

AP United States History
Unit 8: The Superpower
Topic- The Red Scare, 1945-1980

The Red Scare

Explain the causes and effects of the Red Scare after World War II.

Americans debated policies and methods designed to expose suspected communists within the United States even as both parties supported the broader strategy of containing communism.

Although he is commonly associated with it, the Great Red Scare of the 1950s was not solely the product of the Wisconsin Senator, Joseph McCarthy. In fact, even during the 1920s an earlier Red Scare had frightened the American public as bankers and businessmen felt that they were under attack after the Wall Street Bombings of 1929. Throughout the 1920s, and more especially during the years of the Great Depression, a small Communist Party grew in America. Despite its growth, the party never numbered more than perhaps 50,000 members. It most likely, according to recent historical scholarship, never had more than 300 spies among its ranks, but yet it, and the party itself was greatly feared, perhaps way out of proportion to the actual threat it ever posed. During World War II, KGB (Soviet) spies operating inside the United States stole secrets of the atomic bomb which enabled the Russians to be able to detonate their own by 1949. A number of Americans, including the couple— Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were executed for treason against the United States as alleged Communist spies, though it appears that the actual knowledge of Ethel Rosenberg, in particular, may have been circumstantial, at best. By 1950, after the loss of China to communism, the Soviet development of an atomic bomb, and rising communist sentiments in parts of Europe, most Americans were indeed becoming wary of the fact that there could be communists with evil intentions within their midst. These fears led to a Red Scare that featured two powerful sets of congressional hearings— those led by young conservatives such as Richard Nixon who were members of HUAC— the House Un-American Activities Committee, and in the Senate, the accusations and trials were led by Joseph McCarthy.

Fears of communism in the United States, particularly in the federal government, had led to the creation of agencies and policies to deal with the issue. Even before the outbreak of World War II, Congress had established HUAC— the House Un-American Activities Committee to keep what it viewed at the time as possible communist infiltration into American society in check by 1938. However, it was in the aftermath of World War II that HUAC began to become much more active. The first explosive case which defined its presence during the Red Scare of the period was in the Alger Hiss Spy Case in 1948. Hiss had been an official in the State Department who was outed for passing stolen documents by a magazine editor, Whittaker Chambers. He was found guilty of passing these important documents to Soviet agents. The case made a young Congressman, Richard Nixon, a household name for most Americans. But, it was the book, *Red Channels* by Vincent Hartnett which caused a real stir with its publication in 1950. The book accused a number of actors, actresses, writers, directors, and producers in the entertainment industry— principally in film and radio, for having communist ties. It led to a series of hearings that investigated the possible ties between these entertainment figures and the Communist Party. It also led to some of the performers and writers, even if the ties were minimal, to become blacklisted, which made it difficult for them to find work. But, beyond the investigations into the possible ties to the entertainment industry, it was the fear that the Hiss case had demonstrated that there were possible Soviet agents or spies working in the federal government. Even before the Alger Hiss Spy Case, the Truman administration had established Loyalty Review Boards to try to quieten public fears about the possibility of Communist spies working in the federal government. But, the fears reached

a fever pitch with the accusations that there were perhaps hundreds of spies or Soviet agents working in the State Department by Senator Joseph McCarthy in a speech that he gave in Wheeling, West Virginia, in 1950. McCarthy had no actual proof for his accusations, but a frightened American public, including the new President, Dwight D. Eisenhower did not challenge them at the time. From 1951-1954, McCarthy leveled accusations at government officials—accusing them of having ties to communism. But, in 1954, he overstepped, and in a new medium, television, he was exposed, as his accusations that the U.S. Army was harboring communists were proven to be overblown. In the secret Venona Papers which were released decades later, there was proof that there were some government officials who did have communist ties, but not to the extent that McCarthy had claimed. Finally, it was a courageous Senator from his own party, Margaret Chase Smith who would condemn McCarthy and lead a revolt against his witchhunts in the halls of Congress. In 1954, he was censured by the Senate and died two years later from an illness related to his battle with alcoholism. Throughout the period, it was the Republican Party which made a name for itself as being tough on communism, but in reality the votes in Congress and the support for anti-communist efforts at the time were bipartisan. The vote to censure McCarthy was also bipartisan.

