



The Second Red Scare and the Unmaking of the New Deal Left (Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century America)

Landon R.Y. Storrs

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The loyalty investigations triggered by the Red Scare of the 1940s and 1950s marginalized many talented women and men who had entered government service during the Great Depression seeking to promote social democracy as a means to economic reform. Their influence over New Deal policymaking and their alliances with progressive labor and consumer movements elicited a powerful reaction from conservatives, who accused them of being subversives. Landon Storrs draws on newly declassified records of the federal employee loyalty program--created in response to fears that Communists were infiltrating the U.S. government--to reveal how disloyalty charges were used to silence these New Dealers and discredit their policies.

Because loyalty investigators rarely distinguished between Communists and other leftists, many noncommunist leftists were forced to leave government or deny their political views. Storrs finds that loyalty defendants were more numerous at higher ranks of the civil service than previously thought, and that many were women, or men with accomplished leftist wives. Uncovering a forceful left-feminist presence in the New Deal, she shows how opponents on the Right exploited popular hostility to powerful women and their "effeminate" spouses. The loyalty program not only destroyed many promising careers, it prohibited discussion of social democratic policy ideas in government circles, narrowing the scope of political discourse to this day.

Through a gripping narrative based on remarkable new sources, Storrs demonstrates how the Second Red Scare undermined the reform potential of the New Deal and crippled the American welfare state.

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