meaningful when understanding U.S. foreign policy at the time?
Corroboration Tasks	In what ways does this document reflect the recommendations provided by the temporary commission on employee loyalty? (Source 1)
Close Reading Questions	List details in the first four paragraphs that explain Truman's reasoning in establishing this program. In what ways does Truman remind his audience of the context of the document? According to the document, how is loyalty to be addressed in the armed forces? Why might that be a concern?

Source 3

Source Information: Letter from David J. Sloane to Harry S. Truman, May 28, 1947, Official File. OF 252-K.


David J. Sloane
252-K
5-28-47

Mr. President,

I consider your executive order against "disloyalty" in government workers a bigger threat to me and my friends than to evil-doers and traitors. I don't see how you can keep it from becoming a prying, suspecting, disturbing shadow in the lives of any progressive people in the country.

We're doing fine with an unadulterated bill of rights. If the order becomes law, I consider it reason enough to deny you my vote in 1948.

Respectfully,
D. J. Sloane



Using Source 3

Sourcing Questions	The source line does not indicate who David J. Sloane is. Given your reading of the document, who do you think Sloane might be? What is his point of view?
Contextualization Questions	Sloane give us an important piece of historical context in the last line of this letter. Why might that be important?
Corroboration Tasks	In what way does Sloane's letter attempt to challenge Truman's explanation for the Loyalty Program, as presented in Source 2?
Close Reading Questions	

Source 4

Source Information: Advertisement, "Leading Americans Warn of Dangers in order 9835," n.d., United Public Workers of America, n.d OF 252-K; Government Employees Loyalty Program, Truman Papers.

HARRY S. TRUMAN LIBRARY

Papers of Harry S. Truman
Official File

LEADING AMERICANS WARN OF DANGERS IN ORDER 9835

LAGUARDIA Warns of Danger

"It is safe to predict that the very people who urged and now approve the Executive Order will realize that it is entirely too one-sided and smacks too much of autocratic power, methods of a police state, and contains many of the attributes which we criticize in other countries and which are repulsive and repugnant to American tradition and American principles."

HENRY WALLACE Sees Witch Hunt

"Intolerance has an insatiable appetite. Whom will its inquisition condemn if this drive continues? Every American who reads the wrong books; every American who thinks the wrong thoughts; every American who stands up for civil rights; every American who believed Willkie; every American who supported Roosevelt. Hatred and violence abroad, hatred and fear at home will be the fruits of the Truman Doctrine."

PHILIP MURRAY Condemns Order

"As carefully as I have read this Order, I cannot find clear guarantee of due process, whether with respect to specific charges being made available, or to the opportunity to confront accusers and cross-examine witnesses, or to any of the traditional protections afforded all our citizens under the laws of the nation."

"I am alarmed at the prospect that any organization of citizens, gathered together to express their ideas on matters of mutual interest, may be declared 'subversive' without any specification, definition or limitation of the meaning of that term. There is no assurance in the Order that fraternal or religious associations, labor or consumer groups, literary or educational organizations or institutions, may not be so labeled forthwith."

HARVARD Professors Dissent

"It is imperative to keep clearly in mind what a dismissal under the order means. Far more is involved than the loss of job. It means that:

"(1) The person dismissed will be denied all opportunity for employment anywhere in the Federal Government.

"(2) As a practical consequence, he will also lose almost all possibility of finding employment within any state or municipal government.

"(3) Also, he will encounter special difficulties in obtaining employment in private organizations.

"No provision is made for a detailed record of the hearing or, for that matter, for a record of any kind. There is no requirement that the findings of the loyalty board must be supported by the evidence."

Zechariah Chafee, Jr., Erwin N. Griswold, Milton Katz, Austin W. Scott

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT Voices Fears

"However, the more I think about one clause in the President's Executive Order, the more troubled I am. Under the clause I am afraid it would be possible to declare subversive many organizations that are simply in opposition to the thinking of certain powerful groups."

WRITE OR WIRE PRESIDENT TRUMAN TODAY
URGING HIM TO RESCIND EXECUTIVE ORDER 9835

UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS OF AMERICA, CIO
930 E Street N.W. WASHINGTON, D. C.

