

interested in silencing liberal voices. The employment of a lot of good liberals is threatened because they have allowed themselves to become associated with or silenced by the Communists.

Liberals must speak out.

I think it is useful that certain of us had this kind of experience with the Communists, for if we had not we should not know them so well. Today, when all the world fears war and they scream peace, we know how much their professions are worth. We know tomorrow they will have a new slogan.

Firsthand experience of dictatorship and thought control left me with an abiding hatred of these. It left me with an abiding hatred of Communist philosophy and methods and the conviction that these must be resisted always.

It also left me with the passionate conviction that we must never let the Communists get away with the pretense that they stand for the very things which they kill in their own countries.

I am talking about free speech, a free press, the rights of property, the rights of labor, racial equality and, above all, individual rights. I value these things. I take them seriously. I value peace, too, when it is not bought at the price of fundamental decencies.

I believe these things must be fought for wherever they are not fully honored and protected whenever they are threatened.

The motion pictures I have made and the plays I have chosen to direct represent my convictions.

I expect to continue to make the same kinds of pictures and to direct the same kinds of plays.

ELIA KAZAN

APRIL 10, 1952:

### *Elia Kazan*

Executive Hearing (released April 11)

A Subcommittee of the Committee on Un-American Activities met at 4:25 p.m., in room 330, Old House Office Building, the Honorable Francis E. Walter, presiding.

Committee member present: Representative Francis E. Walter.

Staff members present: Frank S. Tavenner, Jr., Counsel; and Raphael I. Nixon, Director of Research.

MR. TAVENNER: Mr. Kazan, you testified before this Committee on January 14, 1952, in an executive session, did you not?

MR. KAZAN: That's correct.

MR. TAVENNER: In that hearing, you testified fully regarding your own membership in the Communist Party approximately seventeen years ago and your activity in the Party, did you not?

MR. KAZAN: That is correct.

MR. TAVENNER: However, you declined at that time to give the Committee any information relating to the activities of others or to identify others associated with you in your activities in the Communist Party?

MR. KAZAN: Most of the others, yes, sir. Some I did name.

MR. TAVENNER: But you declined at that time to name all of them?

MR. KAZAN: That is correct.

MR. TAVENNER: Now I understand that you have voluntarily requested the Committee to reopen your hearing, and to give you an opportunity to explain fully the participation of others known to you at the time to have been members of the Communist Party.

MR. KAZAN: That is correct. I want to make a full and complete statement. I want to tell you everything I know about it.

MR. TAVENNER: Now, in preparation for your testimony here, have you spent considerable time and effort in recalling and in reducing to writing the information which you have?

MR. KAZAN: I spent a great deal of time, yes, sir.

MR. TAVENNER: Do you have prepared, in written form, the full and complete statement which you say you would like to make to the Committee?

MR. KAZAN: Yes, sir, I have such a statement prepared.

✱ ✱ ✱

(Statement of Elia Kazan:)

New York City, N.Y., April 9, 1952.

The House Committee on Un-American Activities,

Washington, D.C.

GENTLEMEN:

I wish to amend the testimony which I gave before you on January 14 of this year, by adding to it this letter and the accompanying sworn affidavit.

In the affidavit I answer the only question which I failed to answer at the hearing, namely, what people I knew to be members of the Communist Party between the summer of 1934, when I joined it, and the late winter or early spring of 1936, when I severed all connection with it.

I have come to the conclusion that I did wrong to withhold these names before, because secrecy serves the Communists, and is exactly what they want. The American people need the facts and all the facts about all aspects of Communism in order to deal with it wisely and effectively. It is my obligation as a citizen to tell everything that I know.

Although I answered all other questions which were put to me before, the naming of these people makes it possible for me to volunteer a detailed description of my own activities and of the general activity which I witnessed. I

have attempted to set these down as carefully and fully as my memory allows. In doing so, I have necessarily repeated portions of my former testimony, but I believe that by so doing I have made a more complete picture than if I omitted it.

In the second section of the affidavit, I have tried to review comprehensively my very slight political activity in the 16 years since I left the party. Here again, I have of necessity repeated former testimony, but I wanted to make as complete an over-all picture as my fallible memory allows.

In the third section is a list of the motion pictures I have made and the plays I have chosen to direct. I call your attention to these for they constitute the entire history of my professional activity as a director.

