

**No Child “Left” Behind:  
The Cold War Educational Prejudice Against the Left  
And its impact on the Spanish Civil War**

**Chan Sai Hay, Samuel**

**1196 S Winchester Blvd, San Jose, CA 95128**

**[samschnp@gmail.com](mailto:samschnp@gmail.com)**

**(408) 508-8541**

**Professor Anne Hickling**

**De Anza College**

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## Introduction

On June 12 1963, Senator Thomas J. Dodd from Connecticut delivered a speech on cold war education before a conference in Tampa, Florida. While addressing the strategies to prepare American young men and women to “deal with the menace of communism” (Dodd 586), Dodd argued that teachers needed not to “maintain a neutral and dispassionate posture” when they taught on the subject of communism. Instead, Dodd said a teacher had the “moral responsibility to condemn” the evil of the reds (Dodd 587). In the Cold War, an age of anti-communism, the United States as a whole shared a similar spirit to that of Senator Dodd – one that fervidly rejected communism; one that had so many misunderstandings towards the left.

Coincidentally, the recording and telling of the Spanish Civil War (hereafter called the “Civil War” occasionally) in the Cold War was subject to similar influences. Due to its complexity and multi-dimensions, the Civil War can be viewed and interpreted in many ways: a war between the fascists and a democratically elected government; a struggle between communistic revolutionaries and counter-revolutionists; or a holy battle between the godless and defenders of the God (Esenwein). Therefore, to historians, the Civil War is somewhat like water – a subject which can appear in one state, derived from one of the fore-mentioned interpretations, and then transform to another form, usually due to a change in external environment. For example, the Civil War can be a war against the fascists in one book from the 1950s and merely a civil resistance to communism in another book. This characteristic of the Spanish Civil War became more apparent than ever in the Cold War, a time of political and ideological polarization, which had the tendency to twist anything that had communist elements in it.

What effects did the Cold War mentality have on the telling of the Spanish Civil War? How did historians record the Civil War in this politically polarized period? Was the history of the Civil War skewed to an interpretation unfavorable to the left? Was it more convenient for historians to just ignore the Civil War altogether in light of the overwhelming skepticism towards communism? All these questions shall be addressed, if not answered, in this paper, which begins with an oral testimony of my history professor, Mr. John Hamer from Chicago, Illinois, who grew up in the 1960s and taught in the 1970s. Although Mr. Hamer, with all due respect, is not the biggest name in the field of Spanish Civil War, he is in a position sufficient enough to provide us with a first-hand account of how he learnt the Spanish Civil War as a history student and how he taught the Civil War as a teacher himself. I attended Mr. Hamer's American History class in spring 2015, in which he talked extensively about historical revisionism, the re-examination of history through a contemporary lens. Therefore, I believe Mr. Hamer, who exhibited deep insights on the subject of historiography, is a suitable candidate to talk about his experience of how he studied and taught the Spanish Civil War.

This paper strives to record a valuable historical testimony of education on the Spanish Civil War in the Cold War, which perhaps can be served as a primary source for revisionists in the future. Thus, this paper shall begin with Mr. Hamer's recollection and opinions of his education and, later, teaching regarding the Spanish Civil War in the Cold War, specifically in the 1970s. The testimony starts with a discussion about education on communism in general in the Cold War, so that one can have a bigger picture of some of the Cold War effects on education at that time. Subsequently, the testimony addresses the Spanish Civil War specifically. After the testimony, this paper shall proceed to discuss some of the interesting points Mr. Hamer raised and integrate these points with information from other sources, in a humble attempt to formulate

theories regarding the relationship between the recording of the Spanish Civil War and the Cold War mentality.

Before starting the body of this paper, I feel compelled to point out a few limitations of my work. First of all, this paper is informative in nature and does not offer any certainty in theorizing the relationship between the Cold War and the recording of the Spanish Civil War. As we shall see, there are abnormalities in the ways the Civil War was presented, but I, as an undergraduate, do not have the expertise to establish any kind of concrete theory to explain them. However, I shall still attempt to do so in this paper for the sake of sparking discussions regarding this aspect of the Spanish Civil War.

