

The Age of Anxiety

Cold war culture: a culture of fear.

- Fear of communism, seen as *evil*.

"Communism in reality is not a political party. It is a way of life, an evil and malignant way of life. It reveals a condition akin to [similar to] a disease, that spreads like an epidemic, and like an epidemic, a quarantine is necessary to keep it from infecting this nation."

J. Edgar Hoover, former FBI director

- Atomic fear

1. Arms race:

In 1945, the USA had used the first *A bomb* (atomic bomb)

Aug. 1949: USSR tested its first A bomb, thus ending the American nuclear monopoly.

1952: USA detonated the first *H-bomb* (hydrogen bomb) - 1000 times more powerful than the A bomb.

1953: USSR detonated its own H-bomb.

- 1954: theory of "*massive retaliation*" (coined by Secretary of state John Foster Dulles): in case of a conventional attack the United States would undertake a massive retaliation on the Soviet Union with nuclear weapons.

1956: USA developed **U-2 spy plane**.

1957: USSR developed the first **ICBMs** (Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles) with nuclear warheads to counter the threat of American *strategic bombers* based in Western Europe and Turkey that flew around the clock.

1959: USA launched its first Atlas ICBM.

1961: theory of "*Mutual Assured Destruction*": the two superpowers had reached *nuclear parity* and each side could destroy the other many times.

- The *space race* (1957-1975): it originally evolved from the missile based arms race and began with the Soviet launch of the Sputnik (first ever artificial satellite) in 1957. In 1961, the USSR put the first man in space (Yuri Gagarin) to which President Kennedy replicated by the Apollo program which would put the first man on the moon in 1969. It ended with the joint Apollo-Soyuz human spaceflight mission in 1975, a symbol of *détente* between the USA and the USSR.

2. Civil Defense

Educational effort promoted by the American government to instruct citizens on how to react in case of a nuclear attack.

- "*Duck and cover*": what Americans were supposed to do if they did not have time to reach a *fallout shelter* - see

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixy5FBLnh7o>

- civilians were encouraged to build their own fallout shelters in their basement.

3. Red Scare, anti communist propaganda and McCarthyism

- the Red Scare (1947-1957): fear of communist influence in American society and in the government.

- **HUAC**: House Un-American Activities Committee, set up by Congress to investigate people suspected of unpatriotic behavior. Investigation of Hollywood motion picture industry → *Hollywood ten* (the ten people who refused to answer the committee on the basis of the *First Amendment*)
- 1947: "*Loyalty Order*" signed by President Truman mandating "loyalty investigation" for all federal employees
- 1950: Sen. Joseph McCarthy claimed large numbers of communist spies and sympathizers had infiltrated American government and society.
- **McCarthyism**: 1950-1954. Causes: heightened fear of communism because the previous year, USSR tested its A bomb + fall of China to the Communists. "*Witch hunt*". People *blacklisted*.
- 1953: execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, convicted of spying for the Soviet Union, despite international protest movement.