Using Source 4

Sourcing Questions	“N.d.” means “no date.” When would you hypothesize this document was produced? What clues lead you to that hypothesis? What do you know about the United Public Workers of America, CIO? Whose viewpoint does this document represent? Why might such a group be concerned about a loyalty program?
Contextualization Questions	Henry Wallace had served as FDR’s Vice President in his third term. The Democrats dropped him from the ticket in 1944 and named Harry Truman as the VP candidate instead. Why might this fact provide additional context for this document?
Corroboration Tasks	How does this document relate to the information Truman and his temporary commission used to explain the need for a federal loyalty program? In what ways does this document “talk” to sources 1 and 2? In what ways does it relate to source 3?
Close Reading Questions	List specific concerns mentioned in this document. Why is some of the word choice important in understanding those concerns?

Source 5

Source Information: Frank B. Steele to Harry S. Truman, With Attachment, and Reply From Matthew J. Connelly, July 7, 1947. Truman Papers, Official File. OF 252-K: Government Employees Loyalty Program.

The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution

ORGANIZED APRIL 30, 1889

INCORPORATED BY ACT OF CONGRESS JUNE 9, 1906

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS, 1227 16TH STREET, N. W., WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

1947-1948

*ack
7-7-47*

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY AND
REGISTRAR GENERAL

1227 16TH STREET, N. W.
WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

July 2, 1947.

Honorable Harry S. Truman,
President of the United States,
The White House.

Dear Mr. President:

It gives me great pleasure
to enclose a Resolution passed at the National
Congress of the Society of the Sons of the
American Revolution assembled at Huntington, West
Virginia, May 15, A. D., 1947.

We feel quite sure you will be interested
in this action of our National Society.

Cordially yours,

Frank B. Steele,
Secretary-Registrar General,
National Society of the Sons
of the American Revolution.

Encl.
FBS/b

cc: Pres. Gen., S.A.R.





NATIONAL SOCIETY SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION
FRANK B. STEELE
SECRETARY GENERAL
1221 SIXTEENTH STREET, NORTHWEST
WASHINGTON, D. C.



RESOLVED, by the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution in Congress assembled at Huntington, West Virginia, May 15, A. D. 1947:

1. That we are gratified by the action of the President of the United States because of his Executive Order of March 22, 1947, wherein he has set new standards of loyalty for employees of the United States Government, and has requested a Congressional appropriation of funds to put such standards into effect;

2. That such Executive Order, if enforced by Congress and the Department of Justice, will make it unlawful hereafter for officials of the Government of the United States to have membership in, affiliations with, or sympathetic association with any foreign or domestic organization, association, movement, or combination of persons designated by the Attorney General as totalitarian, Fascist, Communist, or subversive, or as favoring any policy which would overturn our American System by force or violence, or any unconstitutional means; and we are gratified also that if such Executive Order of the President is enforced that it

will mean a quick discharge from the Government service of all public officials now in such service whom the Federal Bureau of Investigation may find to be members of any such organizations as are hostile to our system of government and in their hearts loyal to alien systems of government.



July 7, 1947

252-K

My dear Mr. Steele:

The President has asked me to thank you for your letter of July second, with the enclosed copy of resolution adopted by your organization. He wants you and your associates to know that he is especially grateful for this kind expression of approval.

Very sincerely yours,



MATTHEW J. CONNELLY
Secretary to the President

x Mr. Frank B. Steele, x
Secretary-Registrar General,
National Society of the Sons
of the American Revolution, x 147
1227 16th Street, N. W.,
Washington 6, D. C.

