



PROFILES IN COURAGE

Teacher's Guide

CHARLES EVANS HUGHES

CREDITS:

Starring Kent Smith, Harry Bellaver, Kevin Hagen, and Richard Rust. Written by David Karp. Directed by Robert Butler. Produced by Gordon Oliver and Robert Saudek Associates. Inspired by John F. Kennedy's Pulitzer Prize-winning book. **50 minutes.** Guide prepared for Social Studies School Service by Robert D. Barnes, 1983.

OBJECTIVES:

- To examine the issue of individual liberty vs. the national security.
- To explore the Red Scare of 1920.
- To study the role of third parties in American politics.
- To understand the meaning of moral courage.

BACKGROUND:

From the outset of the Russian Revolution in February, 1917, Americans were confronted by misconceptions of what was going on. So when the democratic but shaky Kerensky government fell to the Bolsheviks in October, 1917, American fear and misunderstanding only deepened. Americans wanted to believe that the Bolsheviks were a minority who had "stolen" power. When armed intervention failed to remove the "Reds" from power, the United States initiated a position of nonrecognition toward the Soviet Union.

In America a hate campaign, perhaps unparalleled in our history, was launched against the Bolsheviks and Socialists. In 1919, agents of the Department of Justice, under orders from Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, conducted raids in a number of American cities. In New York alone, 2,000 were arrested. In 1920, 556 aliens were deported because of their political beliefs. In New York, the state legislature expelled five Socialist members.

SYNOPSIS:

"Nothing, in my opinion, is a more serious mistake at this critical time than to deprive socialists or radicals of their opportunities for peaceful discussion and thus to convince them that violence and revolution are the only available means at their command. Democracy cannot be preserved if representation is denied."

So wrote Charles Evans Hughes upon hearing that the legislature in New York had expelled five Socialist members. Hughes, a former U.S. Supreme Court justice and Republican presidential candidate in 1916, ignoring his distaste for the principles of the Socialist Party, expressed outrage at the idea of duly elected legislative members being removed before charges against them had been proven.

We see Hughes, preoccupied with the impending death of his daughter, take on a fight with the leadership of his Republican Party in New York, a fight that need not be his, a fight his supporters urge him not to enter.

When Hughes attempts to speak and distribute a petition at a Republican committee meeting in Albany, he is rebuffed by the chairman.

At the 1920 Republican Presidential Convention, Warren G. Harding becomes the nominee over Hughes. Hughes went on to serve as Harding's Secretary of State and was named by Hoover to be the tenth Chief Justice of the United States.

VOCABULARY:

The following words and phrases appear in the program. Teachers may wish to check for student understanding:

Red Scare	abridgment
Bolshevik	cohorts
John Barleycorn	expulsion
remiss	coup (d'etat)
exemplifies	acting in concert
Socialist	went aglimmering
despicable	crystallize
evolutionary	integrity
the political left	exponent
dissenting	gubernatorial
bipartisan	abhor
indict	demean

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What was the "Red Scare"? What actions did our government take against Bolsheviks and Socialists?
2. What reasons were given for Hughes's loss in the presidential election of 1916?
3. When State Assembly Speaker Thaddeus Sweet talks with reporters, what tactics does he use in response to their questions? Why? Are the reporters cowed? What argument does Sweet use to dismiss the Hughes protest? Have you seen this tactic used before? Give examples.
4. Barney Hale tells Hughes, "This is too small a squabble to throw yourself into." Looking from Barney's perspective, do you see his point? Hughes reply to Barney is "When it comes to Constitutional Rights...all quarrels are the same size: they are fundamental!" What does Hughes mean? Do you agree?
5. Barney decides, probably against his best "political" judgment, not to "push" Hughes on the nomination issue. Why?
6. Hughes played down the notion that he was making any self-sacrifice to support the Socialists. Did he make sacrifices? Explain.

ACTIVITY:

Hold a class "brainstorm" session where you develop a list, on the board, of groups, people, causes, and beliefs that are unpopular in your community or in America today. Allow several days for individual students to conduct research. Hold another class discussion. Consider the following:

Do we usually know a lot or a little about groups and causes that we don't like?

Do we some times direct our fear or mistrust on people who have different cultures, colors, or religions?

Most Americans accept the "fact" that Russia is our enemy and communism is evil. What "facts" do we know about communism and the Soviet Union?

FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION:

1. What did Assemblyman Martin McCue dig up against Hughes? What type of appeal did he make in his speech? Study the "crusade" led by United States Senator Joseph McCarthy against communists in the early 1950s. What were McCarthy's tactics? What evidence did he produce? What was his fate in the Senate? View a McCarthy speech. Compare it with the McCue speech.
2. Hughes said, "The right to vote is no right at all if the right of representation is denied."

In the 1950s and early 1960s civil rights workers turned this concept around: "The right to representation is no right at all if the right to vote is denied." Find out about the "poll tax," "literacy tests," and other devices used to disenfranchise black citizens. What did presidents Kennedy and Johnson do to correct the situation?