Second, my choice of the candidate for the oral testimony is in no ways perfect. As I have mentioned, Mr. Hamer, again with all due respect, is not a prominent scholar in the field of Spanish Civil War. The decision to invite him to take part in this oral history project was based on convenience and accessibility as he was my history teacher. However, I do not think this poses any major problems on the authenticity of the testimony as one needs not to be a leading figure in a field to give accurate account of what happened in that field.

Third, certain primary sources of this paper are selected from Canada, even though this paper focuses on the general attitude of the academia and educational system towards the Spanish Civil War in the United States. This decision was made basing on the assumption that Canadian and American shared similar Cold War experiences in terms of treatments towards communistic subject. However, it shall be kept in mind that there were differences in the level of tolerance towards the left in these two countries.

Last but not least, the term “Cold War” is used in a very broad and vague definition in this paper. In fact, the Cold War can be divided into distinct periods with different levels of tension between the communist and capitalist bloc. However, in this paper, for the ease of discussion, the term “Cold War” simply refers to the period starting from 1950s until the end of the Soviet Union, regardless of the varying political realities.

### **The Testimony<sup>1</sup>**

Mr. John Hamer was born in Chicago, Illinois in the 1950s. He had lived in Chicago for 16 years since his birth before moving to Massachusetts, where he lived for another 25 years. Mr. Hamer went to University of New Hampshire for his undergraduate and graduate education; his undergraduate major were English and History; his graduate major was history. He finished his undergraduate degree in 1972 and his graduate degree two years later in 1974. After finishing his education, Mr. Hamer had taught in high schools and colleges for 5 years before working in private industry for a long time; in South Lancaster Academy, a high school in Massachusetts, Mr. Hamer taught history; in Atlantic Union College and University of New Hampshire, Mr. Hamer taught English writing classes. In 2011, Mr. Hamer returned to teaching history at De Anza College in Cupertino, California.

When asked about the general perceptions in education toward communism in the Cold War, Mr. Hamer recalled that historians in the United States had a “more nuanced view” towards the left. As more information about the Soviet Union, which people had not had access to in the 1970s, became available later, historians started to realize they had misunderstood the Russians in many ways. For example, many Americans viewed the Soviet Union as a monolithic kind of

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<sup>1</sup> All of the information in The Testimony section is from an interview with Mr. John Hamer, my history professor on 06-06-2016 except as noted.

power system, which was not always the case. For another example, people in the United States failed to realize that “the imminent nuclear destruction” had been over in the 1950s - Nikita Khrushchev, Stalin’s successor, had no intention to drop the nuclear bomb. Lastly, as Mr. Hamer pointed out, people misunderstood containment in this period of time – in retrospect, the Russian politics was driven by local politics, and international events, like in the United States, were sometimes used to distract local populace rather than advancing some kinds of Russian secret agenda. Therefore, there was no some kinds of “schemes” in the Soviet Union to go and “roll over” the Western Europe, as many Americans suspected, because, as Mr. Hamer quoted from the American diplomat and historian George F. Kennan, the Russians were not “adventurers” and “schemers” but instead “opportunists”. To conclude his answer, Mr. Hamer used the “bunker mentality” to describe the general American view towards the Soviet Union at that time, saying that “people were like peeking out of their fox holes” and “were wrong” in many ways.

Mr. Hamer later pointed out that the above misconceptions could be a result of inadequate and “lagged” education on the topic of communism in the Cold War. To be specific, he added that education on the left was greatly oversimplified and influenced by politics at that time. Moreover, the generations of Mr. Hamer’s teachers were from a background that was primarily anti-communism – most of the historians were “G.I. Bill Guys”, who came back from the World War and had lived in an environment of “better dead than red”. And, in general, teachers were greatly influenced by their teachers. Therefore, education on topics regarding communism was inevitably dictated and hauled by an older worldview from the previous generation. On top of that, the availability of information of the Soviet Union was limited in the 1970s, causing a distorted view towards practices of the left. As a side note, Mr. Hamer pointed out that a revision of a segment of history always took generations to occur – just like the

Dunning School of Reconstruction, which dominated the writing of history of Reconstruction in the 1910s through 1950s, took years to be revised. Similarly, the intellectual trend and curriculum on communism would also need generations to revise and change, even though society had progressed since then.