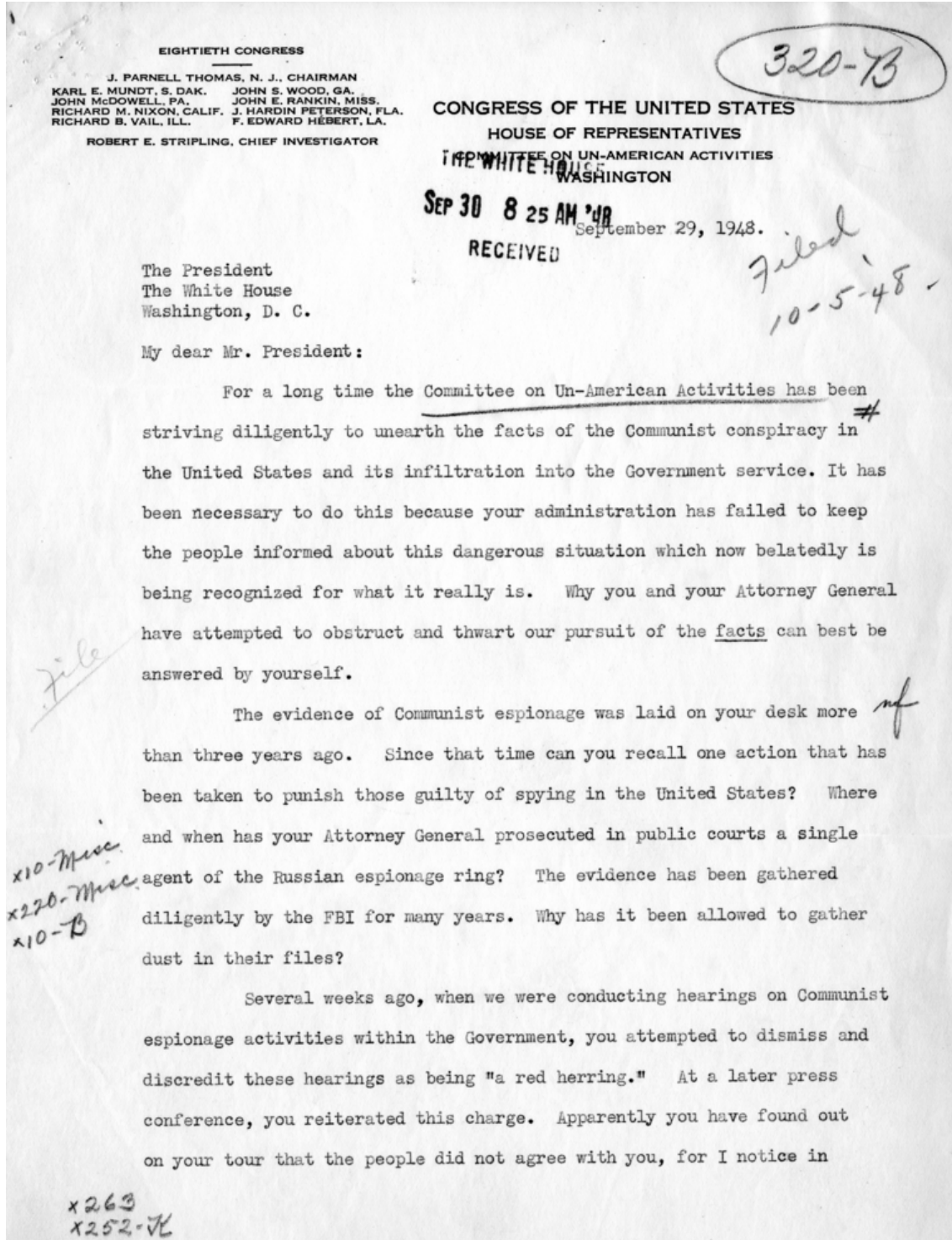
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Using Source 5

Sourcing Questions	This document was produced by the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. Even if you don't know anything about this group, what might you hypothesize about its ideology and purpose? Why do you think they produced this document?
Contextualization Questions	Compare the date on this document with the date the Executive Order was issued. What does that tell you about this organization's initial response to the loyalty program? How does the president's secretary respond to the document?
Corroboration Tasks	Compare and/or contrast the tone and ideas of this document with those of Sources 3 and 4.
Close Reading Questions	What seems to be the biggest concern about the loyalty program as outlined in this document? What phrase is repeated several times? What does that tell you about Cold War fears of the individuals in this organization?

Source 6

Source Information: J. Parnell Thomas to Harry S. Truman, September 29, 1948. Truman Papers, Official File. OF 320-B: Un-American Activities, House Committee on.



reading the text of your speech which you gave yesterday in Oklahoma City, that you stated as follows:

"The FBI has been quietly and efficiently assembling this evidence for several years. The evidence was being presented to the Grand Jury long before the Republican Congressional Committees began their recent hearings. Now these Committees are trying to win credit for digging up evidence. They are trying to cash in on the work of the FBI, and to usurp the functions of the Grand Jury and the Federal Courts."