However, the threat of communism and the fear of it never subsided in America to some extent until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

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Topic- The Economy, 1945-1980

The Economy, 1945-1980

Explain the causes of economic growth in the years after World War II.

A burgeoning private sector, federal spending, the baby boom, and technological developments helped spur economic growth.

At the end of World War II, America experienced unparalleled economic growth. Despite the Red Scare, the development of American businesses coming out of the war, federal loan and generous spending programs, a tremendous baby boom, and several key technological innovations led the way for the growth that would be experienced throughout the period until it slowed during the early 1970s. Though America had been mired in the Great Depression before the war, it was already one of the world's most important manufacturing nations coming out of it. By 1950, America may have contained only about 6% of the world's population, but it produced almost 50% of the world's manufactured goods. During the war, Americans had produced an abundance of jeeps, tanks, guns, ships, and airplanes. In the 1950s, Americans would produce oil, steel, cars, televisions, air conditioners, refrigerators, washers and dryers, and food in abundance— enough to create a continuing economic boom until the early 1970s. But, this does not mean that the entire picture was rosy. In 1946, strikes in key American industries— cars, meatpacking, steel, and appliance makers all went on strike for better wages and working conditions. In response, Congress passed the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947 which limited the power of unions to protest and allowed states to pass right to work laws. The weakening of labor unions was just one component of the early economic growth that occurred in the years following World War II. Another major component was federal investment into the economy, particularly in the Sunbelt— the region which encompassed the southern half of the country, from Virginia in the East to California in the West.

From 1865-1945, the Sunbelt (the South, in particular) had been America's poorest region, but starting during the Great Depression, investment by the federal government changed that dynamic. During the Great Depression, public works programs such as the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Works Progress Administration built and fashioned a modern infrastructure throughout the South, providing the region with electrical power, roads, and public buildings. Throughout the war and in the years following it, the federal government built military bases, training camps, and installations throughout the Sunbelt. With these bases, came the development of towns with businesses that were designed to cater to the needs of the soldiers and their civilian counterparts who were employed in these areas. For those returning soldiers from the war, there was also heavy investment in their futures. The GI Bill, or the Servicemen's Adjustment Act, gave funds to returning soldiers from the war to invest in themselves. For many American soldiers, this meant the opportunity to be the first generation in their families to receive a college education. Other returning soldiers used the money to help their family purchase a home in America's growing suburbs. Some returning soldiers also used their money to invest in college educations for their children, while working to provide for their families. Though it was established as a part of the New Deal, the Federal Home Loan Administration provided loans at lower costs and interest rates which allowed more American families than ever before to be able to own a home. It was a major component of the economic growth during the period, as two factors would define this period, the baby boom and the rise of the American suburbs. The baby boom from 1945-1961, launched the need for hospitals, grocery stores, pharmacies, and restaurants in a way that the nation had never seen before. It also led to the rise of the suburbs— throughout the country, such as the Levittowns in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, where homes were mass produced just like automobiles, a practice which is still a feature of suburban living in

the Sunbelt states today. The suburbs led to the growth of shopping centers and malls, where customers could go and buy just about any consumer item, from electronics to clothing. For the first time, the average American home was stocked full of modern appliances, as most had refrigerators, washers and dryers, ovens, and freezer units that were more affordable than ever before. Most American families had at least one car, as the nation produced 80% of the world's automobiles during the 1950s and early 1960s. And by 1960, most American homes also featured a television set in living rooms that featured full sets of furniture for the first time, too. Also, as more Americans relocated to states like California, Texas, and Florida, a technological innovation made living in these areas far more comfortable than ever before— air conditioning. Though refrigerated railroad cars had existed during the Gilded Age, by the 1950s, most Americans began to be able to afford air conditioning units to cool their own homes. Cities such as Albuquerque, New Mexico, El Paso, Texas, Phoenix, Arizona, and Las Vegas, Nevada, blossomed for the first time during the period following World War II. While the Sunbelt states experienced tremendous growth, the federal investment in America's infrastructure continued as the government invested heavily in highways, airports, and also, in public education.

Explain the causes and effects of the migration of various groups of Americans after 1945.

As higher education opportunities and new technologies rapidly expanded, increasing social mobility encouraged the migration of the middle class to the suburbs and of many Americans to the South and West. The Sun Belt region emerged as a significant political and economic force.

