THE ANTI-COMMUNIST MOVEMENT
IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
IN THE 1940s AND 1950s
Gerakan Anti-Komunis di Amerika Serikat pada tahun 1940-an
dan 1950-an
Kusworono,¹ T. Ibrahim Alfian², dan Djoko Moerdianto³
Program Studi Pengkajian Amerika
Program Pascasarjana Universitas Gadjah Mada

ABSTRACT
Anti-Communist hysteria that spread throughout the United States of
America in the 1940s was an important part of the American historical heri-
tage. The United States took the most vigorous action to eliminate commu-
nism from America. Despite the success of this effort to curb the Communist
activities, there have been pros and cons about the excessive anti-Commu-
nist crusade during the 1940s. Accordingly, the primary objective of this
research is to find out the causes of this anti-Communist hysteria and to
describe how Truman’s contain communism in the United States.

In this study the researcher uses the library research. He uses historical,
political, economic, and sociological data. The collected data are carefully
selected and analyzed by using the concept of interdisciplinary approach.

The result of this study shows the complexity of the anti-Communist
movement in the 1940s in the United States. It was caused by many factors,
such as ideological antagonism between communism and capitalism, the
conflict of interest between the conservatives in the Republican Party and the
liberals in the Democratic Party, and the conflict between the American busi-
nessmen and labor. The Cold War between the United States and Soviet
Union in the post World War II had also heated the anti-Communist move-
ment in America.

This study also revealed the fact that criminalizing and blacklisting
were common strategies used by President Truman and other anti-Commu-
nist activities to control the Communists in the U.S.

Keywords: anti-Communist movement - the U.S.A. - causes and impact

¹ Pusat Bahasa Universitas Islam Indonesia, Yogyakarta.
² Fakultas Ilmu Budaya Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta.
INTRODUCTION

Since the success of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia communism has been seen as a threat to democracy and national security in many countries. Consequently, communist parties have been banned and their members have been persecuted in many part of the world. In the 1940s through 1950s anti-Communists hysteria took place in the United States of America. The United States then took vigorous actions to curb the Communist activities. The activities that took place in the name of eliminating domestic communism in the United States during the period of the 1940s through 1950s is called McCarthyism (Ellen Schrecker 2).

The anti-Communists hysteria of the 1940s and 1950s was an important part of the American historical heritage. During these two decades many people became the victims of the anti-Communists activities. They lost their jobs, went to jail, and were deported out of the U.S. for the reason that they were communists or were just accused of being communist sympathizers. This historical phenomenon of the Americans was so important that it requires analysis and researching.

Many studies on this issue have been focused on the actors of this movement, such as McCarthy, Truman, or J. Edgar Hoover. This study, however, tries to go deeper to uncover the aspects of the American social life in that era that had helped shape the anti-Communist movement in the 1940s. The researcher views the issue from different aspect, such as politics, economy, history, and culture.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study the researcher uses the library research. Data are collected from books, newspaper, magazines, literary works, such drama and novels. Data are also taken from internet, especially the data that cannot be found in other resources. The data are selected carefully and then analyzed qualitatively. The anti-Communist phenomenon is analyzed in line with the concept of interdisciplinary approach to find out the causes of the issue, the Truman’s administration action to curb the Communists and to see impact of this anticommunism on the Americans’ life.

ANALYSIS

The Establishment of the American Communist Party

The American Communist Party came into being in 1919. It had its origin in the international socialist movement that spread throughout the world after the success of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. It was founded by the left-wing of the Socialist Party of America who had been expelled from the party by its right-wing leaders because of their support to the Soviet Government. Among of them were John Reed, William Z. Foster, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Ella Reeve Bloor, Claude McKay, Michael Gold and Robert Minor. There was no doubt that the establishment of the American Communist Party was inspired by the success of the Bolshevik Revolution of November 7, 1919.

The American Communist Party had adopted the teaching of Karl Marx. It had desire to help the oppressed people. This made the communist Party well accepted by labors, the black, and other minority groups in America. As we know, the capitalist system in America had created structural classes in the society. Labors, who belong to the lower class were often oppressed by the capital owners, and they often did not have any chance to improve themselves. Since the American Communist Party had strong desire to help the subordinated people and gave promises for the betterment of their life, the party became very popular with them. In a short time, it gained its popularity. Many labors and the Blacks became the members of the party. Some of them even became very loyal cadres. In its later development, the party’s members were not only labors and the Black, but more people from all walks of life. In the 1930s, it had many organizations, such as schools, theaters, literary magazines, students’ group, the International Worker Organization, and the Trade Union as its front groups to promote the party’s policy.

