In response to the Soviet Union's test of a pseudo–hydrogen bomb in 1953, the United States began Castle Bravo—the first U.S. test of a dry-fuel hydrogen bomb. Detonated on March 1, 1954, it was the most powerful nuclear device ever tested. But the effects were more gruesome than expected, causing nuclear fallout and radiation poisoning in nearby Pacific islands. Wikimedia.

acts of aggression with perhaps its entire nuclear might. Both sides, then, would theoretically be deterred from starting a war, through the logic of mutually assured destruction (MAD). J. Robert Oppenheimer, director of Los Alamos nucelear laboratory that developed the first nuclear bomb, likened the state of "nuclear deterrence" between the United States and the USSR to "two scorpions in a bottle, each capable of killing the other," but only by risking their own lives.[21]

Fears of nuclear war produced a veritable atomic culture. Films such as *Godzilla*, *On the Beach*, *Fail-Safe*, and *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* plumbed the depths of American anxieties with plots featuring radioactive monsters, nuclear accidents, and doomsday scenarios. Antinuclear protests in the United States and abroad warned against the perils of nuclear testing and highlighted the likelihood that a thermonuclear war would unleash a global

environmental catastrophe. Yet at the same time, peaceful nuclear technologies, such as fission- and fusion-based energy, seemed to herald a utopia of power that would be clean, safe, and "too cheap to meter." In 1953, Eisenhower proclaimed at the UN that the United States would share the knowledge and means for other countries to use atomic power. Henceforth, "the miraculous inventiveness of man shall not be dedicated to his death, but consecrated to his life." The "Atoms for Peace" speech brought about the establishment of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), along with worldwide investment in this new economic sector.[22]

As Germany fell at the close of World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union each sought to acquire elements of the Nazi's V-2 superweapon program. A devastating rocket that had terrorized England, the V-2 was capable of delivering its explosive payload up to a distance of nearly six hundred miles, and both nations sought to capture the scientists, designs, and manufacturing equipment to make it work. A former top German rocket scientist, Wernher von Braun, became the leader of the American space program; the Soviet Union's program was secretly managed by former prisoner Sergei Korolev. After the end of the war, American and Soviet rocket engineering teams worked to adapt German technology in order to create an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). The Soviets achieved success first. They even used the same launch vehicle on October 4, 1957, to send Sputnik 1, the world's first human-made satellite, into orbit. It was a decisive Soviet propaganda victory.[23]

In response, the U.S. government rushed to perfect its own ICBM technology and launch its own satellites and astronauts into space. In 1958, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) was created as a successor to the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA). Initial American attempts to launch a satellite into orbit using the Vanguard rocket suffered spectacular failures, heightening fears of Soviet domination in space. While the American space program floundered, on September 13, 1959, the Soviet Union's Luna 2 capsule became the first human-made object to touch the moon. The "race for survival," as it was called by the *New York Times*, reached a new level.[24] The Soviet Union successfully launched a pair of dogs (Belka and Strelka) into orbit and returned them to Earth while the American Mercury program languished behind schedule. Despite countless failures and one massive accident that killed nearly one hundred Soviet military and rocket engineers, Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin was launched into orbit on April

12, 1961. American astronaut Alan Shepard accomplished a suborbital flight in the Freedom 7 capsule on May 5. The United States had lagged behind, and John Kennedy would use America's losses in the "space race" to bolster funding for a moon landing.

While outer space captivated the world's imagination, the Cold War still captured its anxieties. The ever-escalating arms race continued to foster panic. In the early 1950s, the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) began preparing citizens for the worst. Schoolchildren were instructed, via a film featuring Bert the Turtle, to "duck and cover" beneath their desks in the event of a thermonuclear war.[25]

Although it took a backseat to space travel and nuclear weapons, the advent of modern computing was yet another major Cold War scientific innovation, the effects of which were only just beginning to be understood. In 1958, following the humiliation of the Sputnik launches, Eisenhower authorized the creation of an Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) housed within the Department of Defense (later changed to DARPA). As a secretive military research and development operation, ARPA was tasked with funding and otherwise overseeing the production of sensitive new technologies. Soon, in cooperation with university-based computer engineers, ARPA would develop the world's first system of "network packing switches," and computer networks would begin connecting to one another.