With the growth of American suburbs in the years following World War II, a major shift in American life began to occur as more Americans than ever before were receiving a college-level education. From 1890-1970, African-Americans continued their Great Migration out of the South and into major industrial cities in the North and the West, although by the end of the period, as the nation desegregated, this process slowed. However, a major shift occurred in America's cities, as well-educated professionals and those who worked in managerial positions moved out of the inner cities and into the growing suburbs throughout the period. By 1970, America's cities were beginning to decay from within, as the wealthy residents who moved into the suburbs left behind working-class families who could not shoulder the tax burdens to continue to improve the quality of life that had once been found in America's large urban areas. As high-paying government jobs began to be relocated throughout the Sunbelt during the period, with agencies such as NASA for example and military installations being relocated to these areas, well-educated professionals began moving in large numbers to cities in the Sunbelt as the populations of the suburban areas surrounding Houston, Orlando, New Orleans, Huntsville, Albuquerque, San Antonio, Dallas, Phoenix, San Diego, and Los Angeles swelled throughout the period. With their booming populations, the states of California, Florida, and Texas, began to develop much more political influence than ever before. This growth and political influence is what pulled government agencies and installations into the Sunbelt region throughout the period. But, another source of government investment which led to tremendous economic and demographic growth during the period, was into the creation of the Interstate Highway System through the Interstate Highway Act of 1956. With the tremendous growth of the automobile industry during the 1950s and early 1960s, better roads were needed to interconnect America's growing cities— especially the suburban areas, together across the country. Much like the Transcontinental Railroad before it, the Interstate Highway System created tremendous economic growth, as American families could hop into their cars and travel like never before to places all across the country. For those families that made the trip, they would find new restaurants (fast food), hotels, shopping centers (malls), chain stores, and attractions for entertainment purposes. Now Americans could more easily eat in their favorite restaurants, stay in their favorite hotels, and shop in their favorite stores, regardless of where they traveled or lived in any part of the country. The modern American consumer culture was born during this period that defines the way of life for most Americans today. Though it still exists today, the economic issues that slowed the growth of this culture in the 1970s also altered the American landscape and would help to usher in some of the major divisions in American society that we are still grappling with today.

During the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, another shift began to occur in American economic life and it would lead to the stagflation (where wages are stagnant, but inflation continues to rise) that Americans felt by

the end of the period, as the economy shifted from one that was based on manufacturing to one that was based on service industries. At the end of World War II, Americans used the Marshall Plan with a great deal of success to rebuild the economies of Western Europe and Southeast Asia from the devastation of the war. By the late 1960s, Americans had become involved in two costly Cold War events— the Space Race and the Vietnam War. But, it was also the resurrection of the industrial capacity of Western Europe and Southeast Asia that also began the process of slowing the great economic boom that had started the period. For the first time, as tariffs were lowered to encourage free trade, even the automobile industry in America suffered mightily from foreign competition. With cheaper cars and trucks coming from Japan and Europe, Americans began to purchase fewer automobiles that were manufactured in the United States. American companies also began outsourcing the labor to produce their products by the 1970s, instead of using American workers to produce their products. Labor costs, especially in developing countries, were simply cheaper than employing American workers, which led to cheaper products being sold on store shelves in America's malls and shopping centers. New technologies, such as computers and automation (the use of robots or mechanical devices) in the manufacturing process meant that even fewer skilled workers were needed to create American manufactured products. In 1973, due to the American support of Israel in its war against Egypt (both in the Six-Day War in 1967 and the Yom Kippur War of 1973), the nations of OPEC (the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries)— mostly nations in the Middle East with large Islamic-based populations, embargoed oil to the countries of the West. The embargo sent oil and gas prices skyrocketing throughout the decade, which increased the costs of manufacturing in America, but also led to long gas lines and the feeling among Americans that the boom period after the end of World War II was coming to an end. As a result, by 1980, the American economy had started its shift to becoming a service-oriented economy where Americans designed products and technologies, but did not manufacture them. This trend would have a tremendous impact on how Americans would see themselves and their place in the global economy by the end of the twentieth century.

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Topic- The Culture, 1945-1980

American Culture, 1945-1980

Explain how mass culture has been maintained or challenged over time.