Mr. Hamer first learned about the Spanish Civil War “within a level of details” in an European/Western Civilization class, which people used to call it as “Survey of Europe”, and another “American in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century” class as an undergraduate. When asked how the Spanish Civil War was taught in the Cold War, Mr. Hamer said that there were two ways to look at it. For one, it can be viewed as an ideological struggle inside Spain, with one side backed by fascists and the other side of a democratically elected government. For two, it can also be interpreted as an event within the international context, one that played the introductory role for the upcoming World War II. Mr. Hamer recalled that, in the late 1960s, the latter and non-ideological view of the Spanish Civil War was more prevalent and emphasized. It was probably because the academia had to try to downplay the narrative of “communism versus fascism” at that time. Interestingly, instead of focusing on its ideological aspects, teachers approached the Spanish Civil War with great details on technicality and descriptions of the war, such as the weapons and tactics used. In particular, Mr. Hamer remembered the Blitzkrieg tactics was one of the things taught about the Civil War.

When asked about the reasons behind the said approach of teaching the Spanish Civil War, Mr. Hamer said that the war created a dilemma for American scholars to have to put the communists into “the good guys” category, which was an “unpalatable” point of view in the Cold War. However, when asked whether the publishers, the creators and writers of textbooks, were under the said similar influence when it came to the history of the Spanish Civil War, Mr.



Hamer admitted that he had no idea to the question and was actually not quite attuned to the complexity of the topic.

Apart from being a student of the Spanish Civil War, Mr. Hamer also taught the Spanish Civil War himself as a teacher after graduation. He admitted that he had only taught this part of Spanish history very “superficially” and “briefly” in the context of 1930s running up to the World War II, and that he had never taught it very “intensely” and “in great details”. When asked about the reason of such brevity in the curriculum of the Civil War, Mr. Hamer attributed it to the limitation of resources and time - having to teach the Spanish Civil War in the context of an American History Survey class, he needed to convey the complexities of the 1930s through other more important events, like the New Deal and Franklin Roosevelt’s domestic as well as international challenges. Therefore he had to sacrifice the Spanish Civil War under the constraint of time. Instead of going into great details of the Civil War, Mr. Hamer would just teach this part of the history as simple as followed, “while America was trying to be neutral, some Americans have gone to Spain and [fought] in the Spanish Civil War; and there was an Abraham Lincoln Brigade.”

When asked about the changes in teaching of the Spanish Civil War in the subsequent decades (1980s and 1990s), Mr. Hamer believed that, in the context of American history class, the war was becoming less significant and “further into the rear mirror”. As a result, aspects that he used to teach, like the American participation in the Spanish Civil War, were abridged, less emphasized or even unmentioned. Mr. Hamer added that he could not really tell whether such changes were justified or not, but he recalled he did not have any consciousness of anyone trying to skew the history into one way or the other.

## Findings

### Colored education towards the left

One of the interesting points Mr. Hamer raised is the inadequacy of education regarding communism in education in the Cold War. The lack of education on the subject consequently led to many misunderstandings towards the left. As we shall see in the following section, not only there were inadequacies in education on the topic of communism, but also colored instructions on subjects which had communistic elements in them. This paper's foundation lies on the proposition that education towards the left was influenced and twisted in the Cold War, therefore I shall first present evidences supporting the said proposition in this section. After that, I shall move on to explore the effects of such colored education on the recording of the Spanish Civil War at that time.

Evidence of inadequacy of education on the left could be found in the speech of Senator Thomas J. Dodd in the opening paragraphs of this paper. In his speech at the 1963 Conference on Cold War Education in Tampa, Florida, Senator Dodd stated that "many of the blunders and defeats of the postwar period [of the United States] can be traced back to the simple fact that [Americans'] understanding of communism was inadequate" (Dodd 587). In consequence, Americans, whether the government or the private citizens, misinterpreted many situations overseas which were communistic in nature. He used Greece as an example of one of the blunders: after the defeat of the Nazis in Greece in 1945, Churchill vigorously intervened and opposed an uprising of the Communist EAM in the country. However, at that time, many newspapers in the United States foolishly berated Churchill for intervening and, due to ignorance of communistic matter, believed that EAM was merely a united front anti-Nazi resistance

movement. It was not until later that the American public realized they had been rooting for the wrong side (Dodd 587). For another example, Senator Dodd cited the blunder in Yugoslavia, in which Britain and the United States misidentified Josip Broz Tito as a leading anti-Nazi hero rather than a pro-communistic general. As a result, the two western countries armed Tito's forces and airdropped supplies to a communistic movement in Yugoslavia, effectively helped erecting a socialistic federation in the country (Dodd 587). Also in China, the American press and publishers had mistakenly considered and embraced Mao as an agrarian reformers without knowing that he was about to turn the most populated country in the world into a communist one (Dodd 588).