IV. The Cold War Red Scare, McCarthyism, and Liberal Anticommunism

Joseph McCarthy burst onto the national scene during a speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, on February 9, 1950. Waving a sheet of paper in the air, he proclaimed: "I have here in my hand a list of 205 . . . names that were made known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist party and who nevertheless are still working and shaping [U.S.] policy." Since the Wisconsin Republican had no actual list, when pressed, the number changed to fifty-seven, then, later, eighty-one. Finally, he promised to disclose the name of just one communist, the nation's "top Soviet agent." The shifting numbers brought ridicule, but it didn't matter: McCarthy's claims won him fame and fueled the ongoing "red scare."[26]

McCarthyism was only a symptom of a massive and widespread anticommunist hysteria that engulfed Cold War America. Popular fears,

Joseph McCarthy, a Republican senator from Wisconsin, pictured here in 1950, fueled fears during the early 1950s that communism was rampant and growing. Such fears intensified Cold War tensions at nearly every level of society, from government officials to ordinary American citizens. National Archives and Records Administration.

for instance, had long since shot through the federal government. Only two years after World War II, President Truman, facing growing anti-communist excitement and with a tough election on the horizon, gave in to pressure in March 1947 and issued his "loyalty order," Executive Order 9835, establishing loyalty reviews for federal employees. The FBI conducted closer examinations of all potential "security risks" among Foreign Service officers. In Congress, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (SPSI) held hearings on communist influence in American society. Between 1949 and 1954, congressional committees conducted over one hundred investigations into subversive activities. Antisubversion committees emerged in over a dozen state legislatures, and review procedures proliferated in public schools and universities across the country. At the University of California, for example, thirty-one professors were

The environment of anticommunist fear and panic led to the arrest of many innocent people, although some Americans accused of supplying top-secret information to the Soviets were, in fact, spies. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were convicted of espionage and executed in 1953 for delivering information about the atomic bomb to the Soviets. Library of Congress.

dismissed in 1950 for refusing to sign a loyalty oath. The Internal Security Act, or McCarran Act, passed by Congress in September 1950, mandated all "communist organizations" to register with the government, gave the government greater powers to investigate sedition, and made it possible to prevent suspected individuals from gaining or keeping their citizenship.[27]

Anticommunist policies reflected national fears of a surging global communism. Within a ten-month span beginning in 1949, for instance, the USSR developed a nuclear bomb, China fell to communism, and over three hundred thousand American soldiers were deployed to fight a land war in Korea. Newspapers, meanwhile, were filled with headlines alleging Soviet espionage.

During the war, Julius Rosenberg worked briefly at the U.S. Army Signal Corps Laboratory in New Jersey, where he had access to classified information. He and his wife, Ethel, who had both been members of the Communist Party of the USA (CPUSA) in the 1930s, were accused of passing secret bomb-related documents to Soviet officials and were indicted in August 1950 on charges of giving nuclear secrets to the Russians. After a trial in March 1951, they were found guilty and executed on June 19, 1953.[28]

Alger Hiss, the highest-ranking government official linked to Soviet espionage, was another prize for conservatives. Hiss was a prominent official in the U.S. State Department and served as secretary-general of the UN Charter Conference in San Francisco from April to June 1945 before leaving the State Department in 1946. A young congressman and member of HUAC, Richard Nixon, made waves by accusing Hiss of espionage. On August 3, 1948, Whittaker Chambers testified before HUAC that he and Hiss had worked together as part of the secret "communist underground" in Washington, D.C., during the 1930s. Hiss, who always maintained his innocence, stood trial twice. After a hung jury in July 1949, he was convicted on two counts of perjury (the statute of limitations for espionage having expired). Later evidence suggested their guilt. At the time, their convictions fueled an anticommunist frenzy. Some began seeing communists everywhere.[29]

Alger Hiss and the Rosenbergs offered anticommunists such as Joseph McCarthy the evidence they needed to allege a vast Soviet conspiracy to infiltrate and subvert the U.S. government and justify the smearing of all left-liberals, even those who were resolutely anticommunist. Not long after his February 1950 speech in Wheeling, McCarthy's sensational charges became a source of growing controversy. Forced to respond, President Truman arranged a partisan congressional investigation designed to discredit McCarthy. The Tydings Committee held hearings from early March through July 1950 and issued a final report admonishing McCarthy for perpetrating a "fraud and a hoax" on the American public. American progressives saw McCarthy's crusade as nothing less than a political witch hunt. In June 1950, *The Nation* magazine editor Freda Kirchwey characterized "McCarthyism" as "the means by which a handful of men, disguised as hunters of subversion, cynically subvert the instruments of justice . . . in order to help their own political fortunes."[30] Truman's liberal supporters, and leftists like Kirchwey, hoped in vain that McCarthy and the new "ism" that bore his name would blow over quickly.

