

WORLD WAR I AND BEYOND**Viewpoints**

During the Red Scare, many Americans believed that there was a real danger that the government of the United States would be overthrown. Others thought that the threat was nonexistent, or at least greatly exaggerated. ♦ *Read the viewpoints. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.*

The Red Scare**Attorney General
A. Mitchell Palmer****The Case Against the “Reds”**

The Government was in jeopardy [danger]; our private information of what was being done by the organization known as the Communist Party of America, with headquarters in Chicago . . . removed all doubt. . . .

By stealing, murder and lies, Bolshevism [Communism] has looted Russia not only of its material strength but of its moral force. . . . My information showed that communism in this country was an organization of thousands of aliens who were direct allies of Trotsky.*

Aliens of the same misshapen caste of mind and indecencies of character, and it showed that they were making the same glittering promises of lawlessness, of criminal autocracy [dictatorship] to Americans, that they had made to the Russian peasants. How the Department of Justice discovered upwards of 60,000 of these organized agitators of the Trotsky doctrine in the United States is the confidential information upon which the Government is now sweeping the nation clean of such alien filth. . . .

*Leon Trotsky (1879–1940) was a Communist policy maker and political activist who was a leader in the 1917 Russian Revolution.

Source: A Mitchell Palmer, “The Case Against the ‘Reds,’” *Forum* (1920), 63:173–185

**“Jailing Radicals in Detroit,”
by Frederick R. Barkley**

. . . the Department of Justice in Detroit received an order from Attorney General Palmer . . . to raid the headquarters of . . . the Communist party . . . to break the back of radicalism” in Detroit. As a result, eight hundred men were imprisoned for from three to six days in a dark, windowless, narrow corridor . . . they were denied all food for twenty hours, and after that were fed on what their families brought in; and they were refused all communication with relatives or with attorneys. These eight hundred men . . . included in their number citizens and aliens, college graduates and laborers, skilled mechanics making \$15 a day and boys not yet out of short trousers. They were seized without warrant while attending dances and classes in physical geography and similar subjects; they were herded behind bars with no examination and no chance to inquire or explain; they were labeled in the newspapers as “Reds, Bolsheviks [Russian Communists], Anarchists, Terrorists,” and were left there for the jeering [mocking] gaze of the . . . public.

Source: Frederick R. Barkley, “Jailing Radicals in Detroit,” *The Nation* 110 (January 31, 1920): 137–137.22–30.

Questions to Think About

1. What group did Palmer believe posed the greatest threat to the United States?
2. What was Barkley’s opinion of the American public?
3. **Contrast** How did Palmer’s view of the men who were suspected of being revolutionaries differ from Barkley’s?