

2

Witch hunt

DOMINATION

INFLUENCE

OPPOSITION

RÉVOLTE



1. The Salem witch hunt



1. Describe the photo and imagine what may have happened.
2. Read the text below and complete your description of the photo, using as much vocabulary from the text as you can.
3. Describe the print (*gravure*) below, using what you have read in the text.

In 1692 a young girl fell sick in Salem, Massachusetts. Her “fits” – convulsions, contortions, and blasphemous screaming – baffled¹ everyone. Other girls soon manifested the same symptoms. Unable to determine any physical cause for the symptoms and dreadful² behaviour, physicians³ concluded that the girls were under the influence of Satan. That diagnosis⁴ launched⁵ a Puritan inquisition. Consequently nineteen people were hanged, one person was pressed to death⁶, and as many as thirteen people may have died in prison. The small community of Salem was taken over⁷ by madness, superstition and paranoia because of Puritanism and the Bible’s exhortations against witchcraft: “Thou⁸ shall not suffer a witch to live.”

A special court of seven judges was appointed to try⁹ the witchcraft cases. The magistrates based their judgments and evaluations on various kinds of intangible evidence, including direct confessions, supernatural attributes (such as witchmarks), and reactions of the afflicted girls.

1. *déconcerter* – 2. *épouvantable* –
3. *docteur* – 4. [daiəg'həʊsɪs] –
5. *déclencher* – 6. *étouffer (en posant d'énormes pierres sur la poitrine)* –
7. *envahir* – 8. (*obs.*) *tu* – 9. *juger*



2. McCarthyism or the Red Scare



Throughout the **1** and **2** America was anxious about the threat of communism growing in Eastern Europe and China. On February 9, **3**, a young Senator named Joseph McCarthy dropped a political bombshell when he gave a speech at the Republican Women's Club of Wheeling, West Virginia, where **5** he claimed to have a list of **4** Communists who had infiltrated the United States government. McCarthy went on repeating his groundless* charges, though the number of Communists on his list changed from speech to speech. The House Un-American Activities Committee which had launched the initial attack in **5** went on another paranoid hunt for infiltrators.

10 The fact that the United States wasn't winning the Korean War (**6**) also gave credibility to the argument that "subversives" were at work in the government.

Many writers, actors and entertainers were accused of being communist sympathisers and lost their jobs or were blacklisted. Some had their **15** passports taken away, while others were jailed for refusing to give the names of other communists.

Among the well-known writers and artists accused of communist sympathies or called before the committee were Dashiell Hammett, Lillian Hellman, Paul Robeson, **20** Arthur Miller, Leonard Bernstein, Charlie Chaplin. . .

* sans fondement



- 1.** Replace each number in the text with one of the following figures or dates: 1950-53 – 1940s – 1947 – 205 – 1950 – 1950s.
- 2.** Look at the top picture and explain who the man is and what he is doing.
- 3.** Describe the bottom photo and guess why the young girls are demonstrating. Explain the meaning of the placards.
- 4.** What do you think happened to the people who were blacklisted?
- 5.** Why was McCarthyism also called the "witch hunt"? (Use a dictionary if necessary.)

3. Witchcraft

Read the introduction to the text, then describe the photo briefly and imagine who these people are, what they are doing and what is going to happen.



Salem, Massachusetts, 1692. Abigail, Betty and several other girls, led by Tituba, a black slave, were engaged in occult activities. Reverend John Hale, an expert in witchcraft, has been called to examine Betty, who lies unconscious, and to investigate the case.

Hale: Take courage, you must give us all their names. How can you bear to see this child suffering? Look at her, Tituba. [*He is indicating Betty on the bed.*]

Look at her Godgiven innocence; her soul is so tender; we must protect her, Tituba; the Devil is out and preying on her like a beast upon the flesh of the pure lamb. God will bless you for your help.

[*Abigail rises staring as though inspired and cries out.*]

Abigail: I want to open myself!

[*They turn to her, startled. She is enraptured as though in a pearly light.*]

I want the light of God, I want the sweet love of Jesus! I danced for the Devil; I saw him; I wrote in his book; I go back to Jesus; I kiss His hand. I saw Sarah Good

with the Devil! I saw Goody Osburn with the Devil! I saw Bridget Bishop with the Devil!

[*As she is speaking Betty is rising from the bed, a fever in her eyes, and picks up the chant.*]

Betty: [*staring too*] I saw George Jacobs with the Devil! I saw Goody Howe with the Devil!

Arthur MILLER, *The Crucible* (1953)

4. Homecoming

1. Read both excerpts and find the equivalents of the following words (in the right order).

Witchcraft: *pasteur* – *chair* – *agneau* – *étonné* – *transporté* – *nacré* – *mélopée*

Homecoming: *introduire* – *total* – *stupéfaction* – *prévoir* – *redouter* – *apogée* – *crapule*

2. Sum up both texts briefly (time, place, characters...).

3. What is common to both excerpts? What is different?

Jane Foster, an American living in Paris, went back to the USA to visit her mother who had been operated on.

I was then ushered into the inner office of a pale young man, with rimless glasses, who said, "May I see your passport?" And an idiot that I am, I turned it over to him. "Thank you, I'll keep this."

I looked at him with utter amazement and asked stupidly, "Do you realize what you are doing?"

Of course, I really had no right to be surprised. I had been foreseeing and dreading this moment since landing in the US. These were the 1950s, the height of the Cold war hysteria and McCarthyism. Every scoundrel in America was hunting "Reds" under each bed. How right was Lillian Hellman to call that period "scoundrel time"!

Jane FOSTER, *An Unamerican Lady* (1980)