

US History

The Cold War

Learning Target:

I can identify and analyze the underlying reasons for the Red Scare during the Cold War and examine a symbol of the era, Joseph McCarthy.

8. The Red Scare

Russian Bolshevik Revolution –

1917 –

- Resulted in the establishment of a communist government in Russia
- Wanted to encourage a world-wide communist revolution

Communism and the Great Depression –

Early 1930s –

- American Communist Party condemned capitalism and blamed depression on it
- Many Americans responded to communist and socialist views for action due to such bad times

Late 1930s –

- Communism begins to be associated with evil
- Stalin stepped up terror against internal enemies of the USSR as he takes power
- Stalin's terror tactics drove many Americans from the communist party
- By WWII communism in America had virtually died

Red Scare (Cold War) –

Post WWII –

- Many Americans leave communist party or become inactive
- Their past would come back to haunt them in this new Red Scare

Truman and Eisenhower Presidencies –

- Concern about worldwide communist revolution raised concerns about a conspiracy to overthrow the government
- These fears launched campaigns that violated the civil liberties of Americans
- Anyone who had ever had Communist party ties and many who did not were swept up in the wave of persecution

Loyalty Review Board –

- Started by Truman to prove he was not soft on communism
- Set up to investigate gov't employees and dismiss those who were disloyal
- Investigated 3.2 million, 212 dismissed, 2900 resigned in protest

The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)-

- Famously investigated Hollywood for communist sympathizers

- Many “friendly witnesses” or cooperative witnesses testified
- 10 “unfriendly witnesses” testified; The Hollywood Ten
- Hollywood Ten refused to cooperate because they felt it was unconstitutional
- Sent to prison for refusing to cooperate

Spy Cases Shock The Nation –

-Alger Hiss Case:

- Alger Hiss accused of being a communist spy
- Too many years had passed to prosecute for espionage
- Convicted on perjury by a young Richard Nixon

-The Rosenbergs:

- Ethel & Julius Rosenberg convicted of espionage
- Accused of stealing secrets from the Manhattan Project on the bomb
- Both were executed

-Both cases led increased fear and paranoia during the Red Scare

The Symbol of an Era: Joseph McCarthy –

Joseph McCarthy –

- Senator Joseph McCarthy – From Wisconsin
- Not well known after his first three years in senate
- Took up the fight against communism to get reelected

Wheeling, WV –

- February 9, 1950 – Republican women’s club meeting in Wheeling, WV
- Claimed he had a list of 205 communists working in the US state department

Senate Subcommittee On Investigations –

- Official forum to accuse people of communist ties
- McCarthy never produced credible evidence in his accusations
- Held numerous hearings and ruined many officials careers
- Accused either resigned or were fired as security risks
- In the peak of his power few would challenge him

McCarthyism –

- The unfair tactic of accusing people of disloyalty without providing evidence
- McCarthy won public support keeping the country safe from communists
- At the peak of his power few would challenge him

McCarthy vs. US Army –

- Went too far after Eisenhower was elected in 1953
- Eisenhower decided to ignore McCarthy hoping he would go too far
- McCarthy went too far when he accused the US Army
- The army supplied plenty of evidence disproving McCarthy’s allegations
- Army attorney Joseph Welch quietly discredited McCarthy on TV
- Public lost faith in McCarthy and turned on him