In light of the mentioned blunders, Senator Dodd then proposed that more emphasizes shall be put on communism in education. However, the method that he suggested in delivering education regarding the topic was highly questionable in today's standard: while Senator Dodd was in favor of a more fact-based education on the left, he was in no ways suggesting teachers should approach the topic with "objectivity" (Dodd 587). In other words, he was urging teacher to condemn the left when given the opportunity. To justify a colored education on the subject, he reasoned, "if a teacher sets forth the facts about the Red terror in the Communist countries, about the liquidation of the political opposition, about the man-made families and the forced collectivization of the peasants, about the forced labor camps, about the brainwashing, about the total denial of human rights ... - if a teacher sets forth all of these facts objectively and without exaggeration, then it is nonsense to talk about "dispassionate presentation" or about "avoiding condemnation". Later, he even added that, "communism stands condemned by the unadorned facts of its own history" and "one would have to be somewhere less than human to remain cold and dispassionate about the inhumanity of communism" (Dodd 587).

Similar attempts to distort education to resist the left were not uncommon in North America. As we shall see in the following paragraphs, the Toronto Board of Education in Canada was also subject to influences of the highly polarized mentality in the Cold War and attempted to skew education in a more “western way”.

On 18 March 1948, the Toronto Board of Education convened a meeting, in which Harold Menzies, an anti-communist trustee who was, not long ago, elected to the board with the slogan “Keep Communism Out of Our School” (Clarke 93), introduced a motion that targeted directly at the left:

Whereas it has been the policy of the Board of Education to allow recognized political groups to hold meetings in school buildings, and whereas it is deemed inadvisable to countenance the spreading of the Communist doctrine. Be it hereby resolved that hereafter no individual group, or body which is part of, or associated with, the Communist movement be granted the use of any building under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education for the City of Toronto (Clarke 95)

The motion sparked heated debate within the board. Trustee C.R. Conquergood voiced his approval for the motion, saying that “communist doctrine is poison. In my judgement it destroys normal and spiritual values. Children should be kept as far away as possible from that poison” (Clarke 95). Some other trustees agreed with Conquergood’s proposition, adding that the communists’ “ruthless propaganda” would undermine the future generation’s loyalty to the country (Clarke 96). There were a few oppositions to the motion, including the one from Herbert Orloff, who expressed that he was much disturbed by the resolution because of its effects on the principle of free speech and freedom of assembly (Clarke 96).

It is noteworthy that none of the trustees favoring the motion had solid evidence of an imminent Communist threat to Toronto's schools. Instead they referred the resolution to a "hypothetical threat". In spite of that, the motion passed easily by sixteen to four (Clarke 96). Among the four trustees who voted against the motion was Blair Laing, who was very angry as, despite his non-affiliation to any communistic organizations, he was accused of being a communist just because he voted against the motion (Clarke 99). As we can see, this battle within the Board of Education in Toronto reflected the general hostile and paranoid atmosphere of society in the western world towards the left and its impact on the education realm.

The wave of anti-communism in the academia had no sign of recession after the ban on communistic meetings in schools. In June 1950, a few months after the beginning of the Korean War, the Toronto Board of Education passed another motion that schools should teach the reasons for war in Korea in name of cultivating "loyalty to and faith in democracy" (Clarke 100). The implication of such curriculum predisposed the enemy of democracy as the "poisonous" communism because the western force of democracy was fighting the communistic North Korea in the Korean War. In the highly polarized Cold War, in which the dichotomy between democracy and communism prevailed, the name of democracy was often used, intentionally or not, to counter the left in education, like in the case of Korean War.

Other than policy-making, the Board of Education in Toronto was also involved in ideological selection among the teaching faculties. On 18 May 1948, the Finance Committee of the Board received a letter from the Toronto Board of Education War Veterans' Association. The letter made several demands in light of "the growth of parties and organizations in this country subversive to [their] democratic way of life". It also made a number of recommendations for the Board to remedy the problem, including

1. “emphasis in the Social Studies ... the dangers of “the police state” where Fascist and Communist regimes prohibit the “free party” and “free voting system” (Clarke 102),
2. “a careful selection of teachers who were “sincere” in their democratic ideas” and
3. “removal from the staffs ... who cannot sincerely subscribe to the ideals of democracy” (Clarke 102).

Essentially, the letter was asking for a purge within the Board of Education to discharge any teaching faculties who were suspected of being a communist. One of the victims of such a purge was Steve Edicott, a member of the Communist Party of Canada and the son of Hames Endicott, the leader of the far left Canadian Peace Congress. Edicott applied for high school teaching jobs in 1959 and was turned down in East York and Toronto. Eventually, he was hired by a high school in Port Credit because of his experience in the Economics field and a shortage of commercial teachers. However, after his first day of work, the head of the Economics Department of the school immediately demanded Endicott to guarantee if his political views would influence his teaching. In spite of Endicott’s assurance that his political views and teaching were two separate matters, school officials kept a close eye on him (Clarke 103). It is noteworthy that this point resonates with Mr. Hamer’s recollection that his teachers were mostly adamant opponents of communism. It was very possible that, in the more communistic-intolerant United States, many teachers with sympathies towards the left were excluded in the educational system.

## Effects on the Spanish Civil War

### Censorship and Regression

Given its communistic elements, the Spanish Civil War could not escape the fate shared by many other subjects regarding the left. Also in the Toronto Board of Education, evidences showed that there were censorships of books about the Spanish Civil War under the reign of Board Director Dr. C.C. Goldring. On 7 December 1948, Goldring was asked to review two books to assess whether they were suitable to be included in school libraries. One of such books was *This Was My Choice* by Igor Gouzenko, a former Soviet cipher clerk and defector who presented documents revealing the existence of a spy ring in Canada. The other book was *Spiritual of Canadian Democracy* by Margaret Fairley, who shared and expressed a pro-communistic view in her book (Clarke 106).

The attitudes towards Communism in these two books were drastically different. *This Was My Choice* was a collection of autobiographies with clear condemnation of the left. Gouzenko, the author, recalled about various tragic events in the Soviet Union, including a widespread starvation in his village caused by attempted collectivization and the bloody Stalin's Purge. He also recounted and described the Soviet's spying tactics in Canada during his post in Ottawa. One of such tactics was "deliberately [encouraging] public complaint", like the lack of veterans' accommodation (Clarke 106). On the other hand, *Spirit of Canadian Democracy* had a much brighter view towards communism in general. In the introduction, author Margaret Fairley praised the "immortal International Brigade" for being the "vanguard" against Fascism in the Spanish Civil War. Then she included speeches and written excerpts to make case for communism in Canada (Clarke 106).

Not surprisingly, Director Goldring, after his review of both books, expressed approvals for *This Was My Choice*, saying that the book was “both interesting and worthwhile”, while reserved his recommendations for *Spirit of Canadian Democracy*, determining that the book “would not be a popular one with students, nor would it serve the purpose in mind as well as some other books which are available” (Clarke 107). Although Goldring did not specify the reasons of the rejection of *Spirit of Canadian Democracy*, it was safe to conjecture that it had something to do with its positive view towards the left, given the highly polarized political climate in the Cold War. A motion to include *This was My Choice* in secondary schools was soon passed by a vote of seven to two in the Board; a similar motion for *Spirit of Canadian Democracy* was defeated by the same margin (Clarke 107).

Such exclusion of texts with communistic elements inevitably led to a shortage of materials regarding the left in the Cold War. Consequently, the recording of the Spanish Civil War faced considerable abridgement at that time. Under such circumstances, even Mr. Hamer, who is a highly-qualified history teacher, at one of the interview, admitted that he “sometimes got confused as who were the communists and who were the fascists”. Although such confusion may have personal reasons, it suggests that the level of relevance of the Spanish Civil War was very limited in the United States. In addition, the regressions of the Spanish Civil War were also present in textbooks at that time. Take the textbook *Western Civilization* written by Edward McNall Burns and published in 1968 as an example. *Western Civilization* was a history textbook which included details of human history starting from around 30,000 B.C. up to the 1950s. The whole book was 1040 pages long; it also dedicated a total of 28 pages for history between the two world wars in the chapter *Dictatorship and Democracy between Two Wars*. However, when it came to the Spanish Civil War, the book merely wrote a total of 43 words in 2 sentences. Other



events with arguably similar, if not less, significance, such as the personal career of Mussolini and the March of Rome, were given at least half a page respectively. Although one may dismiss such an abridgement of the history of the Spanish Civil War in the said textbook as merely an individual incident, one, coupled with the examples, like the one of *Spirit of Canadian Democracy*, shall take serious note of these abnormalities.

### **Narrative Selectionism**

As briefly discussed in the introduction, the Spanish Civil War could be told in at least 3 identifiable narratives: first, a pro-Nationalist view of the Civil War as a struggle between defenders of Christianity and the godless force of communism; second, a pro-Republican narrative of a defensive war between a democratically elected government and the power hungry fascists led by Franco; third, a pro-capitalist version of a counterrevolution against the advance of communism in Spain (Esenwein 118). This unique characteristic of the Spanish Civil War provided historians choices and flexibility in recording the Civil War. In the case of Cold War, due to the highly polarized intellectual environment, most prevailing narratives were against the left in nature. However, as we shall see, there were also certain counter-current narratives that must not be overlooked in this period of time.

Since the beginning of the 1950s, the Spanish Civil War's communistic element appealed to many pro-Western intellectuals and political pundits, who saw the Civil War as another opportunity to attack communism. There were two reasons at that time that helped the anti-left narrative blossom. First of all, the Soviet Union, after World War II, was no longer an ally of the western world. Therefore, it was then suitable and "fashionable" to publicly denounce Stalin and anti-democratic government (Esenwein 124). Second, there were series of rediscoveries of books and articles which exposed the left during this period of time. Of all rediscovered materials,

personal testimonies became a trend in term of primary sources of the Spanish Civil War (Esenwein 124).

Speaking of personal testimonies, no organization was more successful in shaping the recording of the Spanish Civil War than the International Brigades. Before the Cold War effects starting to kick in, their stories, usually filled with passions and personal dramas, were initially the centerpieces of the pro-Republican narrative. Key victories in important engagements served to display strength to the world of international support for the democratically elected republican. By 1938, when the International Brigades had to leave Spain, they had already been hailed as heroes for generations to come (Esenwein 121).

However, in the Cold War, these stories of the International Brigade became problematic because of their communistic affinity and, as a result, had to acquire new ideological meaning to suit the latest political trends and realities. The Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the United States could serve as an example here - the reputation of the ALB as “freedom fighters” was constantly subject to revision due to external political environment. In the early 1950s, when the notorious McCarthyism prevailed, the Brigade was unfortunately viewed with suspicions – rather a defender for democracy, it was considered as a subversive force to advance communism in Spain. Later, especially in the 1960s, many veterans had to “rehabilitate” and titled themselves as good fighters against Fascism, distancing themselves from any communistic affiliation (Esenwein 121).

Narrative preference of the Spanish Civil War was not only limited to personal testimonies. Anti-communist literatures were also favored in this period of time. Famous British author George Orwell’s two famous works could serve an example here – while the popularity of *Animal Farm* was justified because of its political theme against the left, the success of *Homage*

*to Catalonia*, which had been consigned to relative obscurity, confirmed the selectionism of narrative in the Cold War – in fact, it was not Orwell’s story that captured Americans’ attention. Rather, it was the political message that suited the American taste at the time. Many reviewers, such as veteran anti-communist Bertram Wolfe, had high regards for Orwell’s work as a historical text for the Spanish Civil War (Esenwein 133). This selectionism was even more apparent when one compares these works’ popularities among different places - Historian Tom Buchanan pointed out that the importance of the Spanish Civil War in Britain had actually abated considerably in the immediately post-world war era. Many activists on the subject had then moved on to new projects. Therefore, these anti-communism works did not enjoy much attention in their homeland. It was in the United States that these anti-Communist works by British authors, like the ones of George Orwell, prospered (Esenwein 132).

According to the Newton’s third law of motion, whenever there is an action, there will be some forms of reaction. The same law applied to narrative selectionism of the Spanish Civil War. Gabriel Jackson could serve as an example here – Jackson is considered as one of the most prominent historians in the field of the Spanish Civil War. He personally wrote two books and many articles on the subject (Jackson 11). In *Interpreting the Spanish Civil War*, Jackson analyzed and reflected on some of the changes in the recording of the Spanish Civil War during his 40 years of dedication to the topic. During 1954 to 1964, one of his most intensive period of works on the Civil War, Jackson said he and other scholars with leftist convictions were constantly being pursued by McCarthyism (Jackson 12). He admitted this kind of political reality played a role in influencing some of his statistical computations – Jackson initially estimated the number of paseos, what executions of political opponents were called in the Spanish Civil War, from both sides to be around 20,000. However, later in his life, after reading other works and

change in political environment, he decided to raise the estimate to 50,000. One of the factors behind the initial lower estimate, as he confessed, had something to do with the “extremely skeptical attitude towards all anti-communists and anti-libertarian accusations” at the time, which led him, who was a leftist himself, to minimize number of Stalinist or anarchist violent in the first computation (Jackson 18). He also added that, in his first estimate, he “gave the benefit of the doubt” to leftist and progressive governments. It was not until later he realized that “movements of so-called religious or national liberation can murder on the same massive scale as did Hitler, Stalin and Franco” (Jackson 19). Nevertheless, Jackson’s narrative of the Spanish Civil War was one of the examples of narratives that went against the more prevalent anti-leftist one. As many scholars, like Jackson, with leftist affinity were more inclined to develop interests for the Spanish Civil War, their pro-Republican telling of the Spanish Civil War.

## **Conclusion**

Mr. Hamer’s testimony provides us an excellent account of how the Spanish Civil War and topics related to communism were taught in the Cold War respectively. He recounted education towards the left was generally inadequate, lagged and sometimes colored. The effects of such education included the birth of many misunderstandings between the United States and communism. In the case of the Spanish Civil War, the subject was taught mainly in two ways: one from an international perspective, which put the Civil War as an event leading up to the World War II; the other one from an ideological standpoint, which described the Civil War as a struggle between a democratically elected government and fascist rebels. Mr. Hamer thought it was easier to present the Civil War in such a way because it avoided to put the communists into the “good guy” category, which would not be a welcoming idea in the Cold War. Last but not least, the Spanish Civil War was also very limited in terms of its relevance in American

education. The dilemma of having to describe the communists as good fighters against the fascist attributed to such limitation. In addition, the constrain of time was also a factor – teachers, like Mr. Hamer, had to sacrifice the Spanish Civil War in order to finish all the other things they deemed more important for the class.

Additional findings resonate with Mr. Hamer's testimony. Senator Thomas J. Dodd's speech on communist education confirmed that instructions on communism was indeed inadequate at the time. A case study of the Toronto Board of Education revealed various examples of institutional attempts to skew education against the left – it banned assemblies of communist organizations in schools, required instructions on Korean War in name of cultivating loyalty to the western way, conducted ideological examinations on teaching faculties and censored certain books with leftist sympathy. In the case of the Spanish Civil War, anti-leftist narratives dominated parts of the academia in the Cold War. Through studying the materials used in the recording of the Civil War, we notice a favoritism in anti-communist personal testimonies and literatures in the United States. However, the anti-leftist environment in the academia was in no ways homogeneous – prominent Spanish Civil War scholar Gabriel Jackson's confession of acting against the current revealed otherwise.

This paper strives to cast lights on how the history of the Spanish Civil War was influenced in the Cold War. In a more general sense, this paper also tries to explore how history could be dictated by political realities. Regardless of the outcomes of these humble attempts, one must always be vigilant to how education is formulated and influenced by its stakeholders. On a side note, I feel a certain point of this paper is relevant to today's political reality and therefore worth-mentioning- the lack of education on communism in the Cold War is strikingly similar to the lack of education on Islam nowadays. Both inadequacies created unnecessary fear, mistrust

and misunderstanding towards their corresponding subject. Perhaps strengthening understandings of the said subjects could, at least in domestic level, work wonder in alleviating conflicts.

Last but definitely not least, I would like to present my utmost gratitude to Ms. Anne Hickling, my history professor, whose assistance and guidance played no small part in the formation of this paper. Ms. Hickling has never failed to inspire me during my study at De Anza College. And I always enjoyed discussions with her on topics of all sorts after-class, which fueled my curiosity on different aspects of history. I would also like to thank Mr. John Hamer for sacrificing his valuable time to take part in the oral testimony of this paper.

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