The American Capitalists’ Perception about the Communists

The quick popularity of the ACP with labors and the Black had been perceived threatening by the American Capitalists. The Communist ideology was naturally in contradiction with capitalism, the established ideology of the Americans. According to the American Capitalists, capitalism is an essential component of Americanism and democracy. If so, then anti capitalists mean anti democracy, Un-American, and a threat to national security (Parenti 139).

The American Capitalists believed that the American Communist Party was behind labor unrests and strike waves that often in the U.S. in the 1920s through 1940s. The labor strikers that demanded the raise of salary and other improvement of working condition were dangerous for the American business people. The anti-Communist people suspected the American Communist Party to be part of the International Communist movement to spread communism and to turn America to be a communist country. They became more convinced about it after the party openly
gave support to the US government to be involved in the World War II after Russia were attacked by Germany. When Russia still had a non-aggression pact with Germany, signed in August 1939, the American Communists refused the involvement of the U.S. in the war. They insisted that World War II was an "imperialist conflict" and claimed to see the difference between democratic Britain and Nazi Germany. They urged the American isolation (Gordon 49). Now after the Nazi broke the treaty and attacked Russia, they flipped to support the American involvement in the war. The Americans perceived this as a sign of the relationship between the American Communist Party and Soviet.

Because they feared the development of the American Communist Party and its popularity would threaten their status and influence in America. They spread the anti-Communist furor. They also set up anti-Communist network. This was supported by business groups whose interests were endangered with the spreading labor strikes. In 1938 the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) was established. Its purpose was to use the government to abolish communists' influence from the labor movements.

**Truman's Policies to Contain Communism**

When World War II broke out, the American Communist Party cooperated with the American Capitalists supported the federal government to be involved in the war. But this reconciliation did not last long. As soon as the war ended, their relationship broke up. The American policy makers saw the Soviet Union committing to worldwide expansion to replace previously Hitler's domination in Europe. They perceived it as a threat to the international security, especially to American national interests, and they believed only the U.S. could resist the Soviet's tendency.

Seeing the tendency of Soviet to spread communism beyond eastern European countries and its efforts to strengthen its military to dominate the Europe, President Truman focused his foreign policy on containing communism. To do this policy, his administration took some ways, such as establishing military alliances with some countries in some area, like NATO, SEATO, ANZUS, etc. America also decided to give financial aids to the destroyed European countries to recover their economy through Marshall Plan. They believed that poor countries would be a fertile land for communism to grow. Through Marshall Plan they hoped to be able to save Europe from poverty so that they would not be interested in communism. Besides military alliances and economic recovery program, the United States also had to build its military. America worried if Soviet's strong military became dominating power in the world the world tragedy of World War II would happen again. So the only way was to never let Soviet military became the strongest in the world. The U.S. government spent a lot of money to build its military and to develop military technology during the Cold War.

To implement his foreign policy President Truman had got much problem. Some people opposed his policy arguing that it caused America to spend a lot of money on foreign aids and building military when their economic condition was not good enough after World War II. The other problem was that Truman administration had been criticized to be too soft to the Communists.

Truman realized that without the support from the American people it was impossible for him to carry out his foreign policy. He had to unify all politicians from both liberals and the conservatives, and all the Americans to face communism expansion. Then he decided to sell the Soviet threat. He convinced the Americans that Communists were really dangerous for their national interests, security, ideology, and economy. Then the federal set anti-Communist agents.

Truman administration launched a program called "Loyal Security Program". This program was used to screen all federal employees for evidence of communist sympathies or affiliation. It was implemented in 1947. Truman also used political test for federal employees. One section of this program was Executive Order 9835 that was issued on March 22, 1947 to search out any "infiltration of disloyal persons" in the U.S. government. Between the launching of this program in March 1947 and December 1952, some 6.6 million persons were investigated. All of these was conducted with secret evidence, secret and often paid informers, and neither judge nor jury (Miller 165). With this program Truman wanted to clean up his government from the Communists.