Respectfully,  
ELIA KAZAN.

State of New York,  
County of New York, ss:

I, Elia Kazan, being duly sworn, depose and say:

I repeat my testimony of January 14, 1952, before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, to the effect that I was a member of the Communist Party from sometime in the summer of 1934 until the late winter or early spring of 1936, when I severed all connection with it permanently.

I want to reiterate that in those years, to my eyes, there was no clear opposition of national interests between the United States and Russia. It was not even clear to me that the American Communist Party was taking its orders from the Kremlin and acting as a Russian agency in this country. On the contrary, it seemed to me at that time that the Party had at heart the cause of the poor and unemployed people whom I saw on the streets about me. I felt that by joining, I was going to help them, I was going to fight Hitler, and, strange as it seems today, I felt that I was acting for the good of the American people.

For the approximately 19 months of my membership, I was assigned to a "unit" composed of those party members who were, like myself, members of the Group Theater acting company. These were—

Lewis Leverett, co-leader of the unit.

J. Edward Bromberg, co-leader of the unit, deceased.

Phoebe Brand (later Mrs. Morris Carnovsky). I was instrumental in bringing her into the Party.

Morris Carnovsky.

Tony Kraber; along with Wellman (see below), he recruited me into the Party.\*

Paula Miller (later Mrs. Lee Strasberg): We are friends today. I be-

\* When Kazan's testimony was cited to Kraber before HUAC, August 18, 1955, the latter asked, "Is this the Kazan that signed the contract for \$500,000 the day after he gave names to this Committee? Would you sell your brothers for \$500,000?"—E.B.

lieve that, as she has told me, she quit the Communists long ago. She is far too sensible and balanced a woman, and she is married to too fine and intelligent a man, to have remained among them.

Clifford Odets: He has assured me that he got out about the same time I did.

Art Smith.

These are the only members of the unit whom I recall and I believe this to be a complete list. Even at this date I do not believe it would be possible for me to forget anyone.

\* I believe that in my previous testimony I mentioned that there were nine members in the unit. I was including Michael Gordon, but in searching my recollection I find that I do not recall his having attended any meeting with me.

As I testified previously, two Party functionaries were assigned to "hand the party line" to us new recruits. They were—

V. J. Jerome, who had some sort of official "cultural" commissar position at Party headquarters; and

Andrew Overgaard, a Scandinavian, who was head, as I recall, of the Trade Union Unity League.

There was a third party official who concerned himself with us, although whether he was officially assigned or merely hung about the theater when he was in New York, I never knew. He told us that he was state organizer for the Party in Tennessee. He was obviously stagestruck and he undertook to advise me. He was—

Ted Wellman, also known as Sid Benson.

Our financial contributions and dues were on a puny scale. We were small-salaried actors, frequently out of work, and it was depression time.

What we were asked to do was fourfold:

- (1) To "educate" ourselves in Marxist and Party doctrine;
- (2) To help the party get a foothold in the Actors Equity Association;
- (3) To support various "front" organizations of the Party;
- (4) To try to capture the Group Theater and make it a Communist mouthpiece.

The history of these efforts in my time, were as follows:

(1) In the "education" program we were sold pamphlets and books and told to read them. There were also "discussions" of these. The "discussions" were my first taste of totalitarian methods, for there was no honest discussion at all, but only an attempt to make sure that we swallowed every sentence without challenge.

(2) The attempt to gain a foothold in Actors Equity was guided by an actor, Robert or Bob Caille (I think that was the spelling). He was also known as Bob Reed. I have been told that he died some years ago.

The tactic—and the sincere effort of many individuals—was to "raise a

demand" that actors receive pay during the weeks when they rehearsed for shows. The long-range plan was, by leading a fight for a reasonable gain for the actors, to gain prestige for individual Communists and sympathizers who, the party hoped, would then run the union.

Pay for the rehearsal period was obtained, but at no time that I saw, either then or after I left, did the Party come within sight of controlling the actors' union.

(3) Most of our time, however, went directly or indirectly into providing "entertainment" for the meetings and rallies of front organizations and unions. The "entertainment" was strictly propaganda.

There were two front organizations in the theater field, but off Broadway, whose purpose was to provide such propaganda entertainment and with whom I had dealings. They were the League of Workers Theaters (later the New Theater League) and the Theater of Action. It was into these that my time went. I acted, I trained and directed other actors and, with Art Smith, I co-authored a play called *Dimitroff*, which had to do with the imprisonment of the Bulgarian Communist leader by the Nazis following the Reichstag fire. It is my memory that the play enjoyed either two or three Sunday-night performances before benefit audiences and was then retired.

I taught at the school for actors and directors run by the League of Workers Theaters. This was unquestionably a Communist-controlled outfit. Its officials were never bona fide theater people and it was my impression that they had been imported by the Party from other fields to regiment the political novices in the theater. To the best of my knowledge, when the league came to an end, they retired from the theater again. I do not recall any Communist meeting which I attended with them, but my impression that they were all Communists is very strong. The ones I remember were—

Harry Elion, president;

John Bonn, a German refugee;

Alice Evans (I am told she later married V. J. Jerome);

Anne Howe.

In the Theater of Action, there was a Communist thought and behavior and control, but I did not attend their political meetings so I cannot tell which of the actors were Party members and which were not. I did some acting training here and I co-directed with Al Saxe a play called *The Young Go First*, and I directed another called (I think) *The Crisis*.

About 1936, I began a connection with an outfit called Frontier Films, but the Party had nothing to do with my making this connection. The organization consisted of four or five men, of whom I remember Paul Strand, Leo Hurwitz, and Ralph Steiner. From long friendship with Steiner, I believe him to be a strong anti-Communist. I do not know the Party affiliations of the others. They were trying to raise money to make documentary films. They put me on their board, but I attended few meetings. I wanted to

make a picture. This I did, with Ralph Steiner, in 1937. It was a two-reel documentary called *The People of the Cumberland*s.

That was my last active connection with any organization which has since been listed as subversive.

(4) I want to repeat emphatically that the Communists' attempt to take over the Group Theater failed. There was some influence and a great deal of talk, the members of the Communist unit consumed a great deal of time at group meetings, they raised some money from the non-Communist members for Communists' causes and they sold them some Communist pamphlets; they brought the prestige of the group name to meetings where they entertained as individuals, but they never succeeded in controlling the Group Theater.

This was because the control of the group stayed firmly in the hands of the three non-Communist directors, Harold Clurman, Lee Strasberg, and Cheryl Crawford. (In 1937 Clurman became sole director and remained so until the theater broke up in 1940.)

In a small way, I played a part in blocking the Communist unit's maneuvers to get control. In the winter of 1935-36 I was a member of the actors' committee of the group. This was an advisory committee, but it was the nearest the actors ever came to having any voice in the running of the theater. I was instructed by the Communist unit to demand that the group be run "democratically." This was a characteristic Communist tactic; they were not interested in democracy; they wanted control. They had no chance of controlling the directors, but they thought that if authority went to the actors, they would have a chance to dominate through the usual tricks of behind-the-scenes caucuses, block voting, and confusion of issues.

This was the specific issue on which I quit the party. I had enough regimentation, enough of being told what to think and say and do, enough of their habitual violation of the daily practices of democracy to which I was accustomed. The last straw came when I was invited to go through a typical Communist scene of crawling and apologizing and admitting the error of my ways. The invitation came from a Communist functionary brought in for the occasion. He was introduced as an organizer of the Auto Workers Union from Detroit. I regret that I cannot remember his name. In any case, he probably did not use his own name. I had never seen him before, nor he me.

He made a vituperative analysis of my conduct in refusing to fall in with the Party line and plan for the Group Theater, and he invited my repentance. My fellow members looked at him as if he were an oracle. I have not seen him since, either.

That was the night I quit them. I had had enough anyway. I had had a taste of police-state living and I did not like it. Instead of working honestly for the good of the American people, I had found that I was being used to

put power in the hands of people for whom, individually and as a group, I felt nothing but contempt, and for whose standard of conduct I felt a genuine horror.

Since that night, I have never had the least thing to do with the Party.

## II

After I left the Party in 1936, except for the making of the two-reel documentary film mentioned above, in 1937, I was never active in any organization since listed as subversive.

My policy in the years after 1936 was an instinctive rather than a planned one. I could usually detect a front organization when I first heard about it and I stayed away from it. I never became a member of such an organization, although I was pressed to join dozens of them.