There had, of course, been a communist presence in the United States. The CPUSA was formed in the aftermath of the 1917 Russian Revolution when the Bolsheviks created a Communist International (the Comintern) and invited socialists from around the world to join. During its first two years of existence, the CPUSA functioned in secret, hidden from a surge of antiradical and anti-immigrant hysteria, investigations, deportations, and raids at the end of World War I. The CPUSA began its public life in

1921, after the panic subsided, but communism remained on the margins of American life until the 1930s, when leftists and liberals began to see the Soviet Union as a symbol of hope amid the Great Depression. Then many communists joined the Popular Front, an effort to make communism mainstream by adapting it to American history and American culture. During the Popular Front era, communists were integrated into mainstream political institutions through alliances with progressives in the Democratic Party. The CPUSA enjoyed most of its influence and popularity among workers in unions linked to the newly formed CIO. Communists also became strong opponents of Jim Crow segregation and developed a presence in both the NAACPand the ACLU. The CPUSA, moreover, established "front" groups, such as the League of American Writers, in which intellectuals participated without even knowing of its ties to the Comintern. But even at the height of the global economic crisis, communism never attracted many Americans. Even at the peak of its membership, the CPUSA had just eighty thousand national "card-carrying" members. From the mid-1930s through the mid-1940s, the party exercised most of its power indirectly, through coalitions with liberals and reformers. When news broke of Hitler's and Stalin's 1939 nonaggression, many fled the party, feeling betrayed. A bloc of left-liberal anticommunists, meanwhile, purged remaining communists in their ranks, and the Popular Front collapsed.[31]

Lacking the legal grounds to abolish the CPUSA, officials instead sought to expose and contain CPUSA influence. Following a series of predecessor committees, HUAC was established in 1938, then reorganized after the war and given the explicit task of investigating communism. By the time the Communist Control Act was passed in August 1954, effectively criminalizing party membership, the CPUSA had long ceased to have meaningful influence. Anticommunists were driven to eliminate remaining CPUSA influence from progressive institutions, including the NAACP and the CIO. The Taft-Hartley Act (1947) gave union officials the initiative to purge communists from the labor movement. A kind of Cold War liberalism took hold. In January 1947, anticommunist liberals formed Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), whose founding members included labor leader Walter Reuther and NAACP chairman Walter White, as well as historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr., theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, and former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Working to help Truman defeat former vice president Henry Wallace's Popular Front–backed campaign in 1948, the ADA combined social and economic reforms with staunch anticommunism.[32]

The domestic Cold War was bipartisan, fueled by a consensus drawn from a left-liberal and conservative anticommunist alliance that included politicians and policy makers, journalists and scientists, business and civic/religious leaders, and educators and entertainers. Led by its imperious director, J. Edgar Hoover, the FBI took an active role in the domestic battle against communism. Hoover's FBI helped incite panic by assisting the creation of blatantly propagandistic films and television shows, including *The Red Menace* (1949), *My Son John* (1951), and *I Led Three Lives* (1953–1956). Such alarmist depictions of espionage and treason in a "free world" imperiled by communism heightened the 1950s culture of fear. In the fall of 1947, HUAC entered the fray with highly publicized hearings of Hollywood. Film mogul Walt Disney and actor Ronald Reagan, among others, testified to aid investigators' attempts to expose communist influence in the entertainment industry. A group of writers, directors, and producers who refused to answer questions were held in contempt of Congress. This Hollywood Ten created the precedent for a blacklist in which hundreds of film artists were barred from industry work for the next decade.