The federal government involvement in hunting the Communists was welcomed by the anti-Communist groups. Now they got legal support to hunt the members of the communist party and became more active in crusading them.

World events after World War II also made it easier to build up the Americans' support for the anti-Communists movement. In 1948, the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia cursed non-communists from the government 'in the same year, the Soviet Union blockaded Berlin. In 1949, there was the Communists' victory in China, and in the same year Soviet exploded its first atomic bomb. In 1950, the Korean war began. All of
these were all perceived by the American public as a sign of a world communist conspiracy (Zinn 165).

The anti-Communist activists spread this issue to discredit the American Communist Party. They spread the notion that individual communist was under Moscow's control. The merrymakers of the A.C.P. were believed to be part of this secret conspiracy and their loyalty to the Communist International made them not loyal to the U.S. During the 1940s and 1950s, almost more government agencies became involved in hunting the Communists: State Department, Congress, Post-Office, Supreme Court, Federal bureaucracy, Politicians, Judges, etc.

President Truman played a very important role in the anti-Communist movement. During his government anti-Communist sentiment was intensified. Some people that were charged of being affiliated with communists or communist sympathizers were prosecuted. Whittaker Chambers was accused of having sent classified documents to Moscow in the 1930s and was indicted for espionage. He was sentenced to prison for five years in 1948. Harry Gold was indicted with Communist Party on December 9, 1950. David and Ruth Greenglass confessed their guilt and implicated Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. They were associated with Communist Party. The Rosenbergs were sentenced to death. Some other leaders of the A.C.P. were also prosecuted under the Smith Act.

The controversy has aroused over their prosecution. It was believed that those who were prosecuted for being affiliated with communists were just the victim of political conspiracy. They were just the scapegoats of political conflict and other conflict of interests in the American society. It was still doubtful whether the Rosenberg were Soviet's agents or not since until their death on the electric chair on June 19, 1953 they still insisted that they were not communists, they were the innocent victims of a "political frame-up." (Schrecker 138).

Strategies Used to Curb the Communists' Activities

To make the anti-Communist program more effective, Truman administration collaborated with FBI and other anti-Communist activists use some strategies. They used films, books, and comics to educate people to be anticommunism. More than forty anti-communist films came out of Hollywood between 1948 and 1954. Young and old people were taught that being anti-Communists was heroic. Three million comics of anti-communist story were sold (Zinn 174).

Another strategy was by criminalizing the Communists. They build the image that being a communist or having sympathy to Communists was illegal and broke the law so that they could be imprisoned. Once a person was identified to affiliate with the Communists he or she would lose his or her job. He or she also would get political repression and economic sanction. During the 1940s and 1950s tens thousands people lost their jobs because of being charged to be affiliated with the Communists. Not only laborers that experienced this bad situation, some academic people, such as university professors were also fired and deported out of America. Blacklisting was the most visible economic sanction. Many professionals, such as entertainment industry, steelworkers, teachers, and journalists were suffered from political dismissal and prolonged unemployment.

In the late 1940s the position of the American Communist Party was very weak. When the Republican Party dominated the Congress in 1947, the Conservatives sought to eliminate the Communists from leadership position within the labor movement. When the Subversive Activities Control Board (SACB) was established, the front groups of the Communists were decline very fast.

This, however, did not mean that the anti-communists crusade was over. Many politicians still took the advantage of this anti-Communists furor for their own political interest. If a politician could find a communist in the government he or she would be popular and get good career in politics. One of them was Joseph McCarthy, a Senator from Wisconsin, from whom the term McCarthyism was derived. He used anticommunism issue to attract people, and he was successful. He became very popular after speaking to Woman's Republican Club in Wheeling, West Virginia, in early 1950. He held up some papers of a list of 205 names of Communist members and who, according to him, were still working and shaping the policy in the State Department. He used this list in many occasions, but he always change the number of people in the list. His inconsistency had made people doubtful about the list. Some people even believed that the list used by McCarthy was the old one used by the State Department. He was said to have nothing new about it.

Senator Joseph McCarthy was actively involved in investigating the communists. He tried to build up his career by creating convincing scenarios and ruin those of others. He was very aggressive in hunting the Communists.