I assume from the above statement that you have concluded that it was not a "red herring" after all. Further in your speech you made some ridiculous accusations against the Committee on Un-American Activities--accusations which I call upon you now to substantiate by the facts:

1. You stated that this Committee "has made confidential information available to the intelligence services of foreign countries." What information are you referring to? Please name it.
2. You state that this Committee has "injured the reputations of innocent men by spreading wild and false accusations." Who are the innocent men? Please name them.
3. You state that "the Committee has also deprived the Government of the services of a number of atomic scientists." Who are they. Please name them.

Your Attorney General, in a speech given on September 22, in Washington, D. C., in defending your loyalty program, stated:

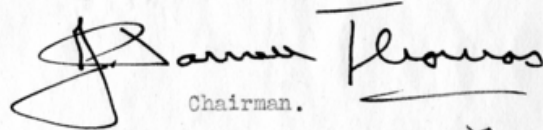
"The President's program has not ended with the investigation of Federal employees. Thirty-four persons have been convicted in the Federal Courts in Washington, D. C., since July 1, 1945."

Let me have the facts on this also, Mr. President, because I am sure that you will find that most of them resulted directly from the work of this Committee and were cases of subversives who had been certified to the United States Attorney by the House of Representatives, after exposure by our Committee.

I realize, Mr. President, that this is a blunt request, but your attack upon this Committee cannot be left unchallenged.

As Chairman of the Committee on Un-American Activities, I do not intend to be deterred or intimidated by personal attacks upon me by the President of the United States, or by political-serving announcements by the Attorney General, for I shall continue to expose the participants in this communist conspiracy whether they be Government employees, scientists, diplomats, labor leaders, or movie stars.

Sincerely yours,


Chairman.

x

xPP7200-A "T"

Using Source 6

Sourcing Questions	J. Parnell Thomas served in U.S. Congress. Given the tone of the document, what party do you think he represented? When was this document written? How long after the executive order is that? What does that show you about Thomas' view of the program?
Contextualization Questions	September 1948 is very close to the 1948 Election. Just as Truman was facing reelection, so was Thomas. How might that shape your reading of this document?
Corroboration Tasks	In what ways do the ideas of this document compare with those in other sources?
Close Reading Questions	Thomas references HUAC several times. What does Thomas seem to be stating about the Executive vs. Legislative branches approaches to Cold War at home?

Source 7

Source Information: Albert B. Epstein to Harry S. Truman, with attachment, March 31, 1948, OF 263, Communism, Truman Papers

HARRY S. TRUMAN LIBRARY

Papers of Harry S. Truman
Official File

AMERICAN ANTI-COMMUNIST LEAGUE
P. O. BOX 1867
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

PRESIDENT
ALBERT B. EPSTEIN
811 TRUMBULL ST.
HARTFORD, CONN.
TREASURER
ARTHUR MARSH
130 OAKLAND VES.
HARTFORD, CONN.
SECRETARY
HUGH F. HAYDEN
108 REYNOLDS ST.
HARTFORD, CONN.
SPECIAL COMM.
ROBERT WETHERELL
75 LINCOLN ST.
HARTFORD, CONN.
ALTHEA L. JOHNSON
81 LIBBON ST.
HARTFORD, CONN.

March 31, 1948

The Honorable Harry S. Truman
President of the United States
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. President:

I am well aware of the burdens of your office, and it is not my intention to impose on your time and good nature.

Enclosed you will find for your consideration a full page Anti-Communist advertisement of March 29, 1948 from the Hartford Courant, stressing the importance of Democracy and a factual condemnation of Communism.

Any favorable comment from you on the nature of our work will strengthen our organization and help us carry on our work for God and our Country.

Respectfully yours,

AMERICAN ANTI-COMMUNIST LEAGUE, Inc.

Albert B. Epstein

Albert B. Epstein

ABE/Tj

Enc.

AN OPEN STATEMENT
BY
AMERICAN ANTI-COMMUNIST LEAGUE
P. O. Box 1267 - HARTFORD, CONN.