Contradictorily, on a few of the many occasions when I was asked to sign a statement or a telegram for a specific cause, I may have allowed my name to be used, even though I suspected the sponsoring organization. They insidiously picked causes which appealed to decent, liberal, humanitarian people; against racial discrimination, against Japanese aggression, against specific miscarriages of justice. There was a piece of spurious reasoning which influenced me to let them use my name in rare instances. It went like this, "I hate the Communists but I go along with this cause because I believe the cause is right."

Today I repudiate that reasoning, but it accounts for those of the instances listed below in which I may have done what is alleged. I repudiate the reasoning because I believe that all their fights are deceitful maneuvers to gain influence.

My connections with these front organizations were so slight and so transitory that I am forced to rely on a listing of these prepared for me after research by my employer, Twentieth Century-Fox. I state with full awareness that I am under oath, that in most of the cases I do not remember any connection at all. It is possible that my name was used without my consent. It is possible that in a few instances I gave consent.

I am told that the *New Masses* of November 4, and the *Daily Worker* of November 8, 1941, list me as an entertainer at a meeting sponsored by the American Friends of the Chinese People. I remember no connection whatsoever with this organization and especially since I ceased all "entertaining" in 1936 when I left the Party, I can only suppose that my name was used without my permission in this instance.

I am told that I signed an appeal put out by the Committee for a Boycott Against Japanese Aggression. I do not remember this either, but it is possible that I signed such an appeal. No date is given, but it must have been before Pearl Harbor.

I am told that the official program of the Artists Front To Win the War

listed me as a sponsor in October 1942. I have no memory of this either, but it is possible that I gave my consent to the use of my name.

I am told that on July 19, 1942, I signed an open letter sponsored by the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties, which denounced Attorney General [Francis] Biddle's charges against Harry Bridges. I have no recollection of this either, but again it is possible that I did so, for I remember that, in contrast to what I had heard about the New York water front, what I had heard about San Francisco suggested that Bridges had done a good job for his union. And I remember that I believed the story, current at that time, that he was being hounded for this. At that time I did not believe him to be a Communist.

I have been reminded that my name was used as a sponsor of the publication, *People's Songs*. I have no doubt that I gave permission for this. The date could be found by referring to the first issues of the publication. Beyond allowing my name to be used initially, I had no contact with it.

The only money contribution which I remember between 1936 and 1947 or 1948—and I remember it with regret—was one of \$200 which I gave to Arnaud d'Usseau when he asked for help in founding what he said was to be a new "liberal literary magazine." This magazine turned out to be *Mainstream* and from its first issue was a patently Communist publication altogether detestable and neither liberal nor literary.

Now I come to the only case or cause in which I got involved, even to a limited extent, in those sixteen years between 1936 and 1952. It was what became known as the case of the Hollywood Ten.

I would recall to this Committee the opening of the first investigation into Communism in Hollywood by the previous committee under the chairmanship of J. Parnell Thomas. I would recall that a large number of representative people in the creative branch of the picture industry, regardless of their politics, were alarmed by the first sessions. They signed protests and they banded in organizations which certainly did not look to me like front organizations at their inception, although later the Communists plainly got control of them.

I am listed as sponsoring a committee to raise funds for the defense of the Ten and as having sent a telegram to John Huston on March 5, 1948, when he was chairman of the dinner for them. I do not remember these specific actions, but I certainly felt impelled to action of that sort at that time and did this or something like it. I also made a contribution of \$500 to a woman representative of the committee for the Hollywood Ten. This was in New York. If I am able to recall her name, I will advise you of it, but I cannot recall it at the moment. I am also listed as supporting a radio program for the Ten as late as August 1950. I am surprised at the date. It is possible that I was approached and gave permission to use my name as late as this, but it seems to me more likely that my name was reused without asking me, since I had allowed its use earlier.

For by that time I was disgusted by the silence of the Ten and by their contemptuous attitude. However, I must say now that what I did earlier represented my convictions at the beginning of the case.

That is the end of the list of my front associations after 1936, insofar as I can remember them, with the assistance of the memorandum prepared for me.

