IN THE NAME
OF SECURITY:

“The Trials of Alger Hiss”

“The Trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg”

& “The Case of J. Robert Oppenheimer”

A series in three parts
by Peter Goodchild

Teacher’s Study Guide

Alive & Aloud • Radio Plays for Learning in the Classroom
Dear Participating Teacher,

We are pleased to provide you this Study Guide as part of our educational program ALIVE & ALOUD: Radio Plays for Learning in the Classroom. It is our hope that the enclosures will support your classroom lesson plans for all your students—wherever they are on the learning continuum. Using the educational materials to prepare the students to listen to the radio play will deepen the educational value of the theatre experience.

During the height of the Cold War, American democracy was challenged by the anti-communist witch-hunts of the McCarthy era. IN THE NAME OF SECURITY: “The Trials of Alger Hiss,” “The Trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg” & “The Case of J. Robert Oppenheimer” a series in three parts by Peter Goodchild re-opens three famous spy cases that rocked America between 1948 and 1954. Each program combines re-enactments from the transcripts with archival material and new evidence, as well as with the latest assessments by American historians, atomic scientists and relatives and friends of the accused.

You may want to experiment with various approaches to integrating ALIVE & ALOUD into your lesson plans. Students can listen to the audio plays individually with their own headset, in a group setting or on their own time outside of class. You may find that certain Study Guides exercises and activities require group listening in teams of students or with the class as a whole. Dividing the play into sections to focus on one part at a time can enhance group listening to the plays.

The Study Guide emphasizes the curriculum core subjects of secondary schools. It is organized to pose important questions and to develop significant study units inspired by the content of the play. These curriculum ideas are our way of promoting academic achievement and enriching the learning process of young people in the classroom.

Sincerely,

Susan Albert Loewenberg

Directors, John Theocharis and Martin Jenkins
Executive Producer, Susan Albert Loewenberg
An L.A. Theatre Works/BBC/KCRW co-production.
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TEACHER’S STUDY GUIDE by Sheryl Hinman
Stephen Gutwillig & Michele Lee Cobb, Study Guide editors
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Mai Bloomfield, Curriculum graphic designer

ALIVE & ALOUD: Radio Plays for Learning in the Classroom, a program of L.A. Theatre Works, is made possible in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, Sony Pictures Entertainment and the BWF Foundation. L.A. Theatre Works productions and programs are supported with the help of the Captial Group Companies, Inc.

L.A. Theatre Works is a 25 year-old nonprofit theatre and radio production organization. We welcome your comments and inquiries regarding the ALIVE & ALOUD recordings and study guides. To reach us or to request a free catalogue of L.A. Theatre Works plays, docudramas and novels available on audio cassette, contact:

L.A. Theatre Works
681 Venice Blvd., Venice, CA 90291
phone: (800) 708-8863
fax: (310) 827-4949
e-mail: latworks@aol.com

Additional ALIVE & ALOUD curriculum guides available for FREE on our Web site: www.latw.org
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The Fifth Amendment
To the United States Constitution

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

About the Playwright

Peter Goodchild is a British writer and producer who has been involved with the BBC since 1963. He was researcher for, then a producer of and finally series editor for the television series HORIZONS on which the American series NOVA was modeled. In 1976, Goodchild moved to BBC’s drama department and made MARIE CURIE, starring Jane Lapotaire and Nigel Hawthorne, which won the 1977 BAFTA best drama series award. In 1978, he set up Special Features Unit to concentrate specifically on factually based drama, and in 1980, he became head of the BBC’s Science Features department. In 1984, he made the unusual move from heading a documentary department to becoming head of television’s Plays Department. Here he set up the two long-running TV feature film series, SCREEN ONE and SCREEN TWO. In recent years Goodchild has devoted himself to producing single films including the award winning THE MARCH by William Nicholson and BLACK EASTER, which won the Gold Plaque at the 1996 Chicago Film Festival. In addition to his radio plays, Goodchild has written a biography of J. Robert Oppenheimer. Peter Goodchild is also the author of THE GREAT TENNESSEE MONKEY TRIAL and THE CHICAGO CONSPIRACY TRIAL, available from L.A. Theatre Works.
1. Loyalty is the focus of each of the cases. What examples of loyalty emerge during the plays?

2. What are your strongest loyalties? Create a collage to symbolize your loyalties.

3. Many employees in the United States were asked to sign a loyalty oath. If you were to create an oath for government employees, what would you want it to say?