Since the days of the Pilgrim Fathers millions of people the world over have left their homelands and loved ones and travelled thousands of miles across the seas with only one hope in their hearts - to find a better life for themselves and their children in the U. S. A.

We of the American Anti-Communist League like most Americans are at a loss to understand why the Communists and their fellow-travellers, who extol Soviet Russia and claim it to have a much superior system to ours, fail to take advantage of this great Marxian paradise.

Why don't these Communists leave the shores of this "Capitalist Infested Country" for the much better life in the land of the Soviets?

We, on our part, are ready and able to help the Communists of America to achieve their heart's desire for a better life in the land of Stalin's Utopia. Therefore, the American Anti-Communist League makes the following offer -

We will supply a first-class ticket from the U.S.A. to MOSCOW by Air Clipper or Steamship entirely free and paid by the American Anti-Communist League to any Communist or his fellow-traveller who wishes to renounce his American citizenship and guarantees to never return to the United States.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Albert L. Epstein, Pres.
311 Trumbull St., Hartford, Conn.

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Hartford, Conn.

Arthur Makris, Treas.
120 Oakland Ter.
Hartford, Conn.

Robert F. Wetherell
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Althea L. Johnson
31 Lisbon St., Hartford, Conn.

Using Source 7

Sourcing Questions	The author of this document is a member of what organization? What can you hypothesize this document will say before you even read a word of it?
Contextualization Questions	How does the presence of this organization and the message of this document reflect what was happening in both foreign and domestic policy at this time?
Corroboration Tasks	
Close Reading Questions	The tone of this document is an important piece of it. What key words show the tone?

Source 8

Source Information: Laurence Jaeger to Harry S. Truman, August 14, 1951, OF 252-K, Government Employees Loyalty Program, Truman Papers.

HARRY S. TRUMAN LIBRARY
Papers of Harry S. Truman
OFFICIAL FILE

16-2

2 PM x 200
8/14/51
R
y

108 McDONALD AVENUE
BROOKLYN 18, N. Y.

August 14, 1951

Dear President Truman:

I have just listened to the rebroadcast of your talk today before the American Legion in Washington. I agreed with a great many of the things you had to say about how our country is being turned into a spineless, hysterical land by people who prey upon fears and use slander, guilt by association and character assassination to build suspicion and close-mindedness. And I agree with you that unless people of strength and character get up the nerve to put a stop to this we'll have no democracy left to defend against possible aggressors.

As I listened, however, there were several things that disturbed me. There seemed to be inconsistencies. Because I've always considered that you are an honest man (perhaps this is in itself an indication of how much all of us -- even supporters -- are infected with the disease of suspicion of the people we would ordinarily never think of doubting), I've decided to take them up with you directly.

In all sincerity, this is what bothered me. (I am impatient with myself for having to apologize for daring to differ with my President -- how effective is the fear of being called a Red because I exercise my right, even my duty, to express honestly the things I wonder about!). As I listened, I asked myself, "Where did all these things start? How did we get sucked into this whirlpool of fear and doubt and slander?"

And I realized, of course, that it started right in Washington. Not in the halls of Congress, where it has been nursed into such a prosperous, vicious handyman, but in the executive branch. What set the pattern for the test of guilt or innocence by association but the loyalty programs? Where did the conclusive evidence of a man's Americanism originate but in the Attorney General's list of subversive organizations?

This is a touchy situation, I know. I do not question the necessity of a government's setting up standards to weed out people who work their way into sensitive positions to do spying or sabotage for a foreign power. But how can I reconcile this reasonable necessity with the sweeping, all-pervading snooping into the lives and thoughts of decent people who are as remote from sensitive jobs as a truckdriver? And how can I reconcile a valid security check with the wild-eyed

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hysteria whipped up by vicious reactionaries and bigots who justify their campaigns of fear and hate by the fact that the government itself is doing almost the same thing? Once the snowball of suspecting and deducing a loathsome guilt from anonymous tips and possibly-malicious denunciations gets started in, say, the State Department, it is inevitable that it will roll into something huge and flatten everybody in its path -- be he postal clerk, typist or elevator operator. The psychology of suspicion and intolerance quickly reaches the point where it invades all walks of life, because we're all afraid of the same thing -- losing the democracy we all cherish so. "Reasonable doubt" turns into "reasonable grounds" for dismissal. What is the difference between "reasonable doubt" of a man's loyalty and "reasonable grounds" for assuming his disloyalty? When you begin to think that way, where do you stop? Is it any wonder that our own Secretary of State and Defense Secretary can be called Communists when intelligent, respectable men can fire a person because of evidence that can never stand up in a court of law?

