THE COLD WAR AND AMERICAN SOCIETY

• A NEW RED SCARE

• MAIN IDEA
  – Public accusations and trials followed in the wake of fears of communism and spies
A NEW RED SCARE

• Rumors and accusations of Communists in the United States and Communist infiltration of the government tapped into fears communists were trying to take over the world

• "The Red Scare" began in September 1945
  – Soviet embassy clerk in Canada (Igor Gouzenko) defected.
  – Had papers that showed massive effort by soviet union to infiltrate organizations/gov’t agencies in Canada and US
    • Goal to obtain information about atomic bomb
A NEW RED SCARE

• This case stunned Americans
  – Implied spies had infiltrated the American Gov’t
  – Search for spies soon spread into a general fear of Communist “subversion”
    • Effort to weaken a society secretly and overthrow its gov’t
A NEW RED SCARE

• The Loyalty Review Program
  – 1947 Truman established the "loyalty review program"
    • Program would screen all federal employees
  – Instead of calming public, program confirmed fears that Communists had infiltrated the gov’t
  – Between 1947 and 1951 program screened more than 6 million federal employees for their loyalty
    • Loyalty hard to define
    • People suspect for reading a certain book, traveling overseas, even seeing foreign films
  – 14,000 employees investigated by the FBI and 2,000 quit jobs under pressure to do so
    • 212 were fired though no evidence was uncovered
A NEW RED SCARE

- House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)
  - FBI director, J. Edgar Hoover, not satisfied with loyalty checks
  - Went before the HAUC urging them to hold public hearings on Communist subversion
    - HAUC formed in 1938 to investigated both Communist and Fascist activities in the US
    - Hoover believed they could get results finding sinister figures engaged in Un-American activities
  - Hoovers goal: expose not just Communists but also Communist sympathizers
    - With this in mind, FBI sent out agents to infiltrate groups and tapped thousands of phones of suspected subversion groups
A NEW RED SCARE

• Hollywood on Trial
  – HUACs first hearings in 1947 focused on film industry
    • Powerful cultural forced that they feared communists might manipulate to spread ideas
  – Interviews began: “are you now or have you even been a member of the Communist Party?”
  – Future President Ronald Regan was head of SAG and testified that there were communists in Hollywood
  – 10 Screen writers (aka Hollywood 10) used 5th amendment rights and refused to testify
    • Led to producers to blacklist anyone believed to be Communist or who refused to cooperate with HUAC
    • 1950 Pamphlet called “Red Channels” listed 151 blacklisted actors, directors, broadcasters and screenwriters
A NEW RED SCARE

• Alger Hiss
  – 1948 Whittaker Chambers (former Communist member) testified to HUAC that several gov’t officials were former Communists or spies
  – Most prominent named was “Alger Hiss”
    • Diplomat who served in Roosevelt’s administration
  – Hiss sued for libel but Chambers insisted he was spy giving him secret documents from gov’t
    • Hiss denied everything (including ever meeting Chambers)
A NEW RED SCARE

– Committee was going to drop investigation into Hiss until Richard Nixon convinced to continue
  • Wanted committee to decide if Hiss or Chambers lied
– Chambers produced copies of secret documents and microfilm that claimed Hiss was lying
  • Hidden in pumpkin on his farm (became known as Pumpkin Papers)
– A jury agreed and convicted Hiss of “perjury”
  • Lying under oath
A NEW RED SCARE

• The Rosenbergs
  – Another spy case focused on accusations American Communists sold secrets of the atomic bomb to the Soviets.
    • Didn’t believe Soviets could produce atomic bomb without help...so hunt for spies spread
  – 1950 found a British scientist who admitted sending information to the Soviet Union
    • After he testified, FBI arrested Julius and Ethel Rosenberg...members of Communist Party
  – Charged with heading Soviet Spy ring
    • Denied charges but were condemned to death for espionage
    • Many believed they were innocent but after several appeals, couple was executed in June 1953
A NEW RED SCARE

