

# The Fatcats Launch a “Red Scare” Every 20 to 30 Years

Analysis of the Late Prof. Edward Herman

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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*Edward Herman was a professor of finance at the Wharton School of Business. He was also a well-known writer and historian, who co-wrote a number of books with “the World’s [top public intellectual](#)”, Noam Chomsky.*

Herman [says](#) that fatcats launch a Red Scare every 20 to 30 years in order to roll back any gains in wealth and rights gained by the public, and to browbeat everyone into allowing policies which redistribute power back to the fatcats:

“Terrorism” and “Red scares,” separately or in combination, have been long-standing features of the U.S. political landscape, recurring in roughly 20-30 year cycles from the Haymarket affair of 1886 [to the “Great Red Scare of 1919 to 1920”, to the McCarthy hearings] to [Secretary of State and White House Chief of Staff Alexander] Haig’s demagoguery of 1980-1982. They have served an important role at home and abroad in helping the ... elite in their struggle against labor organization and reformist political threats, in favor of unconstrained business domination, enlarged arms budgets, and imperial expansion.

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Red scares have all had the effect of weakening labor and reform movements by unleashing irrational forces that divert attention from real issues and cast doubts on the patriotism and purposes of unionists and reformers.

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Red scares have all featured alleged radical conspiracies usually linked to some foreign power, whose existence and importance are “proved” by evidence that is partially or wholly fabricated. This evidence may be easily demonstrated to be false or defective, but during the “age of terrorism” the national media disseminate the required line without serious criticism, feature the fabricated and inflated claims as news, and contribute to the hysteria and “cleansing” of the dissident elements. Subsequently, and long after the Red scare has taken its toll, it is discovered that the conspiracies were a mirage; [in] the scare of 1919-20, millions of people had been induced to believe in and take drastic actions to counter a massive conspiratorial threat “when no such threat existed.” As in the case of the “gaps” in our military arsenal—of bombers, missiles, “throw-weight,” and vulnerable “windows”—discovered by the arms lobby whenever there is a perceived opportunity for a killing [for example, during the Reagan administration, Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld helped [generate fake intelligence](#) exaggerating the Soviet threat in order to undermine coexistence between the U.S. and Soviet Union, which conveniently

justified huge amounts of Cold War spending, and see [this article](#)], the repeated discovery that weapons gaps and terrorist conspiracies were fraudulent never interferes with the media playing the same role in the next phase of elite need for a gap or terrorist scare.

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It took the Free Press years to start lifting the lid on outright perjury and coached disinformation, and the assumptions of the Red scare were never seriously questioned. Thus, the Great Fear was effective in creating an ideological groundwork for rearmament, Vietnam and the spread of the National Security State in the U.S. sphere of influence.

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Terrorism and the Red menace never die, they merely ebb and flow in accordance with the propaganda requirements of the moment. The era of McCarthy and the Great Fear was associated not only with a need to roll back union power and welfare state advances, but also with perceived elite needs for rearmament and a forward policy abroad, most vividly expressed in the Truman Doctrine, with its Orwellian complement in the concept of "Containment." The United States was "containing" somebody else as it established 3000 overseas bases and made one of the most dramatic external advances in power since the era of the Roman Empire. In the late 1970s and early 1980s new terrorist networks and Red menaces were called into play once again to serve the traditional functions ....

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A new Red Scare in the form of a "Soviet-backed international terror network" has been vigorously pushed in the United States during the past decade, reaching new heights in 1980-1981. It was badly needed by the [fatcats]. One effect of the Great Society and Vietnam war was to stimulate populism - the belief on the part of many formerly apathetic people that they had legitimate claims that could be pursued both in private bargaining and in the political arena. Protest and demands extended from civil rights marches and war protests to more material claims on the part of the poor, the disabled, the old, women, Indians and others. Establishment spokesmen expressed open dismay at the weakening of traditional restraints on the masses, and their assertive demands to share political power with the elite .... A durable method by which the U.S. business and upper class contends with such problems is by means of a refurbished Red Menace.

Herman makes clear that each of the above-described Red Scares took place in response to growing demands for increased rights and a bigger slice of the pie for the little guy.

The powers-that-be branded anyone who advocated for such things as Russian sympathizers.

The current Red Scare (you know, the Ruskies stole our election, brainwashed our people, etc.) is happening approximately 30 years after the last one.

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