4. List the personal qualities you think would be necessary for an effective spy. Provide examples to explain why those qualities would be essential.

5. Interview adults who were children in the late 1940’s or 1950’s. Ask them to comment about the way communists were portrayed. Did they feel threatened by communists in any way?

6. Pretend you are a juror on one of the cases. What questions would you have liked to ask any of the witnesses?

7. If you were one of the jurors, what is the one piece of evidence or one sample of testimony that you would recall most vividly?

8. Write a letter in defense of the actions of one of the characters in the play. You may select the accused, a witness, a lawyer, etc.

9. Examine Internet sites and print resources related to the cases (see page 17). Is the information objective or subjective? If the author incorporates personal opinion, explain what evidence is provided in support.

10. When a guilty verdict was returned for both Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, they made an attempt to bolster their confidence by singing to each other as they waited to be led back to prison. Ethel sang “Un bel di” from Madam Butterfly and Julius responded with “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.” If you were to choose music to represent various people involved in one of the cases, what would you select?

11. According to a national poll published by the National Law Review, more than 40 percent of potential jurors feel that a defendant’s failure to testify indicates that they are hiding something. Moreover, they may be quite comfortable ignoring a judge’s instructions to the contrary. Why do you believe the Bill of Rights includes the right of people to refrain from giving testimony that would incriminate them. Why is the protection against self-incrimination important in a court of law? What are its benefits and drawbacks for the accused?
“Unwept, Unhonour’d, and Unsung.”

On the final page of a report published by the House Un-American Activities Committee this poem appeared. (Report released April 19, 1949)

Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,         
This is my own, my native land!        
Whose heart hath ne’er within him burn’d  
As home his footsteps he hath turn’d,    
From wandering on a foreign strand?     
If such there breathe, go, mark him well; 
For him no minstrel raptures swell;    
High though his titles, proud his name,  
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim,—  
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,  
The wretch, concentrated all in self,    
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,      
And, doubly dying, shall go down       
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung, 
Unwept, unhonour’d, and unsung.

— Sir Walter Scott

DISCUSSION

• How does this poem apply to the actions of the committee?  
• What does the inclusion of this poem in the report say about the attitude of the committee toward their task?
**GENERAL LESLIE GROVES**  
What was his role in the successful development of the atomic bomb?

**HOUSE UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE**  
What motivated the formation of the committee?  
What were some of its powers and its goals?

**YALTA AGREEMENT**  
Who was present? What was the focus of the meeting?

**J. EDGAR HOOVER**  
What was his role in the pursuit of the related cases?

**JOSEPH STALIN**  
What are the personal qualities that Stalin demonstrated as a leader?  
How did he maintain power?

**LOS ALAMOS**  
What was the main product of this government facility?

**LOYALTY OATH**  
What was the typical wording of a loyalty oath?  
Which officials were required to swear to one?

**SING SING PRISON**  
Where is the prison located?  
What is its history?

**ROBERT AND MICHAEL MEEROPOL AND TONY HISS**  
What public roles have the Rosenberg and Hiss children played since their parents trials?

**FBI AGENTS**  
What types of crimes fall under the jurisdiction of FBI cases?

**THE KOREAN WAR**  
When did it take place? Which countries were involved?

**VENONA INTERCEPTS**  
What information did they contain?  
What affect has their release had on the continuing controversy of these cases?
"The Trials of Alger Hiss"

1949-1950:

Was Alger Hiss not only an official enjoying the trust of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, but also a Soviet agent?

"The Trials of Alger Hiss" covers the prosecution of a respected government official. Hiss had worked with President Franklin Roosevelt during the war years. After World War II, he played a significant role in drafting the Yalta agreement that was to define the shape of the post war world and he was involved in establishing the United Nations.

Hiss was president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace when he was first examined by George Stripling, the House Un-American Activities Committee’s (HUAC) chief investigator. When the hearings began, the nation was shocked to learn that Hiss was accused by former spy Whittaker Chambers of passing information to the Soviet Union. Although he was ultimately convicted of perjury and imprisoned, Hiss maintained his innocence throughout his life. He died in 1996.
### Suggested Vocabulary

| agile     |
| allegations     |
| bolster     |
| confrontation     |
| credibility     |
| eminence     |
| espionage     |
| fabrications     |
| functionary     |
| imminent     |
| italicize     |
| libel     |
| ordeal     |
| ornithologist     |
| perjury     |
| provision     |
| reciprocate     |
| recollection     |
| remorse     |
| repute     |
| siege     |
| substantiate     |
| suppressed     |
| unassailable     |
| vindication     |
IN THE NAME OF SECURITY, a series in three parts by Peter Goodchild

NARRATOR: Nixon had been busy securing the support of John Foster Dulles, and he had reached an agreement with Bert Andrews Pulitzer Prize–winning Washington bureau chief of the Herald Tribune. Like Dulles, he also read the transcript. He too concluded that Chambers knew Hiss. And he and Nixon struck a bargain. Andrews would support the Nixon line if Nixon would leak information to him as the case unfolded.

Hebert: Mr. Hiss, you are a very agile and clever young man, but I just can’t reconcile how someone of your intellect will let his apartment to a casual acquaintance, and throw in a car as well, who lends the person money and yet is so cautious another time. For instance, everyone who has seen the pictures of Chambers back in 1934 and the picture of him today has remarked on how similar they are—except you, who hedges and resorts to technicalities that you can’t tell.

Hiss: Mr. Hebert that was a very loaded statement.

Hebert: I hope it was because I want you to get the full impact of it. (The large crowd in the hearing room applauds this.)

Hiss: When the photos are public, we will see what the people think. For the record, I was initially shown one photo and that was one taken at a strange angle. I simply said I would want to see the man face to face.

Hebert: We are only trying to get at the truth, and either you, or Mr. Chambers, is the biggest liar that ever came on the American scene.

Discussion

• Hiss calls the opening comments by Hebert a “loaded statement.” What does that mean?
• Hebert seems to imply that only one man is telling the truth. What statements and evidence make you doubt Hiss? Chambers?

Talking Points

Highlights in the recording for class discussion.

Tape 1 Side 1

Discussion

• What are your reactions to the bargain between Nixon and Andrews?
• What problems could leaking HUAC testimony create for the committee and for the accused?
Narrator: After three days of deft parrying, Hiss left the witness stand, in the view of most observers, bruised but intact, his story unshakable. Now it was the turn of his alleged accomplice, his wife Priscilla. The trial had already cost her much. Her conversation was obsessively centered on their imminent financial ruin. She hated the publicity, the phone calls at all hours. She was so tense that her own counsel found her impossible to tutor and the tension was palpable when she faced Murphy’s cross questions.

Discussion

• What are some of the major stresses and problems that would arise from being called before such a committee?
• What emotions would you feel most strongly?

Chambers: You ask me if I have any statement to make on the outcome of the Hiss trial in New York. It seems to me, in view of what has happened, that it is not necessary to make any statement at all. You also ask me what I think I have been doing by my activities in the past year. I am a man who grudgingly, reluctantly, step by step, is destroying himself so that this nation and the faith by which it lives may continue to exist.

Discussion

• In what ways was Whittaker Chambers destroying himself?
• You have heard his explanation of his motives. Do you believe the statement or do you think he had other motives?
"The Trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg"

Did New York engineer Julius Rosenberg and his wife Ethel provide atomic secrets to the Soviet Union?

"The Trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg" follows the story of the trial and execution of the Rosenbergs, an American couple found guilty of passing atomic secrets to the Soviets. They were convicted chiefly on the testimony of accomplices who had much to gain by cooperating with the authorities. The program explores the differences in treatment between the Rosenbergs and the Greenglasses, relatives who testified against the couple.

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Cast of Characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHARACTERS</th>
<th>ACTORS IN THE L.A. THEATRE WORKS / BBC/KCRW</th>
<th>RADIO THEATRE PRODUCTION (in alphabetical order)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emmanuel Bloch</td>
<td>Francis Guinan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roy Cohn</td>
<td>Arthur Hanket</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Cox</td>
<td>Ella Joyce</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruth Greenglass</td>
<td>Amy Pietz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julius Rosenberg</td>
<td>John Rubinstein</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethel Rosenberg</td>
<td>Erika Schickel</td>
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<td>Irving Saypol</td>
<td>Alan Wilder</td>
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With commentary by Aaron Katz, Robert Meeropol, David Oshinsky, William Reuben, Ellen Schrecker and others
## Suggested Vocabulary

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<th>A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>accomplice</td>
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<td>barbarism</td>
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</table>
BLOCH: And do you have any affection for your sister, Ethel?
GREENGLASS: I do.
BLOCH: You realize the possible death penalty in the event Ethel is convicted by this jury?
GREENGLASS: I do.
BLOCH: Are you aware that you are smiling?
GREENGLASS: Not very.

**DISCUSSION**

- What impression do you have about Greenglass at the conclusion of this exchange?
- What has motivated him to testify against a family member?

SAYPOL: (speaking about Rosenberg’s lost government job) Were you then dismissed?
ROSENBERG: That is correct.
SAYPOL: And what was the reason?
ROSENBERG: It was alleged I was a member of the Communist Party.
SAYPOL: Is it not a fact you were told you were being removed because information had reached the Army that you were a member of the Communist Party? Were you a member of the Communist Party?
ROSENBERG: I refuse to answer on the grounds that it might incriminate me.

**DISCUSSION**

- Why is it important for Rosenberg to emphasize the term alleged?
- Rosenberg “takes the Fifth” when asked about party membership. How might that influence a jury? Why do you think he made that choice?
SAYPOL: (interviewing the maid) In particular, about a new console table. Can you tell the court about it?

COX: I asked her where it came from; it was such a pretty table. She said a friend of her husband gave it to him. He hadn’t seen this friend for a long time and that it was a sort of wedding present.

SAYPOL: Did she ever say to you that her husband bought it and paid $21 for it at Macy’s?

COX: No, she said it was a gift.

**DISCUSSION**

- How crucial is the testimony of the maid?
- Does she seem to have any bias toward the couple?

Julius and Ethel Rosenberg leave federal court in a prison van.
Did J. Robert Oppenheimer deserve the scrutiny of his country because of his earlier communist sympathies?

“The Case of J. Robert Oppenheimer” deals with the story of a traumatic hearing for the scientist regarded as the father of the atom bomb. Oppenheimer had been summoned before the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission to decide if he should still have access to classified material.

A letter of indictment listed the fact that he had been a sponsor of the Friends of the Chinese People, that his wife and brother were communists and he had failed to promptly report an attempt to recruit him as a Soviet agent. Less than nine years after he had led the largest scientific project ever, the Manhattan Project, to create the world’s first nuclear weapon, the distinguished scientist J. Robert Oppenheimer was on trial for his professional life.

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**Cast of Characters**

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<th>ACTORS IN THE L.A. THEATRE WORKS / BBC/KCRW RADIO THEATRE PRODUCTION (in alphabetical order)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J. Robert Oppenheimer</td>
<td>JOHN DE LANCIE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Narrator</td>
<td>WILLIAM FRANKFATHER</td>
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<td>Llyod Garrison</td>
<td>ARTHUR HANKET</td>
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<td>Gordon Gray</td>
<td>RICHARD HOYT MILLER</td>
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<td>Roger Robb</td>
<td>ALAN WILDER</td>
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With commentary by physicists Dr. Hans Bethe and Dr. Edward Teller; Arthur Schlessinger, Ellen Schrecker, Alan Weinstein, Mark Kramer, Patricia McMullen and others.
<table>
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<th>Suggested Vocabulary</th>
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<tr>
<td>affiliations</td>
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<tr>
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TALKING POINTS

HIGHLIGHTS IN THE RECORDING FOR CLASS DISCUSSION.

TAPE 3 SIDE 1

GARRISON: Mr. Chairman, could I just make a short request at this point? I appreciate the existence of the rule under which we cannot ask for access to the file, and I am not going to protest that rule. But could we request that when Mr. Robb reads from a transcript that we are furnished with a copy of it? This, of course, is orthodox in a court of law in order for us to see what parts are being read from and which are not.

GRAY: Mr. Robb?

ROBB: I don’t know, Sir. This is presently marked secret so I could not make it available to Mr. Garrison at this time.

GARRISON: General Groves, can you tell me what your conclusion was over the Haakon Chevalier incident?

GROVES: That there was an approach made which involved Dr. Oppenheimer, that he didn’t report it in its entirety as he should have done, but throughout he was always under the influence of what I termed the typical American schoolboy attitude that there is something wicked about telling on a friend. And it was my impression that his brother Frank might have been involved in this chain and that he wanted to protect him. I felt that was wrong but it was, after all, a minor point with respect to the success of the project.

DISCUSSION

- Is Garrison’s request to see the documents fair?
- What is your impression of Robb as a lawyer? Compare your opinion to those offered during the program interviews.

GARRISON: General Groves, can you tell me what your conclusion was over the Haakon Chevalier incident?