x 19 11-1-47
Yes, I'm really upset about all this. I heard of something today that got me mad. It was of a man I know who is desperate, his family in a terrible way. He was a postoffice clerk, he's 34 years old. He's worked hard and struggled all his life for the security he thought he had in the postoffice. But then he lost his job in a loyalty investigation because it turned out that somebody said that he had been a member of a subversive organization when he was 18 years old. He didn't deny it, it was true. I don't even know what organization it was, but it probably was some Communist-led group that said it wanted to do away with discrimination and prejudice. He's a Negro so he joined it. Why shouldn't he have? Do you ask for a man's credentials when you're sick and he promises to relieve your pain? Now, 16 years later, he loses his job and his family's bread and butter because he is suddenly labeled "a known subversive".

x 93 11-1-47
That's not the end of the story. He found another job -- as a truckdriver. I don't think it paid as well as the one he lost but he couldn't be fussy. Then his firm got a defense contract. He was fired again, same reason. Maybe he'll find another job, maybe he won't for a long while. What is to happen to him, not only economically but morally? Is his family to be disgraced because some narrow-minded group of officials don't have enough sense or decency to know a subversive from a hole in the wall?

It's a nasty story, but I daresay it's not the only one of its kind. I wonder what this man would say of the kind of "Americanism" that gives him freedom of speech

R. L. H.

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with one hand and then takes away his very bread and butter for having exercised it in a way that isn't popular any more. What kind of "Americanism" is that grants him the freedom of assembly our Constitution talks of with one hand and then ruins his insignificant career with the other because he exercised it? What harm to national security is there in allowing this man to live and work? Even if he were a Communist, which he isn't and never dreamed of being, how could he sabotage the nation's defense by selling stamps in a post-office or driving some contractor's dump truck, or whatever kind of truck it is? Isn't our FBI efficient enough to catch a saboteur on evidence without our having to terrorize every person who ever dared to speak up for the equality we know is ours, regardless of skin color? Am I to stop believing that discrimination is bad just because the Communists say the same thing? Is the President the only one who can get away with saying that FEPC-laws are necessary to insure fairness in job selection? That's what it comes down to, it seems to me.

It's reached the point where I have to think more than twice about writing a letter to my own President for fear it'll find its way into some dossier and be thrown back at me someday by God-knows-who. I'm quite serious about that -- I had seriously to tell myself that if we've reached that stage by now, there's no use in having any more faith in anything, so I might just as well take the chance.

And that isn't a healthy attitude for a citizen of a democracy to have. When ordinary people like me begin to think that way, Americanism is truly in danger.

I really hope you'll be able to answer these questions in my mind. I want to know how you feel about these things, so I can understand them better. I guess it all boils down to this -- how can you, as President, accept the responsibility for having started the official loyalty program... and attack those who are merely carrying it to its logical extreme (God help us if it gets any more extreme than now!)? If those are perhaps unkind words, I hope you'll try to put yourself in my place and know how I felt when I heard about the man I just spoke of. I think none of us can possibly know he must feel!

Sincerely yours,

Laurence Jaeger

Laurence Jaeger

Using Source 8

Sourcing Questions	Notice the date on this document. How does this document show the effects of the Loyalty Program?
Contextualization Questions	
Corroboration Tasks	In what ways does this document corroborate the concerns expressed in earlier documents? Cite a specific document and specific concerns validated by this document.
Close Reading Questions	

Source 9

Source Information: Walter White to Harry S. Truman, November 26, 1948. Truman Papers, Official File. OF 252-K: Government Employees Loyalty Program.