Mass culture became increasingly homogeneous in the postwar years, inspiring challenges to conformity by artists, intellectuals, and rebellious youth.

During the period after the conclusion of the Second World War, an American mass consumer culture would develop that would largely be defined by the growth in the American economy, the baby boom, and the rise of new technologies— especially, television. The earliest television shows were simply vaudeville, or theatrical productions that were formatted for an hour slot in the schedule. The early television networks— NBC, CBS, and ABC developed from the world of radio broadcasting and by the mid-1950s most American families were beginning to receive their news from television stations that were each connected to one of the three major networks. Beginning in the mid-1950s, television shows began to showcase life in dramas that mirrored that of the growing American suburbs. Two television programs, *Leave it to Beaver* (1957-1963) and *I Love Lucy* (1951-1957) both showcased suburban family life on the one hand, and the yearning for women to be able to move beyond the confines of it on the other. Both of these iconic television shows were situational comedies, or sitcoms, for short. In *Leave it to Beaver*, each episode of the program shows a child growing up in a suburban home with his family and the challenges of being a kid. In the program, his mother is always depicted as being supportive of her children, while the father is shown as being a role model and almost always teaches them a lesson by the end of each episode. In *I Love Lucy*, her husband in the program, Ricky Ricardo is actually a band leader, or is an established star, but in each episode, Lucy tries her best to get out of the house and to attract his attention by becoming a star herself. But, situational comedies set in the American suburbs were not the only popular ones on television at the time, as westerns, dramas, horror shows, variety shows, and soap operas (so named because of the fact that their sponsors were often soap or detergent companies) were also extremely popular. But, in the 1960s, television began to change, as color television programming was introduced and police show dramas, science fiction, spy thrillers, and more action oriented programs became increasingly popular on television. Though it only ran for three full seasons, from 1966-1969, *Star Trek* gained a cult following and helped introduce science fiction to young audiences at the height of its popularity and the Space Race. It was also the first television show to feature an interracial cast. During this era in early television, one show which began running throughout much of the period, *The Ed Sullivan Show*, 1948-1971, was a variety show which would feature some of the most prominent artists of the period, including Elvis Presley, The Beatles, and The Rolling Stones. From 1971-1979, *All In the Family*, became the show which defined a decade. This sitcom was taped live in front of a studio audience and featured the life of Archie Bunker, a bigoted blue-collar worker whose daughter is a feminist and whose son-in-law is an anti-war activist at the height of the war in Vietnam. His wife, Edith, plays the loyal housewife, much like the female characters that could be seen in the television programs of the 1950s. It was a controversial program, but it was the most popular show of the decade and showed the struggles that many American families faced during it. It also led to a unique spinoff television program, featuring an African-American family as the centerpiece for the show— *The Jeffersons*, which was also highly popular in the period from 1975-1985 (The Jeffersons had been the neighbors to the Bunker family on *All In the Family*). Another highly popular television show was *M*A*S*H*, which aired from 1972-1983, and brought humor to the seriousness of war. But, while television showcased the way in which American culture was displayed on millions of screens across the world by 1980, it was popular music and its evolution that also helped to define the rebelliousness of the period.

While television mirrored the culture of the Cold War period, it was the music of it that expressed the way in which people felt about it. Popular music as both a form of art and entertainment came of age during this period. With the growth of film, recording techniques, radio, and television, popular music— especially rock and roll music came of age during the period. From 1945-1980, the pop music of the cities of the big band era from World War II, combined with the blues music of the African-American community to create music that was distinctively American. Country music also became popular during the period, fusing the blues music of the African-American community with the folk songs of Appalachia (the rugged, hilly, and rural regions of the Old South- Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Virginia, and the Carolinas), and the swing music of the West. But, if one early figure embodied the changes that came in popular music during its formative period, it was Elvis Presley. Elvis took the gospel music that was played in the rural churches in the South, the country music of the period, and the blues music from the Mississippi Delta region (Memphis and New Orleans) and became the first true rock and roll icon in popular music. Some of the early hit songs in his career, such as “Hound Dog,” for example which was released in 1956 had already been a hit for African-American performers such as Big Mama Thornton (1954) in Memphis before his version was ever released. Elvis also showcased the sense of teenage rebellion which defined the period, as well. Other pioneering performers, such as Little Richard and Chuck Berry became popular during the period, and brought their music, from the African-American community to white audiences for the first time. Music stars became teen idols for adoring fans and often made appearances on radio shows, in television programs, and even on the screen in blockbuster films.

