**Cold War Reading**

*How did the Cold War affect American culture and Soviet culture?*

*How did anti-communist fear affect American politics and culture in the 1950s*?

**Directions:** Read the information below and annotate along the right hand side. When annotating think about the questions above and attempt to answer them using the reading. There will be a quiz tomorrow on this information.

**Vocab:**

**Consumption-** the use of economic goods to satisfy wants and/or shape identity**.**

**Production**- the making of goods available for use. In mass production, goods are created using assembly-line techniques.

**McCarthyism**- named for Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin, this term describes anti-communist crusading that used intimidation and accusation to denounce its targets. McCarthy actually began his crusade in 1950, a few years after the HUAC hearings in Hollywood and shortly after the Hiss case ended.

**House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)-** a Congressional committeethat was created in 1938and made permanent in1945. HUAC investigatedthe present and past politicalaffiliations of citizens. Thecommittee was particularlyinterested in the affiliationsof civil servants, people inthe movie industry, labor unions, and teachers, and it held hearings in which citizens testified about their loyalty. The committee was abolished in 1975.

**Blacklist—**in the wake of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) investigation of the motion picture industry, during which the “Hollywood Ten” refused to answer questions about their membership in the Communist Party, industry executives met in New York to condemn the Ten and issue a statement to ward off future investigation from Washington. The “blacklist,” which prevented actors, writers, and directors with radical sympathies from getting jobs in Hollywood, arose out of this meeting. The Hollywood Ten, who included Ring Lardner, Jr. and Dalton Trumbo, were among those on the blacklist, though many worked under pseudonyms.

**Subversion-** the undermining of the power and authority of an established system or institution.

**Hearings -** A legal proceeding where an issue of law or fact is tried and evidence is presented to help determine the issue.

The Cold War affected American and Soviet culture during the early years of the conflict. In the Soviet Union, state-sponsored propaganda campaigns claimed that the nation had created considerable prosperity and happiness for its citizens, despite the fact that the war, fought on Soviet grounds, had severely damaged the economy. The campaigns criticized capitalism in the West for problems such as war, unemployment, exploitation, and racism.

Americans enjoyed an era of prosperity after World War II, but the fear of communism dominated American culture during the 1950s. The war had revived the American economy, and Americans quickly adjusted to a **consumer economy**. Advertisements encouraged Americans to invest in homes, televisions, and kitchen appliances. While concerned about the Soviet Union’s advancements in nuclear arms and space technology, Americans believed that **consumer** abundance proved the superiority of the capitalist system.

In the years after World War II, American society experienced a wave of anti-communist fear similar to those felt after World War I. During this period, opportunists like Senator Joseph McCarthy used accusations of communism to undercut political and cultural opponents. The United States had experienced a Red Scare like this before, in 1919-1920. During this earlier Red Scare, Congress created an organization known as the **House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)** to investigate alleged communists and anarchists in the United States in an attempt to deport foreign-born labor activists. HUAC worked alongside Attorney General Palmer to wiretap and raid possible communist spies here in the United States. The Communist Party (CP) in the United States had become popular during WWI, but was not popular again until the Great Depression, when some Americans became disenchanted with capitalism; during this period, members of the CP joined other Americans in calling for unemployment relief and union organizing.

The Cold War revived American anticommunism. Communism was inevitably linked to the Soviet Union, and it was assumed that all communists were loyal to the USSR, that they followed the party line, and that they would work to subvert the American system. In retrospect, some historians have questioned whether the threat posed by the CP warranted the measures taken to suppress them.

Although anticommunism affected all parts of American society, the federal government conducted the most well-known anticommunist campaign. The most famous of these efforts was the continued investigations by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) during the Second Red Scare after WWII. HUAC was a Congressional committee that investigated Communist **subversion** of American society and institutions, especially in labor unions, universities, and the entertainment industry. At HUAC **hearings**, witnesses were often assumed to be guilty of subversion, were not shown the evidence against them, and were pressured to “name names” of associates involved in their activities. The 1950s also witnessed the Army-McCarthy hearings (where Senator Joseph McCarthy accused members of the military of being connected to the USSR and communism) and the trial of former state department official Alger Hiss. Alger Hiss was investigated as a possible spy for the USSR, and questioned by future president Richard Nixon. While the hearings conducted by McCarthy and HUAC on communism uncovered sympathy for liberal causes in places like Hollywood, it did not find rampant subversion of American institutions. Nonetheless, many of those accused during the hearings found themselves “**blacklisted**” by former employers—that is, unable to find work. This era of **McCarthyism** also led to fear that communism had reached America and led many people to not only be suspicious of their neighbors, but also willing to accuse them of being pro-Soviet and possible spies.

**Again tips for annotating:**

* Think about and answer the overarching questions - How did the Cold War affect American culture and Soviet culture? How did anti-communist fear affect American politics and culture in the 1950s?
* Short summaries of sections that look important.
* Questions you have about the reading.
* Connections to other events in history, literature, etc.
* Topics of further research.