- Project Venona
  - Public trials being sensational, there was actual evidence of Soviet espionage at the time
  - 1946, American and British cryptographers worked on a project code named Venona
    - Cracked Soviet Spy code
    - Read approx. 3,000 messages between Moscow and US
  - These messages confirmed extensive Soviet spying and ongoing effort to steal nuclear secrets
    - Venona’s existence wasn’t public until 1995
    - The documents had strong evidence that Rosenbergs were guilty
A NEW RED SCARE

• The Red Scare Spreads
  – Many state and local gov’ts, universities, businesses, unions, churches and private organizations began own efforts to find communists
    • University of California had 11,000 take loyalty oaths, fired 157 who refused
  – Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 required union leaders to take oaths that they weren’t Communists
    • Didn’t object and even launched own efforts to purge communists from union
  – CIO president expelled 11 unions that refused to remove Communist leaders from their organizations
THE COLD WAR AND AMERICAN SOCIETY

• MCCARTHYISM

• MAIN IDEA
  – Senator Joseph R. McCarthy used the fear of communism to increase his own power and destroy the reputations of many people.
McCARTHYISM

• 1949 Red Scare intensified
  – Soviet Union had successful first atomic bomb test, china became communists etc.
  – Proved to Americans that we were losing Cold War
  – Thought gov’t was failing and furthered belief that Communists had infiltrated gov’t

• 1950, Young Wisconsin senator, Joseph McCarthy gave a speech
  – Claimed that he had a list of 205 gov’t members who were part of Communist party and still part of American Gov’t
  – People asked to see the list but he never showed it...however continued to use it to further his own popularity

• When ran for Senate in 1946 claimed opponent had communist ideas but did not provide evidence
  – Helped win election due to sensationalist media coverage of his claims
McCARTHYISM

• As a senator still claimed Communists were dangerous at home and abroad
  – In some places distributed booklet called “The Party of Betrayal”
  – Accused Democrat Party leaders of corruption and protecting Communists
  – Accused Secretary of State Dean Acheson and George C. Marshall of conspiracy with communists

• Many Americans were ready to believe McCarthy
McCARTHYISM

• The McCarren Act
  – 1950 Korean War also increased fears of Communist spying
  – Congress passed Internal Security Act
    • Called “McCarran Act”
    • Made by Senator McCarran created act which made it illegal to combine, conspire or agree with any other person to perform any act which would substantially contribute to...the establishment of a totalitarian gov’t
  – Act also required all Communist Party and “communist-front” organizations to publish their records and register with the US Attorney General
  – Communists could not have passports and in national emergencies could be arrested and detained
    • Truman vetoed the bill but was overrode veto in 1950
    • Supreme Court cases later limited scope of McCarran Act
McCarthy’s Tactics

- Republicans controlled Congress in 1952, McCarthy was chairman of subcommittee on investigations.
- Used power to force gov’t officials to testify about alleged Communist influences.
  - Became a witch hunt...bad evidence and irrational fears.
- Tactic of damaging reputations with vague and unfounded charges became known as “McCarthyism”.
- McCarthy became well quoted in the press and with his tactics of unfounded charges, people were afraid to challenge him!
MCCARTHYISM

The politically motivated practice of making accusations of disloyalty, subversion, or treason without proper regard for evidence.
McCarthyism

- McCarthy’s Downfall
  - 1954 began to look for Soviet Spies in the US Army
    - Army-McCarthy trials were televised and people saw his bully tactics and unfounded accusations first hand...his support began to fade
  - During trial McCarthy attacked a young member of the Army attorneys for being in a Communist front organization in Law school
    - Head lawyer attacked back asking him “have you left no sense of decency?”
    - People cheered for lawyers attack and McCarthy lost his power of putting fear into the people
  - Later, Senate passed a vote of “censure” (formal disproval) against McCarthy
    - Most serious criticism Senate can level against a member
    - Remained senator but lost influence...he died in 1957
ARMY HEAD RAPS M'Carthy-COHN TACTICS

Eisenhower Urges Anti-Red Crusade

Exploze Poisonous Propaganda, President's Plea to Publishers.