GROVES: That there was an approach made which involved Dr. Oppenheimer, that he didn’t report it in its entirety as he should have done, but throughout he was always under the influence of what I termed the typical American schoolboy attitude that there is something wicked about telling on a friend. And it was my impression that his brother Frank might have been involved in this chain and that he wanted to protect him. I felt that was wrong but it was, after all, a minor point with respect to the success of the project.

DISCUSSION

- Do you agree with General Groves’ assessment of the situation?
- Oppenheimer had contributed significantly to the success of the project that developed the atom bomb, but the general stated that he would not clear Dr. Oppenheimer today. If you were Oppenheimer, what reactions would you have to that statement?
LANSDALE: I do feel strongly that Dr. Oppenheimer, at least to the extent of my knowledge, is loyal. I am extremely disturbed by the current hysteria of the times of which this seems to be a manifestation.

ROBB: You think this inquiry is a manifestation of hysteria.

LANSDALE: I think...

ROBB: Yes or no?

LANSDALE: I won’t answer that question “Yes” or “No.” I think that the hysteria of the times over Communism is extremely dangerous. I think the fact that associations in 1940 are regarded with the same seriousness that similar associations would be regarded today is a manifestation of hysteria. I think rehashing stuff from the Forties is what I mean by hysteria.

ROBB: I think the current hysteria is a manifestation of the times.

LANSDALE: Yes or no?

ROBB: Yes, I think so.

LANSDALE: I will not answer that question.

OPPENHEIMER: (explaining his refusal to name the person who had approached him) I do know now that I should have reported the incident and completely accurately, but it was a matter of conflict for me. Chevalier was a friend of mine. He was also an unlikely and absurd intermediary for the task. There was—I am certain there was—no deep conspiracy, and I did not therefore want to expose him.

GRAY: But should you have felt able to judge between those choices, of friendship and security? Would you nowadays say as you did in the past, that the implications of membership of the Communist Party depends on the individual?

OPPENHEIMER: Nowadays, Mr. Gray, it would not be up to me to determine whether disengagement from the Communist Party was genuine. I would think that, at this time, investigation would be called for.

Discussion

- What are the dangers of using past associations to assess Dr. Oppenheimer?

- Are you satisfied with the explanation Oppenheimer gave?

- What does his action then and his evaluation now show about him personally?
Bibliography


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GENERATION ON TRIAL: USA VS. ALGER HISS; Cooke, Alistair; Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc., 1986.


SENSATIONAL TRIALS OF THE 20TH CENTURY; Kraft, Betsy Harvey; Scholastic Press, 1998. (young adult book with information related to the Rosenberg case)

THE ROSENBERGS (HISTORY’S MYSTERIES); Larsen, Anita and Marcy Ramsey; Crestwood House, 1992. (children’s book)


THE ULTIMATE SPY BOOK; Melton, H. Keith; London: Dorling Kindersley Limited, 1996.


**Resources on the Internet**

1948: The Alger Hiss Case

- article on Hiss

CNN’s "The Cold War"

http://learning.turner.com/coldwar/
- educator’s guide to the Cold War

Famous Trials: The Rosenbergs

http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/rosenb/ROSENB.htm
- chronology, biographies, final letter to sons, bibliography, etc.

Government Files

http://www.aponline.com/gfiles/rosenberg/index.html
- Government files related to the Rosenbergs; other historical figures available

"Hiss & Chambers" New York Times Article 12/12/48

http://dept.english.upenn.edu/~afilreis/50s/hiss-chambers-nyt.html
- detailed article summarizing information about two key people involved in the Hiss case

The Life and Times of the Manhattan Project

http://www.gis.net/~carter/manhattan/project.html

Literature and Culture of the American 1950s

http://www.english.upenn.edu/~afilreis/50s/home.html
- links to many related articles

Manhattan Project

http://www.avdigest.com/aahm/trmanhat.html
- Einstein Letter, Support Facilities, Trinity Test Site, Russian Spy

Michael Meeropol Statement on the Rosenbergs

http://www.english.upenn.edu/~afilreis/50s/meeropol-on-rosenbergs.html
- statement from the son of the Rosenbergs concerning released documents

Un-American Activities Committee

http://www.optonline.com/comptons/ceo/04925_A.html
- brief background on the committee; links to related topics

Yalta Conference

http://ac.acusd.edu/history/20th/coldwar1.html
- photos, article about the conference