

## Reading Guide – Sex, Gender, and the Lavender Scare

During Session 7 we will discuss two sets of materials: *The Manchurian Candidate* and the accompanying short primary source, “Are American Moms a Menace”, and the Johnson chapter and its accompanying primary source, “Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts”. Our goal in class will be to make connections between these materials and to examine how ideas about sex, sexuality, and gender helped shape the period of political repression known as “The Red Scare.”

### Assigned Materials

- WATCH: *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962)
- Aram Scheinfeld, “Are American Moms a Menace?” in *Women’s Magazines, 1940-1960*, Walker, ed. (1998) 108 -114
- David Johnson, “Peurifoy’s Revelation: The Politics of the Purges,” from *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (2004) 15-39.
- “Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts: Senate Investigations Subcommittee Report,” in *Documents depicting the 1950s: A Decade of Conformity and Dissent*, Paschen and Schlup, eds. (2012) 88-101.

### Questions to Consider

*The Manchurian Candidate*, released in 1962 and Directed by John Frankheimer, is a thriller about brain-washing, conspiracy, and repression during the Red Scare. We’ll be discussing this film in the context of the gendered aspects of the Red Scare, and also in the context of heightened interest in “Brainwashing” during the nuclear age.

Aram Scheinfeld’s “Are American Moms a Menace,” was published in the *Ladies Home Journal* in 1945. There are some obvious connections here to the Tyler May reading from last week, but this piece is also relevant to our conversation about sex, gender, and security/insecurity. What connections can you make between *The Manchurian Candidate* and the fears about American moms expressed in the Scheinfeld article?

David Johnson is an historian of LGBT history. His book, *The Lavender Scare*, was the first major study of the impacts of the McCarthy-era political repression on gays and lesbians. As you read the first chapter of his book, try to make sense of the connections Americans during this era made between homosexuality and communism. Why were homosexuals deemed “security risks”? Looking forward to next week, what role did psychology play in the Lavender Scare?

“Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government” is a special report produced by the United States Senate in 1950. Put this primary source in conversation with Johnson. What, according to the report, made homosexuals “undesirable employees” for the government? [Note: The formatting for this source is a tad confusing – introductory material precedes the source itself, which begins in the middle of p.90. The source ends on p100 (the last paragraph beings “In view of the importance...”) and is followed immediately by citation info for both the source and the introduction.]

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