

Wm. Joseph Thomas

Joyner Library's Cold War and Internal Security Collection

In April 2013, Joyner Library announced a new collection: The Cold War and Internal Security Collection (CWIS). The CWIS was created as a Center of Excellence for the Collaborative Federal Depository Program of the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL). But it grows out of a long tradition of collecting federal documents at East Carolina University.

With IMLS grant support, ASERL created the Collaborative Federal Depository Program during the 2006-2007 academic year in order to improve public access to government document collections in member institutions and to explore collaborative services and collection analysis and development.¹ The Program Steering Committee determined that Centers of Excellence would be created in order to develop comprehensive collections of specific agency and/or subject. These Centers of Excellence would guarantee redundancy and preservation of these materials, and serve the region for fast delivery when the materials need to be shared. Twenty-six institutions, including ECU, currently serve as Centers of Excellence.

East Carolina sent its proposal to become a Center of Excellence to ASERL officers in November 2010, focusing its collection on hearings of the House Un-American Activities

Committee and its successor the House Committee on Internal Security.² Noting that "Among these hearings are testimonies of Soviet defectors, contemporary analyses of Communism, and committee hearings on alleged Communist influence in the motion picture industry," the proposal makes a case for this collection fit in part because the library's Special Collections already holds an excellent companion in the extensive J. Edgar Hoover Collection on International Communism. Other library holdings also focus on the second half of the 20th Century, especially the Cold War. In addition, the CWIS fits in with the history and mission of Joyner's Federal Documents Collection. Joyner became a partial federal depository in 1951, and now holds roughly 200,000 print documents in addition to 575,000 microfiche, 1700 DVD's and CD's, and more than 25,000 maps.³

The CWIS Collection contains more than 1,000 volumes of Congressional hearings, committee prints and committee reports from the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), its successor the House Committee on Internal Security (HCIS), the Senate's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (SPSI), and the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Internal Security

(SISS). The contents of the collection (1934-1977) are composed mostly of Congressional investigations of organizations deemed "subversive" or "un-American," including especially the Communist Party USA and its allies.



Logo of the Communist Party USA. Source: Wikimedia Commons, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:CPUSA_logo.svg.

Other subjects of investigation include the New Left, the Ku Klux Klan, the Black Panthers, 1930's and 40's pro-Nazi organizations and even the World War II internment of Japanese-Americans. North Carolina-specific topics include the "Silver Legion of America" in North Carolina and activities of the Ku Klux Klan and of the Communist Party, USA (CPUSA) in the state.⁴ Descriptions below are largely from the Cold War and Internal Security

(CWIS) Collection Research Guide.⁵

The most recognizable name of the four agencies represented in the Cold War and Internal Security Collection is that of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). The HUAC began in 1934 as a special committee to investigate alleged Nazi subversion, as well as Communists and domestic far-right groups. The committee was disbanded in 1935, but re-formed in 1938. HUAC became a permanent House committee in 1945, and a fixture of the early Cold War. The House Un-American Committee reached “its counter-subversive heyday from 1947-54, but became increasingly controversial as concerns mounted over its impact on civil liberties. Faced with growing criticism, HUAC was officially renamed the House Committee on Internal Security (HCIS) in 1969.”⁶

The CWIS Collection currently holds more than 230 volumes of HUAC hearings and related publications, and Federal Documents Librarian David Durant plans to add another 170-200 documents that will cover the entire range of the committee’s existence, from 1934-1969. Notable HUAC hearings include the “Hollywood Ten” in 1947 and the 1948 Hiss-Chambers hearings on Communists in the U.S. government. Testimony from baseball great Jackie Robinson is also included in Joyner’s CWIS holdings.⁷ Other items of local interest include “a 1956 investigation of Communist activity in North Carolina, 1958 hearings on Communism in the South, and a 1965 investigation of the Ku Klux Klan that reached Greenville and Pitt County.”⁸

The House Un-American Activities Committee was succeeded by the House Committee on Internal Security (HCIS). The HCIS existed from 1969-1975, and is represented

in the Cold War and Internal Security Collection by more than 80 HCIS documents, including Gun-Barrel Politics, Black Panther Party, 1966-71.⁹

The CWIS contains roughly 180 documents from the Senate’s Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (SPSI). Led by Senator Joseph R. McCarthy (R-WI) during the 83rd Congress (1953-1954), the SPSI launched a number of investigations of alleged communist subversion and infiltration. The most famous volumes are the Army-McCarthy hearings of 1954.¹⁰

The fourth agency represented in the CWIS is the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee (SISS). Also known as the McCarran Committee, the SISS is represented by more than 500 documents. Considered to be the Senate counterpart of the HUAC, the SISS was established in 1951 as a result of the Internal Security Act of 1950 and was abolished in 1977. Significant documents among SISS

holdings are testimony from Nobel Prize winner Linus Pauling and Black Panther Party “Honorary Prime Minister” Stokely Carmichael.¹¹

Although the CWIS copies do not circulate, Joyner has second copies of many of these documents available to check out. In addition, researchers can be directed to many supplemental materials. The J. Edgar Hoover Collection on International Communism available in Joyner Library Special Collections is especially useful companion.

The Cold War and Internal Security Collection, as the Research Guide points out, “provides valuable primary sources on topics such as American political culture during the Depression, World War II and the Cold War; the history of American Communism and the other investigated movements; the fate of civil liberties during a period of perceived external threat; and the evolution of attitudes towards political movements deemed extreme or ‘un-American.’”¹²



Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, ca. 1954. Source: National Archives “Treasures of Congress,” http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/treasures_of_congress/images/page_23/70b.html

All are welcome to explore this collection. Questions may be directed to David Durant, Federal Documents and Social Sciences Librarian at Joyner.

References

- ¹ Overview of ASERL's Collaborative Federal Depository Program (CFDP)," Association of Southeastern Research Libraries, <http://www.aserl.org/programs/gov-doc/program-overview/>
- ² Durant, David M., "Proposal to Become an ASERL Center of Excellence," November 9, 2010. <http://www.aserl.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Sample-COE-Proposal-East-Carolina-University.pdf>.
- ³ About the Federal Documents Collection," Joyner Library, <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-lib/govdoc/about.cfm>.
- ⁴ Cold War & Internal Security (CWIS) Collection," Joyner Library, <http://blog.ecu.edu/sites/cwis/>.
- ⁵ The Cold War and Internal Security Collection (CWIS)," Joyner Library, <http://libguides.ecu.edu/cwis>.
- ⁶ House Un-American Activities Committee," The Cold War & Internal Security Collection (CWIS), Joyner Library, <http://libguides.ecu.edu/content.php?pid=448043&sid=3671474>
- ⁷ Jackie Robinson Testifies before the HUAC," Cold War & Internal Security (CWIS) Collection, Joyner Library, <http://blog.ecu.edu/sites/cwis/2013/04/jackie-robinson-testifies-before-huac/>.
- ⁸ House Un-American Activities Committee," *ibid*.
- ⁹ The House Committee on Internal Security," The Cold War & Internal Security Collection (CWIS), <http://libguides.ecu.edu/content.php?pid=448043&sid=3671475>.
- ¹⁰ Senate Internal Security Committee," The Cold War & Internal Security Collection (CWIS), <http://libguides.ecu.edu/content.php?pid=448043&sid=3671476>.
- ¹¹ Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (SPSI)," The Cold War & Internal Security Collection (CWIS), <http://libguides.ecu.edu/content.php?pid=448043&sid=3671478>.
- ¹² The Cold War and Internal Security Collection (CWIS)," *ibid*.



<http://www.nclaonline.org/>