HUAC made repeated visits to Hollywood during the 1950s, and their interrogation of celebrities often began with the same intimidating refrain: "Are you now, or have you ever been, a member of the Communist Party?" Many witnesses cooperated, and "named names," naming anyone they knew who had ever been associated with communist-related groups or organizations. In 1956, black entertainer and activist Paul Robeson chided his HUAC inquisitors, claiming that they had put him on trial not for his politics but because he had spent his life "fighting for the rights" of his people. "You are the un-Americans," he told them, "and you ought to be ashamed of yourselves."[33] As Robeson and other victims of McCarthyism learned firsthand, this "second red scare," in the glow of nuclear annihilation and global totalitarianism, fueled an intolerant and skeptical political world, what Cold War liberal Arthur Schlesinger, in his *The Vital Center* (1949), called an "age of anxiety."[34]

Anticommunist ideology valorized overt patriotism, religious conviction, and faith in capitalism. Those who shunned such "American values" were open to attack. If communism was a plague spreading across Europe and Asia, anticommunist hyperbole infected cities, towns, and suburbs throughout the country. The playwright Arthur Miller's popular 1953 play *The Crucible* compared the red scare to the Salem Witch Trials. Miller wrote, "In America any man who is not reactionary in his views

Many Americans accused of communist sentiments refused to denounce friends and acquaintances. One of the most well-known Americans of the time, African American actor and singer Paul Robeson, was unwilling to sign an affidavit confirming he was communist and, as a result, his U.S. passport was revoked. During the Cold War, he was condemned by the press and neither his music nor films could be purchased in the United States. Wikimedia.

is open to the charge of alliance with the Red hell. Political opposition, thereby, is given an inhumane overlay which then justifies the abrogation of all normally applied customs of civilized intercourse. A political policy is equated with moral right, and opposition to it with diabolical malevolence. Once such an equation is effectively made, society becomes a congerie of plots and counterplots, and the main role of government changes from that of the arbiter to that of the scourge of God."[35]

Rallying against communism, American society urged conformity. "Deviant" behavior became dangerous. Having entered the workforce en masse as part of a collective effort in World War II, middle-class women were told to return to housekeeping responsibilities. Having fought and died abroad for American democracy, black soldiers were told to return home and acquiesce to the American racial order. Homosexuality, already stigmatized, became dangerous. Personal secrets were seen as a liability that exposed one to blackmail. The same paranoid mind-set that fueled the second red scare also ignited the Cold War "lavender scare" against gay Americans.[36]

American religion, meanwhile, was fixated on what McCarthy, in his 1950 Wheeling speech, called an "all-out battle between communistic

atheism and Christianity." Cold warriors in the United States routinely referred to a fundamental incompatibility between "godless communism" and God-fearing Americanism. Religious conservatives championed the idea of the traditional nuclear, God-fearing family as a bulwark against the spread of atheistic totalitarianism. As Baptist minister Billy Graham sermonized in 1950, communism aimed to "destroy the American home and cause . . . moral deterioration," leaving the country exposed to communist infiltration.[37]

In an atmosphere in which ideas of national belonging and citizenship were so closely linked to religious commitment, Americans during the early Cold War years attended church, professed a belief in a supreme being, and stressed the importance of religion in their lives at higher rates than in any time in American history. Americans sought to differentiate themselves from godless communists through public displays of religiosity. Politicians infused government with religious symbols. The Pledge of Allegiance was altered to include the words *one nation, under God* in 1954. *In God We Trust* was adopted as the official national motto in 1956. In popular culture, one of the most popular films of the decade, *The Ten Commandments* (1956), retold the biblical Exodus story as a Cold War parable, echoing (incidentally) NSC-68's characterization of the Soviet Union as a "slave state." Monuments of the Ten Commandments went up at courthouses and city halls across the country.

While the link between American nationalism and religion grew much closer during the Cold War, many Americans began to believe that just believing in almost any religion was better than being an atheist. Gone was the overt anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic language of Protestants in the past. Now, leaders spoke of a common Judeo-Christian heritage. In December 1952, a month before his inauguration, Dwight Eisenhower said that "our form of government makes no sense unless it is founded in a deeply-felt religious faith, and I don't care what it is."[38]

Joseph McCarthy, an Irish Catholic, made common cause with prominent religious anticommunists, including southern evangelist Billy James Hargis of *Christian Crusade*, a popular radio and television ministry that peaked in the 1950s and 1960s. Cold War religion in America also crossed the political divide. During the 1952 campaign, Eisenhower spoke of U.S. foreign policy as "a war of light against darkness, freedom against slavery, Godliness against atheism."[39] His Democratic opponent, former Illinois governor Adlai Stevenson, said that America was engaged in a battle with the "Anti-Christ." While Billy Graham became a spiri-