I should like to point out some of the typical Communist-front and Communist-sympathizer activities which I stayed away from:

From the day I went to Hollywood to direct my first picture, in 1944, I had nothing to do with any front organization there. Neither had I anything to do with them on three earlier trips as an actor. I had nothing to do with the Actors' Lab. I never gave a penny to any front organization on the West Coast.

I did not sign the Stockholm peace pledge. I saw what that was. I resented the Communist attempt to capture the word "peace."

I did not sponsor or attend the Waldorf Peace Conference. My wife's name was used as a sponsor without her permission. She protested and asked for its withdrawal in a letter to Prof. Harlow Shapley of Harvard University, who had some official post. She received no answer from him, but she did get an apology from James Proctor, who had given her name without her permission.

I had nothing to do with the Arts, Sciences, and Professions or any of its predecessors or successors.

I did not support Henry Wallace for President.

I do not want to imply that anyone who did these things was one of the Communists; I do submit that anyone who did none of them was a long way away from them.

### III

There follows a list of my entire professional career as a director, all the plays I have done and the films I have made.

*Casey Jones*, by Robert Ardrey, 1938: The story of a railroad engineer who comes to the end of his working days. It is thoroughly and wonderfully American in its tone, characters, and outlook.

*Thunder Rock*, by Robert Ardrey, 1939: This is a deeply democratic and deeply optimistic play, written at a time when there was a good deal of pessimism about democracy. It told of a group of European immigrants headed for the West about 1848, and showed how they despaired of reforms which this country has long since achieved and now takes for granted. A failure in New York, this play was a huge hit in wartime London.

*Café Crown*, by Hy Kraft, 1942: A comedy about Jewish actors on New York's East Side. No politics, but a warm and friendly feeling toward a minority of a minority.

*The Strings, My Lord, Are False*, by Paul Vincent Carroll, 1942: An Irishman's play about England under the bombings. Not political. It shows human courage and endurance in many kinds of people, including, prominently, a priest.

*The Skin of Our Teeth*, by Thornton Wilder, 1942: One of the plays I am proudest to have done. It celebrates the endurance of the human race and does so with wit and wisdom and compassion.

*Harriet*, by Florence Ryerson and Colin Clements, 1943: The story of Harriet Beecher Stowe, who wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

*One Touch of Venus*, by S. J. Perelman, Ogden Nash, and Kurt Weill, 1943: Musical comedy. The goddess Venus falls in love with a barber.

*Jacobowsky and the Colonel*, by S. N. Behrman, 1942: Humorous-sad tale of the flight of a Jewish jack-of-all-trades and a Polish count before the oncoming Nazis. Not political, but very human.

*A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (my first picture), 1944: A little girl grows up in the slum section of Brooklyn. There is pain in the story, but there is health. It is a typically American story and could only happen here, and a glorification of America not in material terms, but in spiritual ones.

*Sing Out Sweet Land*, by Jean and Walter Kerr, 1944: A musical built around old American songs. Nonpolitical but full of American tradition and spirit.

*Deep Are the Roots*, by Arnaud d'Usseau and James Gow, 1945: This was a very frank and somewhat melodramatic exploration of relations between Negroes and whites. It was shocking to some people but on the whole both audiences and critics took it with enthusiasm.

*Dunnigan's Daughter*, by S. N. Behrman, 1945: A comedy drama about a young wife whose husband was too absorbed in his business to love her.

*Sea of Grass* (picture), 1946: The conflict between cattle ranchers and farmers on the prairie.

*Boomerang* (picture), 1946: Based on an incident in the life of Homer Cummings, later Attorney General of the United States. It tells how an initial miscarriage of justice was righted by the persistence and integrity of a young district attorney, who risked his career to save an innocent man. This shows the exact opposite of the Communist libels on America.

*All My Sons*, by Arthur Miller, 1947: The story of a war veteran who came home to discover that his father, a small manufacturer, had shipped defective plane parts to the Armed Forces during the war. Some people have searched for hidden propaganda in this one, but I believe it to be a deeply moral investigation of problems of conscience and responsibility.

*Gentlemen's Agreement* (picture): Picture version of the best-selling novel about anti-Semitism. It won an academy award and I think it is in a healthy American tradition, for it shows Americans exploring a problem and tackling a solution. Again it is opposite to the picture which Communists present of Americans.

*A Streetcar Named Desire*, by Tennessee Williams, 1947: A famous play. Not political, but deeply human.