Ironically, the greatest change in American pop culture during the period did not come from America, but from the United Kingdom. The music of the Beatles and The Rolling Stones was influenced by country music, blues music, and pop music which came from America. In 1964, when the Beatles first appeared on the *Ed Sullivan Show*, it was the most watched television broadcast of all time. From 1964-1970, the Beatles dominated the popular music charts. In 1966, due to the screaming fans at their concerts (which often drowned out their actual music), the group decided to focus on their work of crafting music in the recording studio. The result was that from 1967-1970, the Beatles pioneered popular music into an art form, changing in the process the way music was consumed and the arc of popular culture. The group pioneered the music video, the concept album, and the fusion of classical music styles with pop. During this period, the group also had a major influence on fashion for both men and women in the Western world. One look at an annual from 1957-1967, will showcase the changes that were brought by the Beatles into American culture. While their music may have been based in American blues, The Rolling Stones were the hard edge to the pop-oriented sounds and stylistic sensibilities of the Beatles. If the Beatles made conservative American parents a bit uneasy, The Rolling Stones repelled them entirely. From 1965-1980, the music of The Rolling Stones would make a lasting imprint on the music of the period. From 1966-1973, popular music often took on the feelings that were felt by both the artists who created it and the youth who consumed it about the war in Vietnam and or, the Civil Rights Movement. The sounds of Motown, African-American artists who were largely based in Detroit, Michigan, such as the Supremes, the Four Tops, and the Temptations, Marvin Gaye and later, the Jackson 5 were also incredibly popular. The First Lady of Soul, Aretha Franklin also became popular during this period. Other groups based in places like California, such as the Beach Boys, the Mamas and the Papas, the Turtles, the Doors, Sly and the Family Stone, the Fifth Dimension, and Creedence Clearwater Revival, were popular. In country music, such stars as Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard, and Glen Campbell were also popular and in the case of Haggard, gave a voice to the rise of conservative America during the period. In the 1970s, groups such as the Eagles, Led Zeppelin, and the Bee Gees became popular— pioneering such musical styles as country-rock, heavy metal, and even disco (whose roots also came from the African-American and the LGBTQ community). As Americans became divided in the 1970s over such issues as civil rights, socio-economic inequality, and the environment and dismayed about the politics of the decade (especially after the Watergate Scandal, which brought down the presidency of Richard Nixon), they began to segment themselves based on what they listened to.

In film during the 1950s and early 1960s, Westerns such as *Giant*, *High Noon*, and *The Magnificent Seven* had been highly popular and actors such as Marlon Brando, John Wayne, James Dean, and Gary Cooper graced

the silver screen alongside such actresses as Grace Kelly, Marilyn Monroe, and Elizabeth Taylor. By the 1960s spy films from Great Britain had become popular such as the James Bond series of films starring Sean Connery, George Lazenby, and into the 1970s and 1980s, Roger Moore. During the 1970s, films about organized crime such as *The Godfather* (1972), and about one of our primal fears in the natural world, sharks, as depicted in *Jaws* (1975) were hugely popular. Plus, comeback stories such as those depicted in the film, *Rocky* (1976), were also very popular, too. At the end of the decade, as Americans were dealing with long gas lines, environmental problems, a stagnant economy, political mistrust, and the setback in the Vietnam War, it was a science-fiction franchise blockbuster film, *Star Wars* (1977), and its sequels— *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) and *Return of the Jedi* (1983) which served to remind Americans that there were heroes who were willing to sacrifice and fight for the values that all Americans shared. The *Star Wars* films were like the Old Westerns that had been so popular in the 1950s and 1960s, but set in outer space.

It was during this period from 1945-1980, that as American culture changed, so did how we viewed one another and it was the Civil Rights Movement which brought about this fundamental change. As you read, you probably noticed that entertainment played a role in changing how Americans saw one another in this period in which the Civil Rights Movement was ongoing, but it was another form of popular entertainment during the period— professional sports, where this process started.