7.12/7/48

11-29

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**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE
ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE**

20 WEST 40TH STREET, NEW YORK 18, N. Y.


LONGACRE 3-6890

Official Organ: The Crisis



252-K

NOV 26 1948



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November 26, 1948

My dear President Truman:

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is greatly concerned about an increasing tendency on the part of government agencies to associate activity on interracial matters with disloyalty. Thus, various investigating agents of the government have been asking white persons whether they associate with colored people. Colored people have been asked whether they have entertained white people in their homes. In addition, there is considerable evidence before us that many colored government employees, who are now being charged with disloyalty, have such accusations brought against them because they have actively opposed segregation and discrimination in their places of employment or in their communities.

At present, we have information on charges filed against colored and white government workers in Chicago, New York, St. Louis, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Washington, and Baltimore. If given a fair hearing, these individuals will undoubtedly obtain complete exoneration. Meanwhile, the government will have spent considerable time and money in processing their cases. The evidence against them is such that it should never have been used in the first instance. However, since it was used, the written answers furnished by employees are more than sufficient to justify dismissal of the cases. Under the Loyalty Review Board's regulations, agencies are entitled to drop such charges without hearing. However, in the cases mentioned, the agencies have decided to conduct hearings. This is particularly true of the Post Office Department where a number of employees with work records of fifteen years and more are now suddenly charged with disloyalty.

40th ANNUAL CONFERENCE, Los Angeles, California, July 12-17, 1949, inclusive 25

President Harry S. Truman

November 26, 1948

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In view of the new developments, we believe that the whole loyalty program should be restudied by a committee of distinguished citizens. The present procedure of confronting employees with charges based on hearsay and doubtful sources has done much to embarrass and intimidate loyal citizens. We, therefore, respectfully urge that a review be made of the present loyalty program. The NAACP is particularly interested in preventing biased informants and officials from using the loyalty program to persecute members of minority groups or persons sympathetic to the program of civil rights, which you have so courageously championed.



Ever sincerely,

Walter White

Secretary.

x 413

The Honorable Harry S. Truman
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C.

ww/mdj

Using Source 9

Sourcing Questions	Walter White was executive secretary of the NAACP. Why is his affiliation with that organization important?
Contextualization Questions	Truman is known for some of his early work on civil rights. Why is that significant in understanding this document? NOTE TO teacher: <i>Perhaps review Truman's desegregation of the armed forces in 1948. What is this author's concern?</i>
Corroboration Tasks	
Close Reading Questions	

Source Information: Petition to Harry S Truman and U.S. Congress, Truman Papers, Official File.
OF 252-K: 10-14

Papers of Harry S. Truman
Official File

10-14

To the President
AND
The Congress of The United States

PETITION

We, the undersigned citizens and residents of the United States, hereby express our approval of the fight which the United States is waging against Communism, believing that the defeat of this form of totalitarianism is as important to world peace as the defeat of Nazism and Fascism. We pledge our support to the United States Government and its various agencies in fighting Communist infiltration into American life and American organizations in an effort to confine and demoralize us in the conflict between this country and the Soviet Union and its satellites. We sincerely believe that the people in Eastern European countries including Slovakia, our ancestral home, are not in favor of Communist rule; that the vast majority of these people are for America and the American form of democracy and are ready and willing to fight with the United States in bringing about lasting peace in Europe and the world, which will never be possible by imposing alien rule upon them even through the most ruthless methods now employed.

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Maria Sdyach	5204 S. Richmond St.
Rose Valukovic	3109 S. 5th St. Ply
Catherine M. Ruff	5316 S. Rockwell St.

Using Source 10

Sourcing Questions	Petitions provide a unique perspective as historical sources. What does this petition tell you about public opinion regarding Communism?
Contextualization Questions	We do not have a date for this document. When might you hypothesize this document was created?
Corroboration Tasks	Which documents in this packet are most similar to this document? In what ways are they similar?
Close Reading Questions	By signing this document, the signees state they agree with a specific position. What is that position with which the signees agree? What do they want the U.S. Congress to do?

Truman's Loyalty Program: Weighing the Evidence

Framing Question: *Do Cold War fears during the Truman Administration justify the institution of the government Employee Loyalty Program in a democratic society?*

Directions: As you read the documents, determine where to place them on the graphic organizer below, based on how the document illustrates that position on the essential question. Be prepared to explain your reasoning. (Indicate specific details from the document that prove the accuracy of your placement on the scales.)