No Delay in Geneva Parley Seen

WASHINGTON, April 27—Army Secretary's charges today that Sen. McCarthy and Rep. P. H. COHN are guilty of a dereliction of duty by urging a curtailment of the Geneva Parley were in the majority of the American people, according to the Department of Defense.

Rebels Renew Drive Against French Fortress

State High Court Acts on Mrs. Hazel Younger

Racket Official Ordered to Show Cause

Why Name Should Not Be Dropped

WASHINGTON, April 27—The California State High Court today ordered the name of Mrs. Hazel Younger, an official of the State Department of Justice, to be dropped from the list of racket officials ordered to show cause why his name should not be dropped from the list of racket officials ordered to show cause why his name should not be dropped.
• LIFE DURING THE EARLY COLD WAR

• MAIN IDEA
  – Obsessed with fear of a nuclear attack, many Americans took steps to protect themselves
LIFE DURING THE EARLY COLD WAR

• Fear of communism and nuclear attacks had a huge impact on American life in the 1950s
  – Affected thinking and choices of ordinary Americans
  – Some prepared to survive a nuclear attack and others got involved in politics
    • Wanted to shape gov’t policy
  – Writers wrote about dangers of atomic bomb or to protest policies that might lead to war
LIFE DURING THE EARLY COLD WAR

• Facing the Bomb
  – Already scared with soviet’s success of atomic bomb, Americans more frightened with soviet success of H-bomb (1953)
    • Hydrogen bomb, more powerful than atomic bomb… US had successfully tested 1952
  – Americans prepared for a surprise Soviet attack
    • Schools set aside special areas as bomb shelters… had bomb drills (duck under desks aka “duck and cover”)
  – Drills felt safe but in reality would not protect students
    • For every person killed outright by a nuclear blast, four more would die later from “fallout”
      – Radiation left over after a blast
    • Families built shelters to protect from fallout (stocked with food/water)
LIFE DURING THE EARLY COLD WAR

• Popular Culture in the Cold War
  – Cold War themes soon appeared in films, plays, television, titles of dance tunes and popular fiction
  – 1953 Arthur Miller’s play the Crucible appeared on Broadway
    • Theme about witch hunts and how hysteria can lead to false accusations
  – FBI undercover agents were also popular to make into books, articles and movies
    • Matt Cvetic infiltrated Communist party in Pennsylvania and was written about in Saturday evening post
    • Movies I was a Communist for the FBI and Walk East on Beacon also featured FBI
    • TV also had a series about FBI undercover agents (I led Three Lives)
LIFE DURING THE EARLY COLD WAR

– Popular songs at the time
  • “Atomic boogie” and “Atom Bomb Baby”
  • [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=intOgKtKxBk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=intOgKtKxBk)

– 1954 Philip Wylie published *Tomorrow!*
  • Novel described horrific effects of nuclear war on an unprepared American city
  • Wanted novel to convince Federal gov’t to take strong role in building bomb shelters

– Most famous non-fiction book is John Hersey’s *Hiroshima*
  • Provides first hand accounts of six survivors of the US dropping the atomic bomb on Hiroshima Japan
  • Made American’s question use of bomb and see horrors of nuclear attacks

– This happened as Americans were also enjoying post war prosperity and optimism
  • But also a time of fear of communism... 1952 election looked for a leader to make them feel secure
REVIEW QUESTIONS

• What was the purpose of the loyalty review boards and the HUAC?
• What were the effects of McCarthyism?
• How did the Cold War affect life in the 1950s?
• What is fallout?
• Explain the Red Scare