

Henry Steele Commager, "Who is Loyal to America?" *Harpers Weekly*,
(September 1947)

Increasingly, Congress is concerned with the eradication of disloyalty and the defense of Americanism, and scarcely a day passes...that the outlines of the new loyalty and the new Americanism are not etched more sharply in public policy....In the making is a revival of the red hysteria of the early 1920s, one of the shabbiest chapters in the history of American democracy, and more than a revival, for the new crusade is designed not merely to frustrate Communism but to formulate a positive definition of Americanism, and a positive concept of loyalty. What is this new loyalty? It is, above all, conformity. It is the uncritical and unquestioning acceptance of America as it is--the political institutions, the social relationships, the economic practices. It rejects inquiry into the race question or socialized medicine, or public housing, or into the wisdom or validity of our foreign policy. It regards as particularly heinous any challenge to what is called "the system of private enterprise" identifying that system with Americanism. It abandons...the once popular concept of progress, and regards America as a finished product, perfect and complete.... The concept of loyalty as conformity is a false one. It is narrow and restrictive, denies freedom of thought and of conscience.... What do men know of loyalty who make a mockery of the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights? rather than in domestic service solely. Today], when our still developing social needs for an ever-increasing...freedom, the woman marrying becomes the house-servant, or at least housekeeper, of the man....When women stand free as economic agents, they will [achieve a] much better fulfilment of their duties as wives and mothers and [contribute] to the vast improvement in health and happiness of the human race.

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