*Sundown Beach*, by Bessie Breuer, 1948: A group of young Army fliers and their girls at a hospital in Florida. Not political, but a warm and compassionate treatment.

*Loveline*, by Alan Jay Lerner and Kurt Weill, 1948: Musical comedy. Story of a married couple, covering 100 years of changing American standards and customs.

*Death of a Salesman*, by Arthur Miller, 1949: It shows the frustrations of the life of a salesman and contains implicit criticism of his materialistic standards.

*Pinky* (picture), 1949: The story of a Negro girl who passed for white in the North and returns to the South to encounter freshly the impact of prejudice. Almost everybody liked this except the Communists, who attacked it virulently. It was extremely successful throughout the country, as much so in the South as elsewhere.

*Panic in the Streets* (picture), 1950: A melodrama built around the subject of an incipient plague. The hero is a doctor in the United States Health Service.

*A Streetcar Named Desire* (picture), 1950: Picture version of the play.

*Viva Zapata* (picture, my most recent one), 1951: This is an anti-Communist picture. Please see my article on political aspects of this picture in the *Saturday Review* of April 5, which I forwarded to your investigator, Mr. Nixon.

*Flight into Egypt*, by George Tabori, 1952: Story of refugees stranded in Cairo and trying to get into the United States.

I think it is useful that certain of us had this kind of experience with the Communists, for if we had not, we should not know them so well. Anyone who has had it is not to be fooled by them again. Today, when all the world fears war and they scream peace, we know how much their professions are worth. We know tomorrow they will have a new slogan.

Firsthand experience of dictatorship and thought control left me with an abiding hatred of these. It left me with an abiding hatred of Communist philosophy and methods.

It also left me with the passionate conviction that we must never let the Communists get away with the pretense that they stand for the very things which they kill in their own countries.

I am talking about free speech, a free press, the rights of labor, racial equality and, above all, individual rights. I value these things. I take them seriously. I value peace, too, when it is not bought at the price of fundamental decencies.

I believe these things must be fought for wherever they are not fully honored and protected whenever they are threatened.

The motion pictures I have made and the plays I have chosen to direct represent those convictions.

I have placed a copy of this affidavit with Mr. Spyros P. Skouras, president of Twentieth Century-Fox.

ELIA KAZAN.

Sworn to before me this 10th day of April, 1952.

MR. TAVENNER: Mr. Kazan, the staff or members of the Committee may desire to recall you at some future time for the purpose of asking you to make further explanations of some of the matters contained in your sworn statement.

MR. KAZAN: I will be glad to do anything to help—anything you consider necessary or valuable.

MR. WALTER: Mr. Kazan, we appreciate your cooperation with our Committee. It is only through the assistance of people such as you that we have been able to make the progress that has been made in bringing the attention of the American people to the machinations of this Communist conspiracy for world domination.

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One of the characteristic types which should certainly be set forth is the Hollywood celebrity who had Communist friends without knowing it. One example was Charles Laughton, who was close to Bertolt Brecht and Hanns Eisler. When he found out the FBI considered Eisler had Communist sympathies, Laughton said, "But that's ridiculous: his music is just like Mozart." That was in December 1947. By 1956, when Brecht died and Laughton received a wire from East Berlin inviting him to a memorial meeting, the now informed and "co-ordinated" actor at once phoned the FBI to ask if it was all right that he had received a wire from such a source, after all he couldn't help it, etc., etc.

In the brave days of 1948, Edward G. Robinson could be cited by the Hollywood Ten in their book *Hollywood on Trial* as a witness most friendly to them, alongside Frank Sinatra, Fredric March, Lucille Ball, Myrna Loy, Burt Lancaster, Judy Garland, and Bennett Cerf. But by 1952 another epoch had opened. In Robinson's testimony this exchange occurs:

MR. WALTER: Mr. Robinson, you stated that you were duped and used. By whom?

MR. ROBINSON: By the sinister forces who were members, and probably in important positions, in those organizations.

MR. WALTER: Well, tell us what individuals you have reference to.

MR. ROBINSON: Well, you had Albert Maltz, and you have Dalton

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# THIRTY YEARS OF TREASON

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*Excerpts from Hearings  
before the House Committee  
on Un-American Activities,  
1938-1968*

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*Edited by Eric Bentley*

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