When he attacked not only the Communists but also the liberals during Eisenhower administration, the Republicans thought that he had gone too far. His obsession to end the broad Liberal-Conservative coalition that was considered very essential by the Republicans. When he began attacking generals for not being hard enough toward the sus-
The Impact of the Anti-Communist Movement on the American's Life

Anti-Communist movements in the United States had given serious impact on the American’s life. Politically, the Republican got a benefit from this anti-Communist hysteria. By exploiting the Americans’ fear of Communists, the Republicans finally regained their power in the White House after they lost it for twenty years to the Democrats.

Culturally, the anti-Communist movement had created the era of conformity and consensus. In the 1940 and 1950 the Americans in general tended to agree with their government. They allowed their government to set up the standard of the national security and control their life. There was no critic toward the U.S. government from the American people. Because of this, there was not enough internal opposition and dissent. As the result was that the United States could intervene other countries and abuse human right within or outside the U.S. without any disagreement from the American people.

McCarthysm has also resulted the very poor labor right. Labors were in a very difficult situation. Their bargaining power was very weak and they could not see any chance to change it. Anytime they demanded an improvement of their condition, such as increase in salary and better working facilities, they would be suspected to have a revolution against the Capitalists. Labor strikes had been stigmatized as a communists’ tactic against the Capitalists and to overthrow the U.S. government. The labor’s life was then on the Capitalists’ hand.

The political repression practiced by the anti-Communist politician was also considered to be contradictory with the political freedom. It violated the Freedom of Speech and the Freedom of association that was guaranteed in the first amendment of the U.S. constitution. Economic sanction, such as firing, creating difficulties in getting jobs, and refusing giving license to run business to the people who were indicted to affiliate with the Communists clearly abused the most essential human right. It was clear that the anti-Communist hysteria had resulted the human right abuse in the United States.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that various factors discussed in this study support the complexity of the anti-Communist phenomenon in the United States of America in the 1940s and 1950s. This denies any single explanation about this historical phenomenon. McCarthyism had been shaped by various elements that were closely interrelated.

This study also concluded that anti-Communist crusade during the Truman administration was an effective way to prevent the nation from the threat of communism. However, it had abused the principle of democracy and against the “Freedom of Speech”. Many innocent people had become the victims of this hysteria. It had given a lot of suffer to a lot of people.

REFERENCES

METONIMIA DALAM BAHASA INDONESIA

Metonymy in Indonesian Language

Ridha Mashudi Wibowo dan I Dewa Putu Wijana

Program Studi Linguistik
Program Pascasarjana Universitas Gadjah Mada

ABSTRACT

Language, as a medium for social interaction, is used to convey messages from one person to another. Linguistic activity within a social interaction is actually an activity to express meaningful signs. Thus, knowledge on the relation between linguistic sign or linguistic unit and its meaning is very important. In this relation, this thesis is written to discuss one of the many relations between language sign and meaning, linguistically termed metonymy. In particular, this thesis written under the objective of determining the characteristic of metonymy, classifying it based on the sense-relation contained, and discussing the use of metonymy in language-using activities.

The research adopts semantic and pragmatic theoretical framework in the stages of collecting, analyzing data, and discussing the analysis results. The stage of data collection results in the classification of metonymy and the stage of data analysis using componential analysis (referential) and operational approaches identifies the characteristic of metonymy, the principle for using metonymy, and the use of metonymy in linguistic activity.

The research results show that metonymy has specific characteristic although it has close relation with other sense-relationships. In addition to being classifiable according to the type of its associative relation into four major categories, i.e., spatial, temporal, logical, and part-whole relations, metonymy is also classifiable based on the nature its referential relation into two groups: a metonymy which has mutual referential relation and a metonymy is used in language which has one-direction relation. Further, metonymy is used in language using activity based on three reasons, i.e., because of unconsciousness in using a lingual unit, practicality in communication, and high frequency of use. Simultaneously, people also use metonymy to achieve certain effects such as to make a speech more specific, concrete, general, or polite. Finally, metonymy also has high flexibility for use not only in locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts, but also in a direct, indirect, literal, nonliteral, and the intersection between them.

Keywords: Linguistic Sign — Metonymy — Associative Relation.

1. Fakultas Ilmu Budaya Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta.