

## **LESSON PLAN: EISENHOWER, McCARTHY, AND THE ELECTION OF 1952**

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### **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

This lesson is designed for use with juniors and seniors enrolled in AP US History. The central focus of the lesson is the Election of 1952 and particularly the battle for Wisconsin in that year. Because I teach in Wisconsin, the story has special relevance for my students. During the late stages of the campaign, Dwight Eisenhower traveled to Wisconsin, the home state of Senator Joseph McCarthy. McCarthy, of course, helped initiate the “Red Scare” of the early 1950s and Eisenhower, though uncomfortable with McCarthy, had been cautious in his public opposition to him and his tactics. On June 14<sup>th</sup> of 1951, Senator McCarthy had delivered a scathing attack on former Secretary of State George C. Marshall, a man who had been a mentor and cherished colleague of Eisenhower’s during the pre-war and war years. Though personally very angry about McCarthy’s attacks on his friend, Ike was under intense political pressure NOT to publicly defend Marshall during stops in Wisconsin. In the end, Ike deferred to McCarthy and Republican Governor Kohler, but not before the full text of his Milwaukee speech had been sent to the New York Times, including the “deleted” paragraph defending Marshall. It was an episode that Eisenhower regretted.

**Note:** This lesson is also available on-line at the following URL:

<http://www.brf.org/schools/hs/depts/Social%20Studies/rykken/PAPERS/IKE%20AND%201952.htm>

### **2. AIM OF THE LESSON**

The aim of this lesson is to help students explore the difficult “political” situation created by McCarthy’s charges of Communist infiltration in the government for soon-to-be President Eisenhower. By examining this particular episode, larger issues surrounding the political consequences of the Red Scare will be more fully understood. In addition, for students in Wisconsin, it will offer important insight into the political history of our state.

### **3. STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO . . .**

- ⇒ Read and Analyze Primary Source Documents related to the Election of 1952
- ⇒ Effectively verbalize one point of view concerning Eisenhower's actions during the campaign to an assigned partner. The thesis being argued is:

***EISENHOWER WAS JUSTIFIED IN NOT DEFENDING GEORGE MARSHALL IN THE FACE OF McCARTHYITE ATTACKS DURING THE WISCONSIN CAMPAIGN SWING OF 1952.***

- ⇒ Write a persuasive essay which counters their original position on the above statement

### **4. ACTIVITIES**

- A. Students will be presented with the documents for the lesson and given a 15-minute reading period during which they will be instructed to study the documents and make any notations on them for later reference.
- B. A “brainstorming” session will be conducted during which students will be asked to share any information that they can recall about the general topic of “McCarthyism.”
- C. Students will listen and take notes on a 15-20 minute lecture I will present on the context of the 1952 election (big picture).
- D. Students will be assigned a partner for the purpose of debating the assertion presented in #3. Students will flip a coin to determine which “side” they will take. Partners will have 5 minutes to make their case.
- E. Students will have 30 minutes to construct an essay response to the assertion in which they argue the opposite point of view from Step D.

### **NOTE TO TEACHERS**

The lesson, of course, can be modified in a number of ways to fit your own situation. For example, it could be used as a set-up for a classroom debate instead of a writing exercise. Another possible use of the information would be to prepare for a simulated press conference during which Eisenhower, McCarthy, and Kohler would respond to questions posed by reporters.

## 5. THE DOCUMENTS

The following documents will be used for this lesson:

### **DOCUMENT A: Excerpt from Marshall's Harvard Speech, June 5, 1947**

Aside from the demoralizing effect on the world at large and the possibilities of disturbances arising as a result of the desperation of the people concerned, the consequences to the economy of the United States should be apparent to all. It is logical that the United States should do whatever it is able to do to assist in the return of normal economic health in the world, without which there can be no political stability and no assured peace. Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist.

Such assistance, I am convinced, must not be on a piecemeal basis as various crises develop. Any assistance that this government may render in the future should provide a cure rather than a mere palliative. Any government that is willing to assist in the task of recovery will find full cooperation, I am sure, on the part of the United States government. Any government that maneuvers to block the recovery of other countries cannot expect help from us. Furthermore, governments, political parties, or groups who seek to perpetuate human misery in order to profit therefrom politically or otherwise will encounter the opposition of the United States.

It is logical that the United States should do whatever it is able to do to assist in the return of normal economic health in the world, without which there can be no political stability and no assured peace. Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist.

SOURCE: <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAmarshallG.htm>

### **DOCUMENT B: Excerpt from William Leahy's I was There, 1950**

Regular meetings of the Joint Chiefs took place on Wednesdays, beginning with luncheon. Special sessions were held at any time, often on Sundays or even late at night. No one other than the Chiefs of Staff was present at the meetings, except that when an important theatre commander was in Washington he would usually be asked to discuss with us the situation and problems in his area. From time to time representatives of our allies - China, Australia, the Netherlands and the exiled Poles, for example-would ask to be allowed to present their case to the Joint Chiefs. On occasions, these requests were granted.

Throughout the war, the four of us - Marshall, King, Arnold, and myself - worked in the closest possible harmony. In the post-war period, General Marshall and I disagreed sharply on some aspects of our foreign political policy. However, as a soldier, he was in

my opinion one of the best, and his drive, courage, and imagination transformed America's great citizen army into the most magnificent fighting force ever assembled.

SOURCE: <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAmarshallG.htm>

**DOCUMENT C: Excerpt from McCarthy's speech before the Senate on June 14, 1951**

How can we account for our present situation unless we believe that men high in this Government are concerting to deliver us to disaster? This must be the product of a great conspiracy, a conspiracy on a scale so immense as to dwarf any previous such venture in the history of man. A conspiracy of infamy so black that, when it is finally exposed, its principals shall be forever deserving of the maledictions of all honest men.

It is when we return to an examination of General Marshall's record since the spring of 1942 that we approach an explanation of the carefully planned retreat from victory. Let us again review the Marshall record, as I have disclosed it from all the sources available and all of them friendly. This grim and solitary man it was who, early in World War II, determined to put his impress upon our global strategy, political and military.

It was Marshall, who, amid the din for a "second front now" from every voice of Soviet inspiration, sought to compel the British to invade across the Channel in the fall of 1942 upon penalty of our quitting the war in Europe.

It was a Marshall-sponsored memorandum, advising appeasement of Russia in Europe and the enticement of Russia into the far-eastern war, circulated at Quebec, which foreshadowed our whole course at Tehran, at Yalta, and until now in the Far East.

It was Marshall who, at Tehran, made common cause with Stalin on the strategy of the war in Europe and marched side by side with him thereafter.

It was Marshall who enjoined his chief of military mission in Moscow under no circumstances to "irritate" the Russians by asking them questions about their forces, their weapons, and their plans, while at the same time opening our schools, factories, and gradually our secrets to them in this count.

It was Marshall who sent Deane to Moscow to collaborate with Harriman in drafting the terms of the wholly unnecessary bribe paid to Stalin at Yalta. It was Marshall, with Hiss at his elbow and doing the physical drafting of agreements at Yalta, who ignored the contrary advice of his senior, Admiral Leahy, and of MacArthur and Nimitz in regard to the folly of a major land invasion of Japan; who submitted intelligence reports which suppressed more truthful estimates in order to support his argument, and who finally induced Roosevelt to bring Russia into the Japanese war with a bribe that reinstated Russia in its pre-1904 imperialistic position in Manchuria—an act which, in effect, signed the death warrant of the Republic of China.

It was Marshall, with Acheson and Vincent eagerly assisting, who created the China policy which, destroying China, robbed us of a great and friendly ally, a buffer against the Soviet imperialism with which we are now at war.

It was Marshall who, upon returning from a diplomatic defeat for the United States at Moscow, besought the reinstatement of forty millions in lend-lease for Russia.

It was Marshall who fixed the dividing line for Korea along the thirty-eighth parallel, a line historically chosen by Russia to mark its sphere of interest in Korea.

It is Marshall's strategy for Korea which has turned that war into a pointless slaughter, reversing the dictum of Von Clausewitz and every military theorist since him that the object of a war is not merely to kill but to impose your will on the enemy.

What can be made of this unbroken series of decisions and acts contributing to the strategy of defeat? They cannot be attributed to incompetence. If Marshall were merely stupid, the laws of probability would dictate that part of his decisions would serve this country's interest. If Marshall is innocent of guilty intention, how could he be trusted to guide the defense of this country further? We have declined so precipitously in relation to the Soviet Union in the last 6 years. How much swifter may be our fall into disaster with Marshall at the helm? Where will all this stop? That is not a rhetorical question: Ours is not a rhetorical danger. Where next will Marshall carry us? It is useless to suppose that his nominal superior will ask him to resign. He cannot even dispense with Acheson.

What is the objective of the great conspiracy? I think it is clear from what has occurred and is now occurring: to diminish the United States in world affairs, to weaken us militarily, to confuse our spirit with talk of surrender in the Far East and to impair our will to resist evil. To what end? To the end that we shall be contained, frustrated and finally: fall victim to Soviet intrigue from within and Russian military might from without. Is that farfetched? There have been many examples in history of rich and powerful states which have been corrupted from within, enfeebled and deceived until they were unable to resist aggression. . . .

SOURCE: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1951mccarthy-marshall.html>

#### **DOCUMENT D: Walter Trohan, *The American Mercury* (March 1951)**

George Marshall was the willing instrument of the tragic policy which held that Russia was an ally to be trusted, that Joe Stalin was "good old Joe". He was the willing instrument of the Hisses and the Achesons, the Lattimores and the Jessups, the misguided men who let American boys die to make America safe for Communism. Whenever the American people have depended on him, he has come up with advice or decisions which have led to disaster.

SOURCE: <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAmarshallG.htm>

#### **DOCUMENT E: Eisenhower's speech in Denver (September 9, 1952)**

Let me be specific. I know that charges of disloyalty have, in the past, been leveled against General George C. Marshall. I have been privileged for thirty-five years to know George Marshall personally. I know him, as a man and as a soldier, to be dedicated with

singular selflessness and the profoundest patriotism to the service of America. And this episode is a sobering lesson in the way freedom must not defend itself.

SOURCE: <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAmarshallG.htm>

**DOCUMENT F: Eisenhower's "deleted paragraph" from the Milwaukee speech during the 1952 campaign (October of 1952)**

The right to challenge a man's judgment carries with it no automatic right to question his honor. Here I have a case in mind. Charges of disloyalty have in the past been leveled against General George C. Marshall. I am not now discussing errors in judgment he may have made while serving in capacities other than military. But I was privileged throughout the years of World War II to know General Marshall personally as Chief of Staff of the Army. I know him, as a man and a soldier, to be dedicated with singular selflessness and the profoundest patriotism to the service of America. Here we have a sobering lesson of the way freedom must not defend itself.

SOURCE:

<http://www.eisenhower.utexas.edu/DI/McCarthy/sixthdraftDDEWIcampaignspeech.pdf>

**DOCUMENT G: Interview with Stephen Ambrose by Mary Lou Beatty (1997)**

**Q:** What do you see as the shortcomings of the Eisenhower administration?

**Ambrose:** Civil rights.

**Q:** That's it?

**Ambrose:** Very much so. And a real mess with Joe McCarthy. In the end, they got rid of McCarthy, but a lot of people got damaged in the process.

**Q:** That was something that cut very close. When Ike went into Wisconsin in the 1952 presidential campaign, he cut out the paragraph defending his old friend and comrade-in-arms, George Marshall, against charges by McCarthy.

**Ambrose:** He took out the paragraph about Marshall because Governor Walter Kohler told him, "You're going to lose the state if you do that." Taking out that paragraph is the one thing that I know of that he was ashamed of. The guy was center stage for twenty years and involved in all the big decisions and had many, many actions to carry out, and this is what he was ashamed of. In a way, he got trapped. All he did was leave out a paragraph. The problem was, advance copies had gone out, and the aides and speechwriters had told the press, "You watch. The general is really gonna give it to McCarthy, right in his own backyard." An expectation had been built up.

**Q:** And he didn't do it.

**Ambrose:** It was a sad day.

SOURCE: <http://www.neh.fed.us/news/humanities/1997-09/ambrose.html>

## **DOCUMENT H: EISENHOWER AND McCARTHY (October 3, 1952)**

Senator McCarthy shakes hands with Republican presidential nominee Dwight D. Eisenhower in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Earlier that day, Eisenhower had endorsed McCarthy's bid for re-election. At center is Charles D. Ashley, Chairman of Milwaukee County Republican Party.



SOURCE: <http://www.apl.org/HISTORY/MCCARTHY/IKE.HTML>

## **DOCUMENT I: SELECTED VOTE TOTALS: 1952 ELECTIONS**

### **NATIONAL RESULTS FOR THE PRESIDENCY**

Dwight D. Eisenhower (R)	33,936,234 popular votes (55.1%)	442 E.V.
Adlai E. Stevenson (D)	27,314,992 popular votes (44.4%)	89 E.V.

### **VARIOUS WISCONSIN RESULTS**

PRESIDENCY: (R) EISENHOWER/ NIXON: 979,744 (60.95%)  
(D) STEVENSON/ SPARKMAN: 622,175 (38.71%)

GOVERNOR: (R) WALTER KOHLER: 1,009,171 (63%)  
(D) WILLIAM PROXMIRE: 601,844 (37%)

SENATOR: (R) JOSEPH R. McCARTHY: 870,444 (54%)  
(D) THOMAS E. FAIRCHILD: 731,402 (46%)

### **VARIOUS JACKSON COUNTY RESULTS**

PRESIDENCY: (R) EISENHOWER/ NIXON: 4235 (60%)  
(D) STEVENSON/ SPARKMAN: 2819 (40%)

GOVERNOR: (R) WALTER KOHLER: 4231 (62%)  
(D) WILLIAM PROXMIRE: 2633 (38%)

SENATOR: (R) JOSEPH R. McCarthy: 3608 (54%)  
(D) THOMAS E. FAIRCHILD: 3123 (46%)

HOUSE MEMBER: (R) MERLIN HULL: 3672 (54%)  
(D) KENT PILLSBURY: 3170 (46%)

SOURCES: The Wisconsin Blue Book of 1954.  
The Banner Journal. 12 November 1952.

#### **DOCUMENT J: LETTER FROM EISENHOWER TO HIS BROTHER (October 9, 1953)**

##### PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

As for McCarthy. Only a short-sighted or completely inexperienced individual would urge the use of the office of the Presidency to give an opponent the publicity he so avidly desires. Time and time again, without apology or evasion, I – and many members of this Administration – have stood for the right of the individual, for free expression of convictions, even though those convictions might be unpopular, and for uncensored use of our libraries, except as dictated by common decency. . .

Permit me to say that I think there would be far more progress made against so-called “McCarthyism” if individuals of an opposing purpose would take it upon themselves to help sustain and promote their own ideals, rather than to wait and wail for a blasting of their pet enemies by someone else. Frankly, in a day when we see journalism far more concerned in so-called human interest, dramatic incidents, and bitter quarrels than it is in promoting constructive understanding of the day’s problems, I have no intention whatsoever of helping promote the publicity value of anyone who disagrees with me – demagogue or not!

SOURCE: <http://www.eisenhower.utexas.edu/dl/McCarthy/Mccarthydocuments.html>





